

**Conclusions and Recommendations of the OIE Regional Meeting on Strengthening Animal Health
Information Networking under the OIE/Japan Trust Fund Project for HPAI control in Asia
Tokyo, Japan, 13 November 2008**

Considering that

1. The situation of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) caused by various strains of H5N1 sub-type, has improved. However, the disease still remains significant threat and resurgent and cases are still reported in the Asian region. In some countries, HPAI is endemic and human cases have also been reported.
2. Under these conditions, strengthening disease surveillance and control are crucial for reducing animal and human health risks, economic losses and to sustain agricultural livestock development.
3. Activities of animal health improvement are of growing importance, and international and regional alliance is essential for achieving important functions of animal disease control and prevention, especially emerging/transboundary animal diseases including zoonoses.
4. The new OIE/Japan Trust Fund (JTF) Project for HPAI control started in April 2008 for 5 years, together with the second phase of the OIE/Japan Special Trust Fund (JSTF) Project on laboratory capacity building and procurement of laboratory diagnostic equipment and materials.
5. The meeting addressed one component of the new Project; namely Strengthening Animal Health Information Networking for animal disease surveillance and control, in particular for further enhancing HPAI control in Asia.

The meeting recommends that

1. Information networking should be improved both at farm/field and national levels, with the support by legislation and an incentive scheme such as the compensation mechanism, which include effective communication by Veterinary Services with producers for encouraging notification of suspected and diseased cases from producers to local veterinary authorities and then timely notification from local veterinary authorities to central government authorities.

2. Knowledge on animal health should be further provided by Veterinary Services more to the farmers level in order to promote awareness of animal diseases and an incentive to report animal disease cases by producers to local animal health authorities.
3. Deployment of contact points at a village or district level should be considered to support or strengthen activities of HPAI control at a local level, which promotes effective notification to the national central authorities.
4. Provision of knowledge on animal health to field veterinarians, including those in the private sector, and para-professionals should be continued so that they can assist and guide producers on disease notification more efficiently.
5. Standardized information systems and operational procedures based on international standards and guidelines should be harmonized for the effective notification from local authorities to national central veterinary authorities.
6. Human resources development including training should be strengthened for securing qualified staff of animal health including notification of disease occurrences, and legislation and its efficient enforcement as well as promoting laboratory diagnostic/surveillance and monitoring capacity at local and national levels.
7. More timely access to information of HPAI outbreaks including those countries where the disease has become endemic should be considered.
8. Information networking should be further strengthened at the Regional level, as HPAI is one of the important emerging/transboundary animal diseases and a regional approach is required to effectively control the disease.
9. International and regional cooperation should be strengthened to share information on animal diseases and surveillance through networking.
10. The component of Strengthening Animal Health Information Networking under the OIE/JTF Project for control of HPAI in Asia should be continued through annual meetings to support regional animal health networking for information exchange and to share experiences of legislation and its enforcement.