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FAO ECTAD
Viet Nam
Newsletter

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ECTAD Emergency Centre for Transboundary Animal Diseases Viet Nam

*FAO Supports Viet Nam's Department of Animal Health and Department of Livestock Production with HPAI Surveillance Activities in 2012 and 2013*

# Preparing for H7N9 in Viet Nam

*Nationwide surveillance for animal diseases by DAH and MARD helps catch emerging viruses early*

On 31 March this year, the government of China reported for the first time three cases of human infection with a novel influenza A strain (H7N9) in Eastern China. Since then, there have been 135 laboratory-confirmed human cases with this virus, 44 of whom have died. Reports suggest that about 70 percent of the human cases had direct or indirect contact with poultry before the onset of disease, including live bird market (LBM) visits, transportation, slaughtering and handling poultry.

The virus has been found in individual birds and in environmental samples at live bird markets in areas where human cases have been reported. Since the first official outbreak of H7N9, the virus has spread to other provinces.

## Long border

North Viet Nam shares a long border with China marked by heavy traffic of people and animals, including large numbers of poultry. Because this greatly increases the risk of introducing the H7N9 virus to Viet Nam, an emergency surveillance programme was put in place to monitor a possible Influenza A (H7N9) incursion from China, by the Vietnamese Department of Animal Health (DAH) in close collaboration with the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

To determine whether the H7N9 virus was present in poultry in Vietnam, 60 markets were selected in nine northern provinces (the red dots in the diagram below) and spent hens and breeder chickens were tested for the virus on a bi-weekly basis for two months, but none of the 8,700 birds tested were H7N9 positive.

On 3 August, the Chinese province of Guangdong confirmed its first case of H7N9 bird flu in a 51-year-old woman. The intense surveillance that followed did not find the virus in poultry or LBMs.


## Looking ahead

The virus is expected to re-emerge in autumn as cold weather in China favours virus survival. Poultry production and trade are also expected to increase due to the upcoming Chinese New Year and Tet celebrations. H7N9 surveillance in poultry will be conducted in both China, Viet Nam, and other higher risk countries in the region later this year based on outcomes of an expert consultation that took place at FAO headquarters in September 2013, where the FAO technical cooperation programme was launched. Risk Communication, Contingency Planning, and closer collaboration between the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) and the Ministry of Health (MoH) are envisioned.

USAID TỪ NHÂN DÂN MỸ
Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
Republic of Korea
European Commission

# Joining hands across the shared border

*China and Viet Nam sit across a table for the first time to officially discuss cross-border cooperation*

A bilateral meeting between Viet Nam and China on Collaboration to Address Transboundary Animal Diseases (TADs) and Diseases of Public Health Concern was organized in Ha Long City, Quang Ninh Province from 22-24 August this year.

The meeting convened 58 participants including senior government officials from the Viet Nam's DAH and the Veterinary Bureau of China, senior officials from Provinces along the border, representatives of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) and the Ministry of Health (MOH) in Viet Nam, FAO Emergency Center for Transboundary Animal Diseases (ECTAD), plus observers from international organizations and donors.


***Participants at the first-ever official bilateral meeting Viet Nam's Department of Animal Health and the Veterinary Bureau of China, convened to discuss cross-border cooperation against TADs***

In his opening remarks at this first ever official bilateral meeting between the DAH in Viet Nam and the Veterinary Bureau of China, Dr. Pham Van Dong, Director General of the DAH highlighted the main objective of the meeting, namely the sharing of experiences relating to the control of TADs, and to develop and evaluate risk reduction measures and strategies at the border.

Dr. Huang Weizhong, Deputy Director General of China's Veterinary Bureau encouraged international agencies such as FAO and USAID to support this cross-border initiative so the bilateral cooperation between China and Viet Nam on TADs control could become a global model.

The USAID Infectious Diseases Advisor, Dr. Kim Thuy Oanh reaffirmed USAID support "to assure safe, responsible and transparent management and control of animal diseases and diseases of public health concern".

Specific recommendations were developed for each theme, and both governments also agreed to have a bilateral meeting every six months to build upon synergies and strengthen joint animal disease control measures in the epi-zone.

Both sides expressed their willingness to develop joint projects for the Viet Nam – Southern China epi-zone with consideration being given to real-time information exchange mechanisms; a corridor approach for poultry and poultry products; and safe pathways for the movement of species susceptible to foot-mouth diseases. Both governments also agreed to identify and appoint focal points to implement all recommendations on schedule.

These efforts were reinforced with technical support from FAO to "improve the understanding of pathways and movements of livestock, animal products, people, and the pathogens they may harbour" to prevent diseases and mitigate disease impacts, said Mr. JongHa Bae, FAO Representative in Viet Nam.

## Exploring the drivers of HPAI

A key International Workshop on HPAI Risk Assessment and Risk Modeling was held in Ha Noi on 27 May. Coordinated and supported by FAO ECTAD Viet Nam, the National Institute of Health and the University of Oklahoma through USAID, the 2-day workshop and field visit brought together more than 50 multidisciplinary national government and international experts, technical staff, and other partners to explore drivers of influenza virus emergence and disease risk factors at the local level.

The workshop aimed to determine how influenza risk assessment and modeling should be applied to benefit national priority-setting for the prevention, response, and control of HPAI H5N1.

Scientific presentations and discussion sessions included:

1) Reviewing factors that contribute to the epidemiological differences in HPAI clades in different regions of Asia;

2) Determining the factors that contribute to the epidemiological differences in HPAI clades in the northern (Red River Delta) and southern Viet Nam (Mekong Delta); and

3) Discussing how influenza risk assessment and modeling should be pursued in Viet Nam to benefit national priorities for the prevention, response, and control of HPAI;

Exploring future potential research areas that would benefit responsible authorities in Viet Nam, including but not limited to Department of Animal Health (DAH), Department of Livestock Production (DLP), and Ministry of Health MOH by improving the control and management of influenza and other zoonotic diseases in Viet Nam. Knowledge, experiences, and information shared at this international workshop and field visit supports Viet Nam in the development of control measures for HPAI H5N1, and control of other major animal zoonotic diseases.

***The workshop aimed to determine how influenza risk assessment and modeling should be applied to help set natiional priorities for the prevention, response and control of HPAI H5N1***

# When the dog bites

*Viet Nam gears up to win the war against rabies*

A recent study among Vietnamese dog owners conducted by Viet Nam's Department of Animal Health within the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development indicated the need for improved intersectoral collaboration between animal and human health to properly control rabies. The dog ecology study coupled with a Knowledge-Attitude-Practice (KAP) survey with dog owners, was supported by FAO ECTAD and aimed at gaining a better understanding of interaction between dogs, livestock, and humans. Priority areas identified included improved dog vaccination, surveillance, laboratory capacity and communication.

In Viet Nam, the main reservoir of rabies is dogs, responsible for more than 90 percent of fatal rabies cases in humans. In recent years, rabies has become a more significant problem specially in Viet Nam's northern mountainous provinces. Between 2006-2010, at least 85 people died from rabies every year in Viet Nam, and an estimated 400,000 people received post-bite treatment and vaccination, preventing further human deaths.

In response to a request from MARD for technical assistance, the FAO Crisis Management Centre–Animal Health (CMC-AH) sent a mission team to Viet Nam, comprising a veterinary public health and disease control expert, a rabies expert, a communication specialist, and a rabies laboratory specialist from the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE). The mission team, together with representatives from DAH, the General Department of Preventive Medicine (GDPM) and FAO-ECTAD travelled to Phu Tho, Yen Bai and Son La, the provinces with the most human rabies cases in the country.

Following the mission, the DAH and FAO ECTAD Viet Nam convened a national rabies workshop to present findings from the KAP and ecology studies, the CMC mission, and to gain insights from neighboring ASEAN countries (Philippines, Thailand and Indonesia) on lessons learned from their rabies management programs.

Key recommendations made for improving rabies control in Viet Nam included the need for strong political commitment and effective intersectoral collaboration mechanisms; a vigorous programme of dog vaccination, especially in districts and provinces with the highest number of rabies cases; and an advocacy and outreach communication plan targeting dog owners and the general public.

FAO ECTAD Viet Nam participated in the Annual Review Workshop on the Rabies National Programme in Phu Tho Province, co-chaired by the Vice Ministers from MARD and MOH. FAO ECTAD Viet Nam gave a presentation titled *Applying Lessons Learned About Rabies to the Viet Nam Situation*.

***A child winces as his pet puppy is vaccinated in a village in Can Thô province***


***Members of the FAO Crisis Management Centre–Animal Health (CMC-AH) rabies mission team of experts during their tour of districts at high rabies risk in Viet Nam***

## Making hatcheries even better

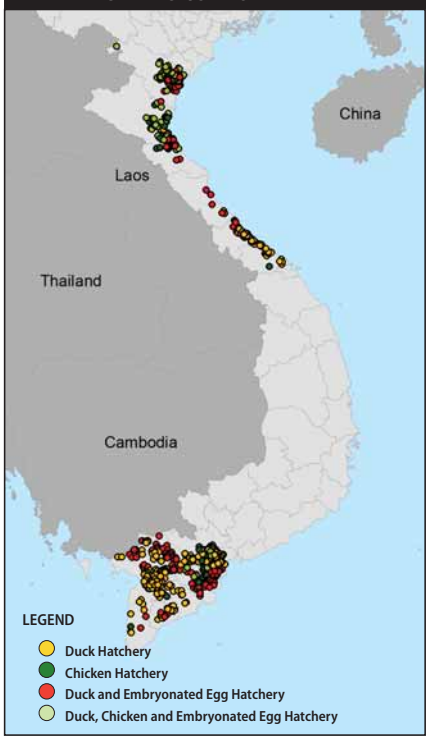
Numerous small, independent hatcheries in Viet Nam are not compliant with minimum good hatchery practices. Existing Vietnamese legislation only addresses large-scale commercial hatchery requirements. FAO ECTAD Viet Nam and the Department of Livestock Production (DLP) under MARD have responded to this gap by adopting a quality improvement approach to improving performance and standard operating practices.

Hatcheries in 21 out of Viet Nam's 63 provinces were mapped and a stakeholder workshop brought together hatchery owners, provincial authorities, national legislators, and hatchery experts. The result was agreement on 15 minimum operating standards that would be easy to implement and would help decrease disease and improve production performance, ultimately increasing the hatchery owner's income. A master trainer training program was also developed to teach hatchery owners how to implement the new standards and acquire certification.

Six hatchery models have been developed in Can Tho and Quang Tri Provinces to serve as demonstrations of good practices. FAO ECTAD Viet Nam is currently filming a video to highlight successful hatchery modifications.

FAO ECTAD has provided technical support to DLP to develop legislation on hatchery bio-security strengthening.

***HATCHERY CLUSTERS IN VIET NAM***



## The animal-human interface

*An animal health worker vaccinates a chicken against HPAI H5N1 at a farm in Can Tho province.*

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