
2. International Emergency Disease Investigation Task Force

The Task Force, formed by FAO in April 2007, was composed of experts from FAO, the Aquatic Animal Health Research Institute of Thailand's Department of Fisheries (AAHRI, based in Bangkok) and Reference Laboratory for Epizootic Ulcerative Syndrome (EUS) of the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), the Network of Aquaculture Centres in Asia and the Pacific (NACA, based in Bangkok) and the Botswana Department of Wildlife and National Parks (DWNP, Gaborone, Botswana and the Department of Animal Health and Production [DAHP, Gaborone, Botswana]). The composition of the Task Force can be found in Annex 1 and Plate 1.

The overall objective of the Task Force was to undertake an emergency assessment of the fish disease outbreak through: (a) field observations (e.g. visit to affected river system, interviews with local/district officials and local fishermen, collection of epidemiological data); (b) laboratory examination (i.e. parasitology, bacteriology, histopathology, mycology, virology) of available normal and diseased fish samples; and (c) examination of available reports and other laboratory findings, in order to identify as far as possible the causative agent of the outbreak, to provide recommendations to prevent further spread of the disease, to recommend control measures if applicable, to develop an emergency response and contingency plan for future outbreaks to concerned governments, and to develop a possible regional project.

With funding support from the Programme Cooperation Agreement with Norway (PCA Norway 2006-2007) under the D.1 Biosecurity Objective, three of the Task Force members (Dr M.B. Reantaso of FAO, Dr S. Kanchanakhan of AAHRI and Dr C.V. Mohan of NACA) travelled to Botswana from 18 to 26 May 2007.

PLATE 1

Task Force members and EUS experts at work

(All photos courtesy of M.B. Reantaso)



Last day sampling

From left, seated: S. Kanchankhan, M. Reantaso, M. Bakani. From left, standing: Coastguard1, DWNP Staff, K. Kesego, Shaft Nengu, Coastguard2. G.D. Rammusi, C.V. Mohan



First day sampling

From left, first row: Coastguard1, M. Reantaso, K. Kesego, Coastguard2, From left, second row: B. van der Waal, Shaft Nengu, B. Bernard, C.V. Mohan, K.V. Motshereganyi, S. Kanchanakhon, Driver1



Task Force members visit farmers and conduct discussion regarding fish disease



Thai EUS experts, from left, S. Chinabut, S. Tandavanitj (AAHRI Director) and K. Tonguthai, meeting with Task Force Members (12 June 2007)



Task Force members, from left, K. Tonguthai, R. Subasinghe, C.V. Mohan, S. Kanchanakhon, M. Reantaso, at AAHRI in Bangkok, 12 June 2007