



Regional Support Unit and ECTAD for South Asia wishes its readers a Very Happy New Year 2011

Disease status in the sub region

- In first two months of 2011 many new highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) outbreaks in poultry were reported at new locations in Bangladesh and India.

Besides HPAI, there were Nipah virus outbreaks reported from north Bangladesh, and India for the first time reported Crimean Congo hemorrhagic fever (CCHF) outbreak.

Resurging HPAI outbreaks in Bangladesh

- In the first two months of the year 2011, the Bangladesh government confirmed 60 new outbreaks of HPAI in poultry in various parts of the country. The first outbreak was reported on 1st January, 2011 at a commercial poultry farm in Narisha Dohar Upazila of Dhaka district. There were only four outbreaks in the month of January, 2011.

However the month of February witnessed as many as 56 outbreaks (including two outbreaks in backyard poultry) in various parts of the country. Many of these were in the region of Dhaka but Khulna, Rangpur, Sylhet and Chittagong regions were also affected. As per the website of FAO technical unit, Bangladesh at <http://www.aitubd.org> so far, a total of 418 HPAI outbreaks have been notified by the government till the end of February 2011. In the year 2009 and 2010 there were only 32 and 31 outbreaks, respectively in Bangladesh.

HPAI outbreak in India

- On 17th February 2011, Government of India reported to the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) the first outbreak of H5 HPAI in the country since June 2010. The report describes one outbreak of HPAI at state duck and poultry farm in Agartala in Tripura state in north-eastern part of India bordering Bangladesh. The outbreak started on 3rd February and after confirmation of H5 strain, authorities culled ducks and chickens in and around the outbreak farm followed by compensation of the owners. The epidemiological investigation and an intensive surveillance campaign was

launched around the 3 Km culling zone. As part of movement control the Tripura government has banned the movement and sale of poultry and eggs from farms in the area.

- Last year (2010) the Government of India submitted the final report to the OIE on 2nd June 2010, indicating that all the outbreaks reported in January 2010 were resolved and the country was HPAI free.

Nipah virus outbreaks in Bangladesh

- In January and February 2011, a total of 33 cases of Nipah virus infection were reported from few districts of northern Bangladesh, where 25 people died. As per website of the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR) of Government of Bangladesh (<http://www.iedcr.org>), in first week of January in Faridpur district 5 Nipah virus positive cases were reported of which 4 died. Later in the last week of January one fatal case each in districts Kurigram, Nilphamari and Lalmonirhat was reported. On 31st January a major outbreak was reported from Hatibandha sub-district of Lalmonirhat district, in which 24 cases were found positive out of which 18 died. On 9th February one more case was found positive in Rangpur district. Laboratory tests were done at IEDCR.

- Several joint teams of IEDCR and International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh (ICDDR,B) are working in the field. These are epidemiology team, qualitative team and veterinarians team.

- In Bangladesh, Nipah virus was first identified as the cause of an outbreak of encephalitis in 2001 in Meherpur district. In the last 10 years the country has witnessed eight more Nipah virus outbreaks, all occurring between December and May.

- Beginning 2006, The IEDCR with ICDDR,B established Nipah virus surveillance in district level Government hospitals of the country where Nipah virus outbreaks have been identified. Presently surveillance system is functioning in 6 hospitals. Outbreak investigations have identified two routes of transmission of Nipah virus from its natural reservoir into humans as drinking of raw date palm sap contaminated with urine or saliva from infected fruit bat and close physical contact with Nipah infected patients. Fruit bats of the family *Pteropodidae* particularly species belonging to the *Pteropus* genus are the natural hosts for Nipah virus. There is no apparent disease in fruit bats.

Crimean-Congo haemorrhagic fever (CCHF) in India

- A woman died of Crimean-Congo haemorrhagic fever (CCHF) in Gujarat state of India in the first week of January 2011. CCHF is a rare disease and it struck first time in India. After the death of the woman, her doctor and a nurse also died in Gujarat. The National Institute of Virology (NIV), Pune (<http://www.niv.co.in>) has confirmed CCHF virus etiology in 6 patients till 24th January 2011.

- NIV, Pune teams, which included animal experts were pressed into action where they combed each and every household falling in the five km radius of Kolat village in Sanand sub-district of Ahmedabad district from where the first case of CCHF originated. Officials from High Security Animal Disease Laboratory, Bhopal also visited

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the village and collected samples from cattle, dogs, cats, rodents and other animals in the village. The entire village was quarantined by the authorities.

- ④ NIV, Pune scientists found virus in high quantities from ticks collected from parts of Ahmedabad. Entomologists had collected 274 ticks from the affected village and Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation area and sent them to NIV, Pune, and High Security Animal Disease Laboratory, Bhopal. NIV scientists found that a particular variety of ticks, *Hyalomma*, which is known to act as vectors of several diseases, was carrying the CCHF virus in high quantities.
- ④ The deadly virus of CCHF, is found in Africa, the Middle East and Eastern Europe, and is normally spread by ticks. As per World Health Organization CCHF is endemic in neighbouring country Pakistan with seasonal rise in cases.

Avian influenza free compartments in Maharashtra state, India

The Department of Animal Husbandry, Dairying and Fisheries, Ministry of Agriculture, Government of India has recognized Hatchery Units and Grand Parent Units of two producers in Maharashtra as separate compartments against avian influenza based on the report of an Expert Group, that the establishments fulfill the principles of compartmentalization prescribed by OIE and also follow all necessary bio-security and bio-safety standards. In addition one Feed Mill has also been recognized as avian influenza free compartment. The Feed Mill has been advised to transport feed to the grand parent and hatchery units in a closed container to avoid any chance of its contamination. This status for both the producers is subject to their continuing to maintain the required bio-security and bio-safety standards and keeping themselves free from avian influenza. The establishments would be inspected on half-yearly basis. The status as distinct compartment against avian influenza is valid for one year from the date of notification, unless terminated earlier. Details can be viewed at the official website <http://www.dahd.nic.in/birdflunew.htm>.

District level workshop in Cox's Bazaar, Bangladesh

- ④ The Cox's Bazaar district orientation/sensitization workshop on strengthening cross-border emergency preparedness and response mechanism for HPAI was held on 2nd and 3rd January 2011 at the district headquarters. It was sixth and the last such workshop in Bangladesh. Earlier five similar workshops were held in districts Chapai Nawabganj, Dinajpur, Lalmonirhat, Jessore and Comilla. The workshop was organized in collaboration with the Department of Livestock Services, Government of 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) posted in the district. The Cox's Bazaar workshop was attended by over 100 participants on the first day and about 50 technical participants on the second day. The workshop was opened by Mr. Md. Giasuddin Ahmed, Deputy Commissioner of the district. During the inaugural session Dr. Mohinder Oberoi, Sub-regional Manager, FAO ECTAD Unit (SAARC), Kathmandu informed the participants about the background, objectives of the workshop and expectations from them. He explained that the workshop should be seen as an opportunity of two way learning process to enhance the understanding of the ground realities and updating knowledge with regard to HPAI.
- ④ The technical session began with presentation by Dr. Oberoi on clinical picture of HPAI and discussions on it. A Bangla version of the presentation was distributed to all the participants.
- ④ HPAI clinical picture session was followed by a presentation

by Mr. Jagmeet Uppal on key areas of advocacy interventions related with risk/outbreak communication 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. He elaborated the need for the social and behaviour change in context with poultry rearing practices as well as related with general hygiene and sanitation. He also explained the factors related with 'constraints' and 'enablers' for behaviour change; importance of Knowledge, Attitude and Practice studies; and various participants group to be targeted for communication and advocacy interventions. 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.

- ④ The second day proceedings of the workshop began with presentation by the District Livestock Officer (DLO), Cox's Bazaar on poultry rearing and market status, movement of poultry and interventions made to control the HPAI in the district.
- ④ This was followed by a presentation by Dr. Oberoi on the key findings of poultry value chain mapping across the high-risk cross-border corridor (Teknaf - Maung Dow of Myanmar), poultry market profile and understanding of their linkages in cross border trade with Myanmar (in context with Cox's Bazaar). He also emphasized the need for interventions in key areas for strengthening cross-border emergency preparedness for prevention and control of HPAI.
- ④ Dr. Oberoi also made a short presentation on the evolving HPAI situation in South Asia. He also presented an animated depiction (developed by FAO) of probable sequence of re-assortment events leading to the emergence of Pandemic influenza A-H1N1 virus. Participants were shown pictorial clinical signs and post mortem lesions of HPAI and its differences from Newcastle disease. Following that he made a presentation focusing on epidemiology, surveillance, reporting, etc. He also deliberated on technical guidance for disease investigation for veterinarians. Later the participants 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 their 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 (disease investigation steps) and how those could be improved.



Participants in a group work at Cox's Bazaar

ⓘ Prior to the district level workshop the ECTAD sub-regional team along with officials of DLS visited Teknaf on the West bank of Naf river bordering Arakan hills of Myanmar. During the field trips brief discussions were held with local DLS staff and one could see lot of cattle which had arrived from Myanmar to Bangladesh. The visiting team members were informed that lot of local variety of chicken from Myanmar also comes illegally to Bangladesh. These meetings helped the team members to understand the poultry value chain in the area as well as the cross-border livestock trade.

FMD- Progressive Control Pathway (PCP) workshops at Dhaka and New Delhi

ⓘ On 5th and 7th January, 2011 two separate workshops were organized at Dhaka and New Delhi on foot and mouth disease (FMD) - Progressive Control Pathway (PCP). The workshops were organized under the "Regional Cooperation Programme on Highly Pathogenic and Emerging Diseases (HPED) in South Asia", which is funded by European Union. About 35 personnel working with Department of Livestock Services (DLS) of the Government of Bangladesh including the Director General, Chief Veterinary Officer (CVO), FAO Chief Technical Advisor and International consultants participated in the workshop in Dhaka. In the New Delhi workshop about 40 senior level animal husbandry officials from various states of India, Department of Animal Husbandry, Dairying and Fisheries (DADF), Government of India, Indian Council of Agriculture Research (ICAR) and from leading laboratory on FMD (Project Directorate (PD)-FMD, Mukteswar) participated. The New Delhi workshop was also attended by the Joint Secretary (Livestock Health), Department of Animal Husbandry, Dairying and Fisheries, Government of India and Animal Husbandry Commissioner to Government of India. In addition Dr Subhash Morzaria, Regional Manager, ECTAD-RAP, FAO Chief Technical Advisor in India and National Consultant also participated.

ⓘ In Bangladesh Dr. Md. Abdul Baqi, the Ex-Director Animal Health and CVO, DLS made a presentation on the FMD status in the country, including the outbreaks, virus types and vaccination status and availability of vaccines for about 48 million population of animals in the country. Dr Abul Kalam, FAO National Consultant made a presentation on the role of FAO in assisting Government of Bangladesh towards control of FMD.

ⓘ In New Delhi the DADF, PD-FMD and Indian Veterinary Research Institute (IVRI), Bangaluru scientists made presentations on the National FMD Control Programme, status of FMD in India and FMD vaccines, respectively. Systematic



Participants at FMD-PCP workshop in New Delhi

FMD control programme (FMD-CP) in the country started in 1974 and from 54 districts the FMD-CP is now covering 221 districts of the country where many rounds of vaccination have been completed. On an average 27-28 million vaccinations are done in each round. From 12th plan period of the country (starting from 2012-13) all the districts in India will be covered under FMD-CP. The presentation explained the modalities of monitoring the pre and post vaccination immune response from the selected villages. Sample testing is done under the aegis of PD-FMD, Mukteswar. The presentation from PD-FMD (SAARC Regional Leading Diagnostic Laboratory) talked about FMD research history and present status in India, which started in the year 1929. The presentation by Indian Veterinary Research Institute, Bangaluru narrated the FMD vaccine development research in India. According to presentation currently India has capacity to produce about 250 Million trivalent doses of vaccine which will be doubled by the year 2015.

ⓘ During both workshops Dr. Mohinder Oberoi, Manager Sub-regional ECTAD and Coordinator - Regional Support Unit (SAARC) explained the key elements of the FMD-PCP, including progression and monitoring the achievements at 0-5 stages of PCP to declare the country free from FMD by the year 2020. He also explained the key outcomes at the end of every stage in the PCP. He informed the participants at both workshops that under the PCP it is estimated that Bangladesh may be currently at stage-1 as many parameters to reach the next stage have either partially been done or not been adhered to, but India may be at stage 2, however proper documentation needs to be done.

High level regional consultation on the control of priority transboundary animal and other emerging infectious diseases in South Asia, Bangkok, 13-14 January 2011

ⓘ In 2010, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the European Union (EU) signed an agreement to launch the "Regional Cooperation Programme on Highly Pathogenic and Emerging Diseases (HPED) in South Asia" under the umbrella of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation



Dr Md A Baqi, Ex-CVO of Bangladesh making presentation at FMD-PCP workshop in Dhaka

(SAARC). The overall objective of the programme is to contribute to the strengthening and empowerment of SAARC member states in their ability to prevent, control and eradicate HPEDs including highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) and other priority transboundary animal diseases (TADs), through improved veterinary and public health services and inter-sectoral collaboration on a regional basis.

- ④ Taking forward the mandate to strengthen regional cooperation a high level consultation was held on 13th and 14th January 2011 in Bangkok, Thailand. The meeting was participated by high level policy and technical officials from SAARC Member States.
- ④ The objectives of the high level consultation were to:
 - a) Establish mechanisms for regional cooperation and collaboration to enhance regional dialogue, promote sharing of information, develop regional policies and harmonize technical issues related to surveillance, diagnosis and epidemiology for improved prevention and control of highly pathogenic emerging diseases (HPEDs).
 - b) Share current status of HPEDs, their prevention and control strategies in the SAARC countries, identify policy and technical issues of common significance and develop specific plans for collaboration.
 - c) Identify mechanisms for forming regional surveillance and diagnosis networks.
 - d) Develop tools for technical cooperation in emergency preparedness and disease control including characterizing

risks associated with the livestock farming sector, animal movement and market chains.

- e) Develop platforms for sharing information on disease investigation (including laboratory information), prevention and control of HPEDs.
- ④ Dr Juan Lubroth, Chief Animal Health Service and Chief Veterinary Officer (CVO), FAO welcomed the delegates and talked about the mandate of the Animal Health Service within FAO's Department of Animal Production and Health. The Regional Manager, FAO ECTAD-RAP discussed the background of the project in context with the Global Framework for the Progressive Control of Transboundary Animal Diseases (GF-TADs).
- ④ The FAO/CVO made a presentation on the progressive control pathway for FMD and touched upon the West Eurasia progress of control pathway, especially FAO's approach to Global FMD risk reduction. He emphasised on the holistic approaches which allow for targeted interventions that are more cost effective.
- ④ Country presentations were made by delegates from Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka highlighting the status of priority TADs (FMD, PPR, HPAI). The Southeast Asia and China FMD (SEACFMD) programme was presented by the Regional Coordinator, OIE Sub-Regional Representative for SE Asia, Bangkok, Thailand. The Sub-regional ECTAD Manager presented the outcome of FMD-PCP workshops recently held in Bangladesh, India and Nepal. After all the presentations the participants were engaged in open discussion



Participants of high level consultation in Bangkok

to express their views on the progressive control pathways for TADs control in the SAARC countries. The main points picked up from the open discussion were framed in the form of recommendations. All the delegates agreed to use the substantive recommendations developed as a basis for seeking greater political support from their Governments.

The High Level Regional Consultation made following recommendations:-

- I. The Regional Support Unit (RSU) under SAARC umbrella establishes the epidemiology and laboratory networks to address the threat of HPEDs.
- II. From a regional perspective, the Regional Epidemiology Centre (REC) facilitates, through a consultative process, harmonization of disease control approaches including risk-based surveillance and outbreak investigation that are technically acceptable, economical, practical and sustainable.
- III. The REC promotes the Countries to map livestock production systems and improve understanding of markets, value chains and animal movement patterns in the subregion.
- IV. The REC promotes the Countries to establish a animal disease reporting system or may continue with the existing disease information systems that support safe, confidential and rapid sharing of information about diseases and the causative agents at bilateral, multilateral, or sub-regional levels.
- V. Regional workshops are organized to enhance laboratory capacity, harmonize minimum standards for national laboratories, and agree on common diagnostic methods based on OIE standards for establishing quality assurance methods and proficiency testing programs.
- VI. The regional workshops should also address issues such as biosecurity, risk communication, rapid response at borders, animal movement management and quarantine, trace back and forward.
- VII. The RSU promotes the establishment of regional and national networks of leading diagnostic laboratories for HPEDs (FMD, PPR, HPAI) and other priority diseases (e.g. Brucellosis) including identifying their functions.
- VIII. The leading laboratories having the capability for molecular characterization of the viruses are encouraged to increase capacity in order to assist other countries in the diagnosis and characterization of viruses conforming to protocols developed by expert groups such as, FAO/OIE Working Group on FMD and OIE/FAO Network of Expertise on Animal Influenza (OFFLU), and also promote sharing of virus sequence information through the laboratory networks.
- IX. In preparedness planning, Countries establish mechanisms and procedures to dispatch and receive diagnostic samples and biological.
- X. The RSU promotes the Countries to embark upon a common Progressive Control Pathway (PCP) for FMD and other priority diseases, and develop regional roadmaps through technical support from international partners under the GF-TADs mechanism.
- XI. The RSU promotes the Countries to develop appropriate legislative frameworks to support PCP at country and regional levels.
- XII. Countries build strategic alliances with the media to enhance communication in support of the sub-regional and national programmes and promote awareness among the general public about the risk of livestock and bird movement, including customary or traditional exchange of animals, in the spread of HPEDs.

- XIII. Given significant negative socio-economic impact of PPR, and the fact that the available vaccine provides life long immunity, South Asia under the umbrella of GF-TADs and SAARC take a lead in initiating a regional consultation for launching the eradication programme.
- XIV. The RSU promotes the exchange of visits of officials and technical personnel in order to share experiences related to animal disease control in the subregion.
- XV. A South Asia FMD Scientific Conference may be organized in India with participation of international community at the end of 2011.

Media sensitization workshops in Nepal and Bangladesh, February 2011

ⓘ In 2010, following a series of district level orientation /sensitization workshops for various stakeholders conducted in the high-risk cross-border corridors of Bangladesh, India and Nepal a few sensitization workshops for media (both print and electronic) were planned with an aim to explain to media, the risks related with HPAI and its outbreaks, sensitivities/issues involved during culling and also gamut of illegal trade in the high-risk corridors across the border(s). Two such workshops were organized in July, 2010 at Siliguri (Darjeeling district) and Berhampore (Murshidabad district) of West Bengal, India. A similar workshop (separately for print and electronic media) was organized in Kolkata on 6th and 7th December 2010. The events were reported earlier in vol. 8 and vol. 10 of Information Bulletin.

ⓘ In the month of February, 2011 two such workshops were organised at Kathmandu (11th February) and Dhaka (15th February) for the journalists of Nepal and Bangladesh, respectively. In Nepal about 50 journalists and around 20 officials from DLS and Department of Information attended the day long workshop. In Dhaka 46 journalists along with about 40 officials from DLS, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Information attended the workshop. The Dhaka workshop was inaugurated by Mr. Abdul



Media workshop in Kathmandu



Minister of Fisheries and Livestock, Bangladesh, Mr. Abdul Latif Biswas (3rd from right) speaking at the media workshop in Dhaka

Latif Biswas, Minister for Fisheries and Livestock. The Secretary and Joint Secretary of the ministry along with Director General Livestock Services and Chief Veterinary Officer also attended the workshop. Mr. Ad Spijkers, FAOR Bangladesh and Dr. Mat Yamage, Chief Technical Adviser, Avian Influenza Technical Unit FAO were also present during the inaugural session of the workshop.

- At both the places presentations were also made on behalf of the respective government on activities undertaken for prevention and control of HPAI.

EC sponsored technical meeting on HPED Networking, 18-19 January 2011, Bangkok

In connection with the Regional Strategy for Asia 2007-2013 of EC, a new regional programme was launched in December 2010, 'Regional cooperation programme on highly pathogenic and emerging and re-emerging diseases (HPED) in Asia'. The programme aims at the prevention of HPED in a framework of (i) regional integration through the reinforcement of capacities of the 2 regional communities (ASEAN & SAARC) and (ii) inter-sectoral Animal Health-Human Health collaboration initiated during the Avian/animal and Human Influenza (AHI) crisis, at various levels (international, regional, national). The programme consists of three projects implemented by international organizations, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) and the World Health Organization (WHO).

The 'HPED Networking Event: Linking the actors of the EU-Asia Regional One Health Programme' was an initiative of EU to link together the actors and stakeholders of the newly launched HPED programme in Asia involving the ASEAN and SAARC Member States, among other players. The event was organized and conducted through a number of presentations by different key actors of the programme. The sessions comprised of information and experience sharing, group discussions followed by plenary and concluding remarks. The participants in three groups engaged in exhaustive brain storming sessions on three vital areas i.e., (i) upgrading the

national basis in animal and human health in order to reach a common regional platform for coordination; (ii) coordinating inside ASEAN and SAARC and in between; and (iii) One health: boosting a cross-sectoral collaboration between animal, human health and other sectors that can impact health. Each of the groups upon their respective time frames furnished to the meeting as to (i) where they want to be by the end of the current project tenure 2013 (the vision); and (ii) the challenges and how to address the challenges in attaining the vision. The Networking meeting brought together about 50 national project focal points (1 person per project per country), representatives from regional organizations and representatives of the implementing organizations (FAO, OIE, WHO).

Annual meeting of Emergency Centre for Transboundary Animal Diseases (ECTAD), Regional Office for the Asia and Pacific (RAP), 22-24 February 2011

The overarching objective of the ECTAD Annual Meeting of RAP was to have a fresh look at the activities undertaken during the past years, impacts made through ECTAD activities in the region and to brainstorm in establishing a clear roadmap of ECTAD activities for the next year(s) based on five identified themes. The five themes, 1) surveillance; 2) vaccination; 3) managing HPAI and duck farming system; 4) ONE HEALTH implementation; and 5) resource mobilization and other operational issues, were identified through a consultative process before the meeting. The five thematic groups with the assigned leaders/coordinator from RAP were responsible to summarize the key issues being discussed during the breakout-sessions of the groups. The thematic team leaders were also tasked to prepare the abstracts for each of their themes.

Dr. Subhash Morzaria, Manager, ECTAD-RAP during the opening remarks and introduction to the meeting, reiterated to recently established credibility of the ECTAD in the region. He also briefed the meeting on the prospect that may emerge in near future and also reminded on the challenges faced. A summary of the results and impacts made through the implementation of different ECTAD project activities in the region was presented during the meeting.

While the meeting had quite focused themes to reap categorical recommendations, it also was filled in with presentation/discussion on important burning issues, such as, risk-based surveillance for AI control along the poultry market chain in South China: the value of social network analysis; experience from Vietnam on integrated risk management approach of HPAI control; communication strategy of ECTAD-RAP: looking into future; and reporting on the results of the public private partnership (PPP) launching workshop.

Upcoming Events

- Consultation for establishing a network of Regional Leading Diagnostic Laboratories in South Asia, Kathmandu, 2nd-4th March 2011
- Media sensitization workshop in Agartala (Tripura), India, 7th March 2011
- FMD- Progressive Control Pathway (PCP) workshops, Bhutan and Sri Lanka, April 2011
- Foot and Mouth Disease Laboratory Training at SAARC Regional Leading Diagnostic Laboratory on FMD, India, 2nd-7th May 2011

