



Strengthening Cross Border Activities among *Bangladesh, India and Nepal* to Control Possible Cross-Border Spread of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI)

Bulletin

INFORMATION

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Project Objectives

- The overall objective of the programme is to contribute to the elimination of the threat posed by HPAI due to cross-border activities in the Gangetic Plain subregion of South Asia.
- More specifically, the project will strengthen the capacity of the countries sharing an epidemiological environment in the Gangetic Plain subregion to deal with the risks and threat of HPAI posed by cross-border activities.

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Disease status in the sub-region

No new outbreaks were reported during October–November 2009 from Bangladesh, India and Nepal.

India declared itself free from HPAI

India has declared itself free from the notifiable Avian Influenza (H5N1) with effect from 22nd October, 2009 and notified the same to the OIE.

During November 2008 to May 2009, India had notified outbreaks of Avian Influenza (H5N1) in Assam (18 epicentres), West Bengal (11 epicentres) and Sikkim (1 epicentre). The last outbreak was notified on 27th May 2009 in Uttar Dinajpur District of West Bengal.

The control measures adopted in all the outbreaks were stamping out of entire poultry population, including destruction of eggs, feed, litter and other infected materials in a radius of 3 to 5 Kms around each outbreak location; restriction on movement of poultry, poultry products to and from the area of outbreak; disinfection and cleaning up of infected premises. The final disinfection process was completed on 8th June 2009.

India carried out surveillance throughout the country as per article 2.7.12.4 of the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code (2008). Surveillance around the area of the outbreak since completion of the operation (including culling, disinfection and clean-up) and surveillance in rest of the country has shown no evidence of the presence of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (H5N1). Results of surveillance and other relevant information on AI outbreaks are available on the Department of Animal Husbandry, Dairying and Fisheries, Government of India website at <http://www.dahd.nic.in>

Activities undertaken

- ④ Exhibition of project activities at the FAO stall on the 64th UN Day in Nepal on 23rd October 2009
- ④ Brainstorming workshops to discuss the developed draft Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for emergency response to disease in high risk areas related to cross border trade, 4th and 6th November 2009, Biratnagar and Nepalgunj, Nepal
- ④ Poultry market profile study in Jhapa and Morang districts, Nepal 8th to 14th November, 2009
- ④ Observation of AI outbreak and control measures simulation exercise by the ECTAD unit (SAARC), at Dhangadhi, Nepal 22nd to 26th November 2009.
- ④ Second Real Time Evaluation of FAO's work on HPAI, Regional workshop for Asia, Bangkok 30th November-1st December 2009.
- ④ Participation at 'Communication for prevention and control of AI' workshop at Kathmandu, Nepal 30th November -1st December 2009

Exhibition of project activities at the FAO stall on the 64th UN Day in Nepal on 23rd October 2009



The ECTAD Sub-regional Unit (SAARC) participated in the 64th UN Day celebration in Nepal and exhibited its activities.

Brain-storming workshops to discuss the developed draft SOPs for emergency response to disease in high risk areas related to cross border trade, 4th and 6th November 2009, Biratnagar and Nepalgunj, Nepal

As a follow-up of the May 2009 Kathmandu workshop on development of SOPs for emergency response to disease in high risk areas related to cross-border trade, two workshops were organized in Nepal in the first week of November to further refine and discuss those SOPs. In the May 2009 workshop, nine SOPs were developed and it was decided then to discuss those in each of the country separately and feedback would be given to FAO to harmonize/coordinate the final draft. The final draft would then be distributed to member countries for implementation.



Participant's presentation during brain storming workshop on SOPs in Nepal

Two brainstorming workshops were held in Nepal on 4th November, 2009 in Biratnagar and 6th November, 2009 in Nepalgunj. At Biratnagar and Nepalgunj, 16 and 18 people respectively participated in the workshops to discuss the already developed draft SOPs and measures to pre-test them. The participants represented the bordering districts (with India) viz, Jhapa, Morang, Parsa, Sunsari, Kanchanpur, Kailali, Banke, Bardia and Dang, and Directorate of Animal Health, DLS Nepal. The ECTAD Unit (SAARC) of FAO Nepal provided technical and logistical support to the workshops. The meeting moderation, presentations and discussions were led by Sub-regional Manager of the ECTAD unit (SAARC), while group discussions

were facilitated by the unit's epidemiology consultant. Participants gave their inputs/comments. The discussions of the various groups focused on improving the draft SOPs for clarity so that everyone involved, especially the veterinary technicians, could understand them easily. It was decided that the suggested improvements would be incorporated into the final version of the SOPs after consultations with the counterparts from India and Bangladesh.

Poultry market profile study in Jhapa and Morang districts, Nepal 8th to 14th November, 2009

Animal Health Economist of the ECTAD Sub-regional Unit (SAARC), facilitated a study in Morang and Jhapa Districts in Eastern region of Nepal between 8th-14th November 2009 to develop a livestock (poultry) market profile; describe how specific rural, regional, national poultry markets work and identify linkages between various types of markets in the region. The study focuses on poultry markets in the Indo-Gangetic region of Bangladesh, India and Nepal.



A typical weekly poultry market in Eastern Nepal

Observation of AI outbreak and control measures simulation exercise by the ECTAD Sub-regional Unit (SAARC), at Dhangadhi, Nepal 22nd to 26th November 2009.

Epidemiology consultant of the ECTAD Sub-regional Unit (SAARC), participated in the Field Simulation Exercise on HPAI outbreak as an observer between 22nd to 26th November 2009. The exercise was conducted at Dhangadhi, Kailali district in Far Western region under the supervision

of FAO. More than 100 persons, including DLS staff from neighbouring districts participated in the exercise. Other participants were from public health, security, media, poultry farmers and local people. The exercise simulated an HPAI outbreak and the response to it, including various components such as: disease investigation by veterinarians; sample collection using PPE; transportation of samples to a laboratory; lab diagnosis; culling & disposal; movement control through check points; and cleaning & disinfection. The participants were quite enthusiastic, disciplined and there was good coordination between the various players during the simulation. The participants acknowledged benefiting greatly from the exercise which gave them confidence to deal with an actual outbreak if it were to occur.

Second Real Time Evaluation of FAO's work on HPAI, Regional Workshop for Asia, Bangkok 30th November- 1st December 2009

The second real time evaluation of FAO's work on HPAI was held from 30th November to 1st December 2009 for the Asian region. The independent Evaluation Team undertook visits to several countries where FAO's projects on HPAI are in operation. Under the rubric of the Sub-regional ECTAD Unit (SAARC) the team visited Bangladesh from 7th to 10th Nov 2009. Dr Mohinder Oberoi, Sub-regional Manager could not directly interact with the evaluation team in Bangladesh. However, through a teleconference on 10th Nov 2009 the team was apprised of the activities being undertaken by the South Asia cross-border project involving Bangladesh, India and Nepal. The team was also apprised about the FAO's initiatives undertaken in India towards surveillance and studying the migration pattern of migratory birds and establishment of an epidemiology unit within the Ministry of Agriculture, Department of Animal Husbandry, Dairying and Fisheries.

The evaluation team held a workshop in Bangkok as part of the second Real Time Evaluation of FAO's contributions to avian influenza preparedness and response in the Asian region. Dr Mohinder Oberoi, Sub-regional Manager participated in this workshop. The workshop brought together FAO staff from the region, representatives of FAO's partner organisations





and institutions, to review the progress made and to discuss future opportunities for better control of avian influenza and preparedness for other priority diseases.

The evaluation team first interacted with FAO staff from the region followed by non-FAO participants from the region. The workshop was officially opened by the FAO Deputy Regional Representative for Asia and the Pacific, Dr Konuma. The participants then went straight into group work. A total of 45 participants were allocated amongst three FAO and three non-FAO staff groups for discussions on various issues to identify gaps for future FAO support.




Participation at 'Communication for prevention and control of AI' workshop at Kathmandu, Nepal 30th November -1st December 2009

Advocacy Coordinator of the ECTAD Sub-regional Unit (SAARC), participated as a resource person in a 2-day workshop on 'communication for prevention and control of avian influenza'. The objective of the workshop was to enhance the communication skills of key people for the prevention and control of AI outbreaks. The two days workshop started on 30th November at Kathmandu and was attended by DLS staff from HQ and districts, Ministry of Health and Population, poultry farmers, poultry farmers association, feed manufacturers association, media representatives, NGOs, Stop AI, USAID and UNICEF.

Upcoming Project Events

-  Brainstorming workshop to discuss the developed draft Standard Operating Procedures for emergency response to disease in high risk areas related to cross- border trade
 - ▶ 4th December 2009, Shillong, India
 - ▶ 10th December 2009, Dhaka, Bangladesh
-  District level meetings in Bangladesh, India & Nepal on poultry production systems, cross-border value chain mapping, disease investigation and advocacy; December 2009-March 2010
-  Laboratory training on the use of Rapid Antigen Detection Kits, India, February 2010
-  Policy and Technical committee(s) meeting in Pokhara (Nepal) on 28th-29th January 2010

New Staff

-  Mr Anthony Burnett worked as International Advocacy Consultant from 9th October to 2nd November, 2009
-  Dr Sathurukulasingham Reuben Shanthikumar joined as International Consultant Epidemiology from 18th October, 2009
-  Mr Jagmeet Uppal joined as Sub-regional Advocacy Coordinator from 9th November, 2009



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