

A website of the Regional Support Unit (RSU) for SAARC countries has been launched. The website is established through the EU funded "Regional cooperation programme on highly pathogenic and emerging diseases (HPED) for South Asia". The webpage can be accessed at <http://www.saarc-rsu-hped.org>. The website would provide a digital platform to obtain information on the

priority and emerging diseases, outbreak alerts, weekly animal disease E-information, bi-monthly information bulletins, workshop reports, and other important links. The website is expected to fulfill the much needed information sharing platform for professionals, public administrators, researchers, media, students and others related to HPED issues.

Major diseases situation in the Sub-region

During the period under report renewed outbreaks of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) were recorded from the hot-spot countries of Indo-Gangetic plains and others, viz. Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal. No other significant disease event was reported during Septemebr-October 2012.

Bangladesh

About 4,000 chickens were culled at a poultry farm at Pabur village in Kapasia Upazila, Gazipur District, Dhaka Division on 23 October 2012 after they were found to be affected by H5N1 HPAI virus. Sources at the district livestock office said about 4 000 chickens were culled and buried to contain the spread of disease within 12 hours of confirmation of the disease. The outbreak has been reported to OIE at the time of going to press (www.oie.int). The last outbreak of H5N1 HPAI in Bangladesh was reported in April 2012 in Dhaka Division.

Bhutan

An outbreak of H5N1 HPAI was recorded in backyard free-ranging chickens in Rinchending village falling under Phuentsholing sub- district of Chhukha district on 2 October 2012. The outbreak resulted in mortality of 24 birds and 29 birds were destroyed. The affected village is located beside the Thimphu-Phuentsholing highway about 5 kilometers

from Phuentsholing town. It was suspected that the outbreak occurred due to illegal movement of birds and introduction of new birds in the flock. The disease was confirmed through detection of H5N1 HPAI virus by rRT-PCR at the National Veterinary Laboratory in the country on 16 October when two carcasses were subjected to tests. Later, on 19 October the presence of H5N1 HPAI virus was also confirmed by the OIE Reference Laboratory on Avian Influenza, Bhopal, India. The last series of outbreaks in Bhutan were reported in March 2012 (*Source: www.oie.int*). Most of the outbreaks in Bhutan have occurred in the districts near the international border with India.

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India

An outbreak of H5N1 HPAI was reported in a poultry farm in the Turkey Unit of Central Poultry Development Organization (CPDO), Hessarghatta, Bangalore Urban, Karnataka. The outbreak started on 12 October with a total of 3 481 turkeys were affected out of a susceptible population of 4 265. All the affected birds died and the remaining population was destroyed. Few days later on 29 October mortality in the chicken and duck unit of CPDO was also confirmed due to H5N1 HPAI virus and the remaining birds (chickens, ducks, emus) were culled, eggs and feed destroyed to stop further spread of the virus. Epidemiological investigation is ongoing. An intensive surveillance campaign has been launched in 10 km radius zone of the epicentre. The current outbreak in India has been recorded at a new geographical location after the disease remained confined to the eastern Indian states (Assam, Manipur, Odisha, Sikkim, Tripura and West Bengal) for last 5 years (2007 to 2012). The last H5N1 HPAI was reported in April 2012 in Tripura state. (Source: www.oie.int and www.dahd.nic.in)

Nepal

A H5N1 HPAI outbreak was reported to OIE from Nepal on 14 October 2012. The outbreak first started on 27 August 2012 in a commercial layer farm rearing dual purpose breed of different age groups in village Sanchal of Lalitpur district, Bagmati zone. All the 2 500 birds at the epicenter died due to HPAI which was confirmed on 3 September 2012 by the National Laboratory by PCR and on 21 September 2012 by the Australian Animal Health Laboratory, Geelong, Australia by PCR and haemagglutination inhibition test. After the disposal of the dead birds the farm premises were cleaned, disinfected and sealed. Post-operative surveillance activities were intensively carried out throughout the country. The outbreak at the time of reporting to OIE on 14 October 2012 was considered as resolved. (Source: www.oie.int)

RSU Workshops and Meetings

Training workshop on harmonisation of diagnostic procedures for poultry diseases, at the Regional Leading Diagnostic Laboratory on HPAI [National Reference Laboratory for Poultry Diseases (NRLPD)], 4-5 September 2012, Islamabad, Pakistan

A total of 12 participants from the government and private poultry diagnostic laboratories in Pakistan registered for this training on the harmonisation of diagnostic procedures.

The objective of this workshop was to provide hands-on training to the laboratory technicians on harmonised diagnostic procedures, who are working in poultry diagnostic laboratories in the public and private sectors. The participants were given presentations on the diagnostic procedures like haemagglutination (HA), haemagglutination inhibition (HAI), agar gel precipitation tests (AGPT) and ELISA for detecting viruses and/or serum antibody titres. In the diagnostic laboratory the participants were first briefed and then provided hands-on training on the usage of equipment, preparation of reagents, disposal of consumables, biosafety of the workers, and handling of test reagents, calculation of HA units and geometric mean titers and interpretation of recorded results obtained in HA, HI, and AGP Tests and ELISA. Each participant was provided an opportunity to perform the test by themselves.

Regional Training on Laboratory Diagnosis on peste des petits ruminants (PPR) at Regional Leading Diagnostic Laboratory (RLDL) on PPR, Bangladesh Agricultural Research Institute (BLRI), 7-12 October 2012, Dhaka, Bangladesh

The Regional Training was organized by the Food and Agriculture Organization of United Nations (FAO) under European Union (EU) funded regional project entitled "Regional Cooperation Programme on Highly Pathogenic and Emerging Diseases (HPED) in South Asia". Dr Mandava Venkata Subba Rao, Laboratory Coordinator, RSU coordinated the training programme.

The aim of the training was to train staff of National Laboratories of the SAARC member countries in laboratory



Mr Md. Abdul Latif Biswas, the Hon'ble Minister for Fisheries and Livestock, Bangladesh and other dignitaries sitting (third from the left) on the dais during the inaugural session

techniques for the diagnosis of PPR. The specific objective was to harmonise procedures and protocols for PPR diagnosis in the region.

The training was imparted on the diagnostic technologies and was a mix of theory and the laboratory exercises. The laboratory exercises included the technologies for antibody detection (C-ELISA) virus detection (IC-ELISA) and RT PCR as per the OIE protocols. The feedback from the participants was taken for evaluation of the training programme.

The training programme was inaugurated by Mr Md. Abdul Latif Biswas, the Hon'ble Minister for Fisheries and Livestock, Bangladesh. The Bangladesh EU Delegation was represented by Ms Libuse Soukupova at the inaugural session. A total of 19 participants representing the member states of the SAARC countries attended the training. The Bangladesh FAO-ECTAD team led by Dr Mat Yamage, Team Leader participated in the programme while resource persons from Bangladesh Agricultural University, Mymensingh, Chittagong Veterinary and Animal Sciences University, Chittagong and ICDDR,B, Dhaka contributed to the training programme.



Participants during laboratory exercises at RLDL (PPR), in Dhaka, Bangladesh

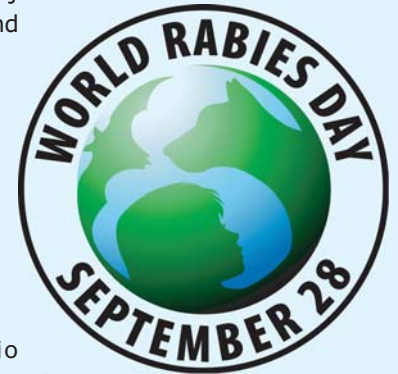
Proficiency Testing of National FMD Laboratories

The proficiency testing (PT) of National FMD laboratories of Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal and Sri Lanka was launched in September 2012 following the agreement from the Chief Veterinary Officers of the concerned countries. Regional Leading Diagnostic Laboratory (RLDL) on FMD, Mukteswar, India is leading the PT programme. The test panels have been prepared and sent to countries.

World Rabies Day observed in Bhutan

World Rabies Day (WRD) in Bhutan was organized on 28 September 2012, jointly by the Department of Livestock and the Department of Public Health and was supported by funds from EU-HPED project.

The local public health and animal health officials conducted half day awareness campaign on rabies to the general public of 28 sub-districts that are located in the rabies risk areas in Bhutan; conducted live panel discussion on rabies (TV) and radio program on WRD and free anti-rabies vaccination of all dogs and cats. At this occasion "One Health Initiative Project" on enhancing rabies control program in the country was also launched.



Workshop on EMPRES-i Asia Information System, 11-13 September 2012, Bangkok, Thailand

A training on EMPRES-i Global and EMPRES-i Asia information systems was organized by the Regional ECTAD, FAO-RAP, Bangkok from 11-13 September 2012 with the overall objective of promoting the use of the systems through providing hands-on training on the functions and application of the systems. It was also to improve the disease data



Dr Subhash Morzaria, Regional Manager, ECTAD-RAP alongwith participants attending EMPRES-i Asia Information System workshop in Bangkok, Thailand

content and quality by way of new partnerships for data sharing and disease outbreak reporting.

Dr Caryl Lockhart from FAO HQ, Rome facilitated the training along with Dr Tum Sothyra from RSU, ECTAD-RAP. A total of 22 officials participated representing FAO and national Governments from the Asia Pacific region. Participants from Bangladesh, Bhutan and Maldives from the SAARC region attended the training programme. Dr Pasang Tshering and Dr Ravi Dissanayake from REC/RSU, FAO Kathmandu participated as resource persons.

The main focus of the training was on disease event, surveillance and data analysis modules of the two systems. EMPRES-i Asia's spatial and temporal analysis tools were also taught. Training methodology included lectures followed by practical sessions and group work. Hands on training were provided on the use of Event Mobile Application (EMA) for reporting events and also accessing disease information.

Workshops and Meetings Attended by RSU staff

USAID/Avian Influenza (AI) consultation Workshop, 14 September 2012, Kathmandu

The team members of RSU attended USAID/AI consultation workshop held on 14 September 2012. The purpose of the workshop was to review progress and achievements of the AI project during 2006-2012. The technical assistance project to strengthen emergency preparedness for HPAI project has been jointly implemented in Nepal by the Department of Livestock Services and FAO's Emergency Centre for Transboundary Animal Diseases from October 2006.

Dr Khadak Singh Bisht, Assistant Coordinator, RSU gave a presentation on development and outcome of targeted active surveillance in Nepal.

USAID Partners' Meeting, 27-28 September 2012, Bangkok

Team members of ECTAD-Nepal, Dr Mohinder Oberoi and Dr Tony Williams participated in USAID Regional partners' meeting in Bangkok during 27-28 September 2012.

During the meeting, updates on Nepal H5N1 situation including clades of virus in outbreaks were discussed. The epidemiology capacity in the South Asia region was summarised.

Expert Consultation on Transboundary Diseases of Agricultural Importance in Asia, 10-12 October 2012, New Delhi

The three-day Expert Consultation was jointly organised by Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), India and Asia Pacific Association of Agricultural Research Institutions (APAARI) with the major objective to prioritise areas of collaboration and partnerships for managing transboundary diseases in the region. Around 150 delegates and experts from FAO, WHO, ICAR, APAARI, CG Centers, OIE and other national and international organizations participated in the event. From FAO, Dr Subhash Morzaria and Dr Mohinder Oberoi participated as resource persons in the consultation meeting.

RSU News

Dr David M. Castellan, Senior Veterinary Epidemiologist, Emergency Center for Transboundary Animal Diseases (ECTAD), FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (FAO-RAP), Bangkok visited RSU on 16-17 September 2012 and discussed about forthcoming trainings related to FETPV and capacity building in the region.

Dr Mandava Venkata Subba Rao, Laboratory Coordinator was honored as Fellow of Indian Association of Veterinary Microbiologists, Immunologists and Specialists in infectious Diseases for his significant contributions for the advancement of Veterinary Microbiology in Chennai, India on 7 September 2012.

New Staff

Dr Md. Abul Kalam, joined RSU on 3 September 2012, as Animal Health Officer. Prior to joining RSU, Dr Kalam was leading National Epidemiology Unit, Department of Livestock Services, Dhaka under Government of the Peoples'



Republic of Bangladesh. Dr Kalam, a veterinarian, obtained his Masters Degree from Bangladesh Agricultural University, Mymensingh. He has 25 years experience in various capacities in the Department of Livestock Services. He worked for about 5 years as National Consultant in the Avian Influenza Technical Unit of FAO Bangladesh.

SAARC Regional Leading Diagnostic Laboratories

Peste des petits ruminants (PPR) laboratory in Bangladesh

The Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh has identified the Virology Laboratory of Bangladesh Livestock Research Institute, Savar, Dhaka as the SAARC Regional Leading Diagnostic Laboratory for PPR. The contact details of the laboratory are, Tel: +88-02-7791690, Fax: +88-02-7791675, Email: ppbrlrip@yahoo.com.

Highly pathogenic avian influenza laboratory in Pakistan

The Government of Pakistan has identified the National Reference Laboratory for Poultry Diseases (NRLPD) at National Agricultural Research Centre, Islamabad as the SAARC Regional Leading Diagnostic Laboratory for avian influenza. The laboratory focal person identified is Dr Khalid Naeem, Chief Scientific Officer and Head of NRLPD. The contact details of the laboratory are, Tel +92-51-9255536, Fax: +92-51-9255420, Email: nrlpd@comsats.net.pk.

Foot and mouth disease laboratory in India

The Government of India has identified Project Directorate on Foot and Mouth Disease, Mukteswar, Uttakhand state as the SAARC Regional Leading Diagnostic Laboratory for FMD. The laboratory focal person identified is Dr B Pattnaik, Project Director. The contact details of the laboratory are, Tel +91-5942-286004, Fax +91-5942-286307, Email: pdfmd111@gmail.com.

OIE Reference Laboratory for Avian Influenza in the SAARC Region

The High Security Animal Disease Laboratory (HSADL), Bhopal is working as OIE Reference Laboratory for avian influenza. The contact details for the laboratory are Joint Director, High Security Animal Disease Laboratory, Indian Veterinary Research Institute, Anandnagar, Bhopal-462 021, Madhya Pradesh (INDIA), Tel: +91-755-2759204, Fax: +91-755-2758842. More details can be found at <http://hsadl.nic.in>.

Upcoming events

- a) Regional training on vaccine matching for analysing the homology of field isolates/strains in relation to the in-use vaccine strain(s) of foot and mouth disease, 29 October-07 November 2012, Mukteswar, India
- b) Regional FETPV Training Programme, 26 November-14 December 2012, Kathmandu, Nepal
- c) Training course on Disease Risk Analysis and Management, 7-11 January 2013, Kathmandu, Nepal
- d) Laboratory training on harmonisation of diagnostic protocols for detection of highly pathogenic avian influenza and Newcastle disease viruses, 14-18 January 2013, Islamabad, Pakistan
- e) 2nd Laboratory Directors' Networking Meeting, 11-12 February 2013, Islamabad, Pakistan



Eliminating Animal Health Risks

Regional Cooperation Programme on Highly Pathogenic and Emerging Diseases (HPEDs) in South Asia

PREVENT RABIES
CARE FOR YOUR DOG AND IT WILL TAKE CARE OF YOU



Wash Bite Wounds Immediately

Seek Immediate Medical Care

Report Dog Bites To Authorities

Have your Dog Vaccinated

WHAT TO DO WHEN BITTEN BY AN ANIMAL ?

- 1. Immediately run water on the wound for a good 15 minutes after washing it thoroughly with soap or hydrogen peroxide. This will remove as much saliva (hence virus) as possible from the wound and will greatly decrease chances of infection (do not clean the wound with alcohol).
- 2. Seek medical treatment or go to hospital without delay for appropriate medical attention and post-exposure vaccination if required.
- 3. Any suspected rabid animal should be confined and put under veterinary observation according to the country's legislation.

Photo Courtesy: Animal Nepal



Regional Support Unit and Emergency Centre for Transboundary Animal Diseases for South Asia
FAO, Kathmandu, Nepal

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