



Strengthening cross border activities among Bangladesh, India and Nepal to control possible cross-border spread of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) OSRO/RAS/701/USA

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 Sub-region of South Asia.

More specifically, the project will strengthen the capacity of the countries sharing an epidemiological environment in the Gangetic Plain Sub-region to deal with the risks and threat of HPAI posed by cross-border activities.

Disease status in the Sub-region

There was only one HPAI outbreak reported by Bangladesh in the month of June. Besides, no other country in the Indo-Gangetic plain reported any HPAI outbreak. Meanwhile India submitted the final report to the OIE on 2nd June, 2010, indicating that the country had become free of HPAI infection.

New outbreak in Bangladesh:

- The Bangladesh government confirmed one new outbreak of HPAI in poultry in Narayanganj district in June 2010. As per website of FAO technical unit, Bangladesh at <http://www.aitubd.org/>, the outbreak took place at Bander Sadar Upzila in a layer farm. On 18th June, 25 poultry among 1455 were found dead in the farm and the remaining 1430 birds were destroyed on 19th June, 2010. With this outbreak a total 31 HPAI outbreaks have been reported in Bangladesh in 2010 and out of that two were in backyard and remaining 29 in the commercial farms.

Situation in Bhutan, India and Nepal:

- No new HPAI outbreak was reported by Bhutan, India and Nepal in the month of June and July 2010. Meanwhile, Government of India submitted the final report to the OIE on 2nd June 2010, indicating that the all outbreaks reported in January 2010 were resolved and the country was HPAI free. As per the website of the Department of Animal Husbandry, Dairying & Fisheries (DADF), Ministry of Agriculture of Government of India, <http://www.dahd.nic.in>, a letter to the Chief Secretaries of all states/Union Territories was also sent on 2nd June, 2010 describing the outbreak in January 2010 in Murshidabad district

of West Bengal that after 30th January no outbreak was reported from any part of the country and final disinfection process in the areas of outbreak in West Bengal was completed on 2nd March, 2010. The letter emphasized that surveillance against HPAI needs to be continued throughout the country, especially in vulnerable areas bordering infected countries and in areas visited by migratory birds.

Activities undertaken

- District level meetings in Bangladesh on advocacy, disease investigation, clinical picture of HPAI and cross-border value chain mapping;
- Participation in GF-TAD meeting and in the inception workshop in establishment of Regional Support Unit at Kathmandu;
- Media sensitization workshops in West Bengal;
- Study on livestock marketing systems in Bangladesh;
- Submission of Legislative reports.

District level meetings in Bangladesh at Chapai Nawabganj, Dinajpur and Lalmonirhat

- With in the framework of the project "Strengthening cross-border activities among Bangladesh, India and Nepal to control possible cross-border spread of HPAI (OSRO/RAS/701/USA Phase II)", orientation/sensitization workshops were planned for district veterinary/livestock staff, police, forces manning the international borders, NGOs, relevant private sector entities, community groups, backyard/commercial poultry farmers, health department representatives, self-help women groups and media at

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the selected bordering districts in high-risk corridors of Bangladesh, India and Nepal. The workshops also aimed to better understand the poultry sector in the border areas with emphasis on sensitization and capacity building of the government staff and the relevant private entities of the member countries to strengthen the disease investigation and HPAI control and prevention activities in the border areas.

⊕ A total 14 such workshops were planned including six in Bangladesh, seven in India and one in Nepal. Eight workshops in India and Nepal were earlier completed, in which over 800 participants were sensitized on various aspects of HPAI prevention and control measures. The participants were also sensitized on key clinical picture of HPAI and also on key advocacy/risk communication interventions. Out of six planned district workshops in Bangladesh three were held from 9th June to 17th June, 2010 at Chapai Nawabganj, Dinajpur and Lalmonirhat, in which over 400 participants including veterinary/livestock officers were sensitized/oriented on various aspects of HPAI prevention and control. The workshops were organized in collaboration with the Department of Livestock Services, Government of Bangladesh and Avian Influenza unit of FAO Bangladesh. The participants included representatives from local administration, department of health, local media/press, NGOs, Police, Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) and staffs (veterinarians and para-veterinarians) of District Livestock Office of the respective districts.



Participants at Chapai Nawabganj workshop

and he thanked FAO for facilitating the workshop. Mr. Rahul Amin, Chairman of the Nawabganj Municipality requested the donor community to extend financial assistance for improving the biosecurity of the poultry markets operating in the municipal areas. Major Anwar from the BDR stressed the need for community support in the efforts of controlling cross border poultry movement and explained the efforts of BDR.

⊕ **Dinajpur:** The workshop at Dinajpur was held on 13th - 14th June 2010, which was attended by 115 participants



Workshop proceedings at Chapai Nawabganj on 10th June, 2010



Advocacy/risk communication group work at Dinajpur workshop

⊕ **Chapai Nawabganj :** The workshop was held on 9th - 10th June, which was attended by 110 participants on first day and 59 technical participants on second day. The workshop inaugural session was chaired by Dr. Ranjan Kumar Biswas, Deputy Director, DLS, Rajshahi Division. In his address he explained the role of the Department of Livestock Services for control and containment of HPAI. Dr. Biswas also explained the difficulties related to the long border that Bangladesh has with India. He also explained the need to improve the condition of wet markets, which were seen as major point for mixing of birds in the area and also played a role in spreading of the disease. The additional Deputy Commissioner Mr. Nazibul Haq, on behalf of the district administration, expressed well wishes for the success of the workshop and assured all possible support for implementation of any events organized for control and containment of HPAI. Dr. Azizul Islam, District Livestock Officer (DLO) of the host district gave welcome address

on first day and 38 next day. The inaugural session of the workshop was chaired by Mr. Md. Abdul Awal, DLO, Dinajpur. The welcome address was presented by Dr. Riazul Rehman on behalf of district livestock office, while welcoming the participants he thanked the FAO for organizing the workshop in the district. The chairman of the workshop Mr. Awal, explained the purpose of the workshop and expectation from the workshop

⊕ **Lalmonirhat:** On 16th - 17th June 2010, the workshop was held at Lalmonirhat in which 98 people participated on first day and 37 on second day. Dr. Mir Farook Hussain, DLO, Lalmonirhat, chaired the inaugural session of the workshop. The welcome address was presented by the Mr. Nazrul Haq Patwari, Chairman of Upazila municipality. While welcoming the participants he expressed his good wishes for the success of the workshop and thanked the participants for attending the workshop.



Participants at Dinajpur workshop

During the inaugural sessions Dr. Mohinder Oberoi introduced the participants to the background, objectives of the workshop and expectations from them. He explained that the workshop was to be taken as two way learning process for the participants as well as for the organizers. He stressed on the fact that the workshop should be seen as an opportunity to enhance the understanding of the ground realities and updating knowledge with regard to HPAI. As the agenda for all the workshops were same, thus technical sessions in all the workshops started with presentation from Dr. Oberoi on clinical picture of HPAI and discussions on it. He explained that how HPAI could be diagnosed in the field through clinical signs and other general indicators of the disease. The presentation generated tremendous interest, particularly among the non-technical participants and resulted in a lengthy question and answer session and discussions.

This was followed by a presentation from Mr. Jagmeet Uppal on orientation/sensitization of participants related with key areas of advocacy and risk/outbreak communication interventions for HPAI prevention and control. He explained the key areas of strategic communication and the principles of outbreak communication. He emphasized the creation of 'felt need' among the targeted participant groups for communication interventions/messages through sustained advocacy. The participants were given group work to discuss the prevention and control of 'animal to animal' and 'animal to human' transmission and the expected behaviour change through the interventions in prominent technical areas. Mr. Uppal facilitated the groups to understand the 'group work matrix'. The group work was followed by presentation by each group and discussions.

The second day of the workshops was mainly devoted to district presentations on overall status of poultry and its trade in the district; poultry value chain mapping;



Inaugural session at Lalmonirhat workshop

situation of the poultry markets and movements of poultry from one place to another and training on disease investigation with group work. Second day proceedings of the workshop began with presentation by a senior DLO staff member of the respective districts. The presentation included geographical information, poultry population, volumes of poultry production, cost of the various types of poultry in the wholesale and retail markets, production pattern, past HPAI outbreaks information and the various actions taken by the department for preparedness, diagnosis and control of HPAI.

This was followed by a presentation by Dr. Oberoi on poultry value chain mapping and production and marketing systems. He first presented the key findings of poultry value chain mapping across the cross border corridor, poultry market profile and understanding of their linkages in cross border trade. He presented information on the selection of study sites, outbreak sites along Bangladesh/West Bengal (India) border. He also emphasized the need for interventions in key areas for strengthening cross-border emergency preparedness for prevention and control of HPAI.



Participants at Lalmonirhat workshop

This was followed by presentation by Mr. Rajendra Singh on findings of the market profile study conducted by the project in each of the district. The study presented detailed findings on understanding of how poultry markets work in the respective district and how market chains are linked to epidemiologically significant events. The findings were expected to enhance understanding of the participants on disease transmission through poultry movement and management of HPAI.

Dr. Oberoi also made a short presentation on the evolving HPAI situation in South Asia. He made an animated presentation (developed by FAO) of probable sequence of re-assortment events leading to the current Pandemic influenza A-H1N1 virus. Participants were also shown clinical picture and post mortem lesions of HPAI and its differences from Newcastle disease. Following that Dr. Oberoi made a presentation on 'Animal disease investigation and value chain analysis' focusing on epidemiology, surveillance, reporting, etc. He also deliberated on technical guidance for disease investigation for veterinarians. All the presentations were followed by a question and answer session and discussions.

In the afternoon session the technical persons (veterinarians) were divided into three groups to discuss

three poultry disease outbreak scenarios to come up with their step by step line of action and diagnosis. Each group presented the group findings followed by a question and answer session and discussions. Finally, Dr. Oberoi pointed out the gaps which existed in participants' group work presentation and how those could be improved.

- **Field Trips:** Along with the workshops the FAO-ECTAD team members also visited the border areas in the concerned districts, in order to better understand the cross border trade and border scenario. The areas visited included: (i) Sonamasjid, Chapai Nawabganj; (ii) Hilli, and Birol, Dinajpur, and (iii) Mogolhat and Burimarihat in Lalmonirhat district. The field trips were organized by the local livestock development office. During the field trips brief discussions were held with the BDR, Custom staff, local staff of DLO and local poultry traders. The BDR staff informed that they were very careful in stopping illegal movement of produce from either side. These meetings helped the team members to understand the poultry value chain in the area as well as the gamut of cross-border trade.

Participation in Global Framework for progressive control of Transboundary Animal Diseases (GF-TAD) meeting and in the inception workshop in establishment of Regional Support Unit at Kathmandu

- The first meeting of the Highly Pathogenic and Emerging Diseases (HPED) Steering Committee held on 1st July followed by the 4th Regional Steering Committee meeting of GF-TADs for Asia and the Pacific Region on 2nd July at Bangkok. The two-day meeting, organized by FAO and OIE was attended by about 50 participants representing the ASEAN and SAARC Secretariats, EU, WHO, FAO (Rome, Bangkok, Kathmandu), and OIE (Paris, Tokyo, Bangkok) and some other donors (USDA, JICA, AusAid, etc). Dr. Oberoi, Sub-regional Manager, ECTAD Unit (SAARC) attended the meeting. The inaugural session of the meeting was chaired by representative of WHO-SEARO. The opening remarks were made by Ms. Libuse Soukupova (EU), Dr. Bernard Vallat (Director General of the OIE), and Dr. Juan Lubroth (FAO-CVO).
- Ms. Soukupova made a presentation following the opening session on EU funded HPED programme, which will end in December 2013. She said that the main objective of the programme was to address cross border cooperation in animal and human health in SAARC and ASEAN regions. The programme will target all diseases with high potential for crisis, e.g. HPAI, foot and mouth disease (FMD) and peste des petits ruminants (PPR). She spelled out the results and activities of FAO/WHO components to be implemented in ASEAN and SAARC countries. The OIE component will focus on strengthening of veterinary services in Asia particularly establishing regional vaccine bank, Performance of Veterinary Services (PVS) and holding seminars and workshops.
- **Fourth Regional Steering Committee meeting of GF-TADs for Asia-Pacific Region:** The first session of the meeting was chaired by Dr. Lubroth.

- Mr Riaz Hamidullah (SAARC) informed the meeting that in the South Asia the priority will be on trainings, studying epidemiology of FMD and PPR, development of biosecurity model, assisting in livestock census, initiating countries to go in for PVS, ensuring availability of quality vaccines, veterinary education and legislation. The other issues highlighted by him were continuous veterinary education and involvement of other stake holders. He also talked about the outcomes of last (2nd) SAARC CVOs meeting which included adoption of road map on TADs which was basically conceptualization of FAO manuals. He further said that strengthening of laboratories will also be a priority. SAARC will continue to support and advance the CVOs initiative to address the regional animal health problems. The reporting obligations will be through CVOs and countries will be continuously engaged on other elements of GF-TADs through policy and other specific interventions. He informed that at country level there was no inkling of One World-One Health (OWOH) concept therefore national level coordination will be essential to understand and move forward the concept. He also highlighted the issue of varying standards of veterinary education, the role of private veterinarians and NGOs in animal health issues. "SAARC will strive for the sustainability of GF-TADs concept and the ECTAD Unit (SAARC) housed at Kathmandu would play important role" he added.

Media sensitization workshops in West Bengal, India

- Under the cross border project, a series of district level orientation / sensitization workshops for various stakeholders were conducted in the high risk border corridors of Bangladesh, India and Nepal. In those workshops media persons were not adequately represented, therefore ECTAD unit (SAARC) felt that a few sensitization workshops for media (both print and electronic) should be separately organized with an aim to explain to media, a complete understanding of the poultry sector, risks related with HPAI and its outbreaks, sensitivities/issues involved during culling and also gamut



A journalist from the "The Telegraph" newspaper narrating her experience of covering HPAI outbreaks in Birbhum district, West Bengal

of illegal trade in the high-risk corridors across the border(s). In India, both the DADF at the central government level and the concerned West Bengal government departments had approved and agreed to organize the workshops, initially at Siliguri (Darjeeling district) and Berhampore (Murshidabad district).

- The first media orientation / sensitization workshop was held on 6th July, 2010 at Siliguri with participation of

about 50 print and electronic media journalists from Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri and Cooch Behar districts of West Bengal. The second workshop was held on 8th July at Berhampore with participation of about 60 print and electronic media journalists from Murshidabad, Birbhum, Nadia and Malda districts of West Bengal. All the participatory districts had HPAI outbreaks during 2008-2010. The media personnel included local representatives of prominent English national/state dailies as well as prominent vernacular dailies of West Bengal, All India Radio and various local TV news channels.



Journalist at Berhampore (Murshidabad) Media Sensitization workshop

Both the workshops followed similar pattern of presentations and discussions. Dr. Oberoi made presentations on the clinical picture of HPAI, situation of HPAI in South Asia and on One World One Health (OWOH). Mr. Uppal made presentation on advocacy and communication issues for effective reporting of HPAI outbreaks including brief history of past pandemics. Presentations were also made by the representatives of DADF on the policy and action plan of Government of India for the control of HPAI and also by the Director, Animal Resources Development Department (ARDD), Government of West Bengal made a presentation on the response of department to the past HPAI outbreaks in the state and the issues encountered. The ARDD had got conducted a study on the socio-economic impact of HPAI outbreaks on the backyard poultry producers during the HPAI outbreaks in 2008. Professor Maneesh Thakur of Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Kolkata was invited to share the findings of the study with the participants. Media persons from the participating districts were also invited to present their experiences in reporting the outbreaks.



Presentation on clinical picture of HPAI at Media sensitization workshop, Siliguri on 6th July 2010

At both workshops, a few of the journalist were very active and interacted a lot on each of the presentation. During their experience narration, they revealed a lot, indicating gaps on surveillance process and systems as well as socio-political weaknesses regarding the HPAI control processes.

- ⊕ Before the Siliguri workshop, a few dailies including English and vernacular press gave a good coverage (3-4 columns) about the FAO initiative for holding the media sensitization workshops in West Bengal.
- ⊕ Without the active contributions and collaboration of the DADF, Government of India and Department of Information and Cultural Affairs and ARDD of West Bengal Government, it would have been a difficult task to organize these workshops. A similar workshop (separate workshops for print and electronic media) is planned in Kolkata and Agartala (Tripura) in forthcoming months. However, there was a demand for FAO ECTAD Unit (SAARC) from the West Bengal government to facilitate a few more such workshops for journalist of other districts in the state.

Study on livestock marketing systems in Bangladesh

- ⊕ During the first two weeks of July, Mr. Rajendra Singh from FAO ECTAD Unit (SAARC) visited three districts of Bangladesh to collect data and other information for the study on livestock marketing systems in Bangladesh. The districts visited were Comilla, Cox's Bazaar and Jessore. Earlier he collected data for the study from three other identified districts of Chapai Nawabganj, Dinajpur and Lalmonirhat.
- ⊕ During the field visit in the respective districts, Mr. Singh discussed plan and methodology for the study with District Livestock Officials (DLO). He, in consultation with DLOs also identified markets for visits to collect data and to conduct interviews with stakeholders i.e. market operators, wholesalers, traders, dealers and farmers.



Poultry trade at Hathibandha area of the border in Lalmonirhat district

- ⊕ In Comilla district, required information was obtained and data collected from markets bordering India such as Bibir bazaar; Bowar Bazaar; Subarnapur (Dhanpur) Bazaar; Golabari bazaar; Borogaola bazaar; Kanistola bazaar, Lakhipur bazaar. These markets were in Boxanagar/Sonamora border corridor of Tripura State of India. Mr. Singh also collected data from bordering markets in Kasba and Akhaura upazila of adjacent Brahmanbaria district. The other markets visited in the district included Upazila municipal market; Gopinathpur border in the border corridor of Agartala in the Tripura state of India.
- ⊕ In Cox's Bazaar, data collected from Idgah, Teknaf, Shahapirardip corridor markets, Cox's bazaar municipal market and also key stakeholders were interviewed.
- ⊕ In Jessore district, Mr. Singh visited markets in Benapole and Putkhali of Sarsha upazila and bordering area of

Chogachi upazila for collecting data and key stakeholders were interviewed.

⊕ Besides, major activities undertaken during the process of collecting data from the field included :

- Observation of market operations and collection of required secondary and primary data by using the standard data collection tools like interviews, discussions etc. This activity was assisted by Dr. Mahbulul Hoque, National Consultant (NC) from FAO, AI Technical Unit, Bangladesh.



Poultry trade at Burimari border corridor areas in Lalmonirhat district



- Purposive sampling procedures were followed for collecting information based on the prepared check-lists. The stakeholders for interview included selected institutions, local DLS staffs, market operators,

relevant private sector players including traders, food processors, transporters/agents, producer associations, feed suppliers, butchers, farmers etc. Likewise secondary information and publications were collected for review.

Submission of legislative reports

⊕ Consultants engaged in India and Nepal "to review and analyze policies issues, legislative framework and development of legislative instruments to fill key gaps related to cross- border trade and risk management" completed the task and reports were submitted in June. The reports were the output of an extensive consultative process involving consultation with many professionals, stake holders and government officials. The findings of the reports will be discussed at regional level with experts and participation of stakeholders from Bangladesh, India and Nepal. The Bangladesh report is awaited.

⊕ **India:** The report analyzed the policies and regulatory framework available in India. It identified measures for the improvement of existing laws and suggested measures to strengthen cross border activities among Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Myanmar to control possible cross-border spread of HPAI. It described geographical status of India, border control and import regulations, transit control on international border, animal husbandry sector (poultry) in India, national livestock policy, policies focused on poultry sector, production policy in livestock, trade policy in livestock (import-export), informal trade, food safety, Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) standards of India, food security issues in livestock trade, legislative framework, veterinary legislation and animal quarantine services, measures for emergency disease control, legal enforcement power, risk analysis, emergence of avian influenza in India and control measures including future strategies followed by analysis of policy and legislative aspects including recommendations.

⊕ **Nepal:** The study used descriptive, explorative and analytical methods and looked into the various secondary sources to collect the information. Besides, various discussions were held with the responsible persons and the stakeholders.

⊕ The study suggested some amendments in existing agricultural and livestock related laws with issues on laws/rule and regulation implementation and recommendations have been mentioned and some solutions have been suggested in this report.

Upcoming Project Events

- ⊕ District level meetings in Bangladesh on advocacy, disease investigation clinical picture of HPAI and cross-border value chain mapping, in September, 2010
- ⊕ Media sensitization workshops in West Bengal, India
- ⊕ Study on livestock marketing system in India in August-September 2010
- ⊕ Participation in Partners' meeting on 1st - 3rd September 2010, at Bangkok

New Staff:

- ⊕ Dr. Md. Abul Kalam, joined on 13th July, 2010 as International Consultant, Strategic Planning and Control.



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