

## **Conclusions and Recommendations**

### **The 5<sup>th</sup> OIE Regional Meeting on Strengthening Animal Health Information Networking for HPAI Control and Prevention in Asia**

**- in collaboration with Department of Animal Health of Vietnam -  
(Hanoi, Vietnam, 2-3 October 2012)**

The meeting recognized/reaffirmed that:

1. Since the epidemic of H5N1 HPAI in Southeast Asia started in late 2003, the disease has spread widely and is still entrenched in many areas in Asia causing a serious damage to the animal and public health sectors, whereas the disease situation is diverse in the region and different from country to country.
2. Such differences among OIE Members are attributed to a number of factors including: 1) geographical location of countries, 2) socio-economic and cultural factors, 3) rural development, 4) poultry production and marketing systems, 5) movement of poultry and poultry products at national and international levels, and 6) poultry population and density. Thus, there is no common and universal control strategy that is applicable to and works for every single country. It should be determined based on the above mentioned factors and the competency of veterinary services in a country.
3. Since the H5N1 HPAI epizootic hit Southeast Asia in late 2003, there have been a number of efforts and initiatives implemented by countries concerned, international and regional organizations, and donor agencies to confine the disease and to improve the H5N1 HPAI situation of control strategies including disease control measures and diagnostic capacities in the region.
4. As a consequence, the number of animal and human cases has declined; meanwhile early warning and early detection systems, surveillance systems and diagnostic capacities of the disease have improved and been strengthened drastically in our region.
5. Such progress has allowed us to gain more accurate and precise insights into the HPAI H5N1 situation, epidemiology, transmission dynamics of the disease. However, despite the efforts made over the last eight years, the H5N1 HPAI virus is still circulating in the region.
6. The main factors which hamper the progress toward the steady and tangible mitigation

7. In countries where HPAI H5N1 is persistent and sporadic, live poultry markets play a key role in amplifying the virus, disseminating it across poultry market chains and maintaining its circulation in ecosystems.  
Meanwhile, duck population is also one of the key elements in promoting the persistence, amplification and the circulation of the HPAI H5N1 virus in ecosystems.
8. Surveillance programme provides valuable insights to better understand: 1) epidemiology of the H5N1 virus infection, 2) mechanisms of the virus circulation and transmission amongst poultry and market systems, and 3) ecology, evolution and source of the virus. Meanwhile, the goal of all surveillance programmes is to obtain information and data for improving the control and prevention of the disease, which should be followed.
9. Vaccination has been expected to play an important role to control and mitigate the risk of HPAI H5N1 in the region. Vaccination may be a valuable tool for controlling and preventing HPAI H5N1 if used appropriately and strategically. Vaccine has to be used always along with other control measures including stamping-out and surveillance programme. Inappropriate use of vaccine may complicate the disease situation and cause further spread of the disease.
10. The ASEAN has taken the initiative and made progress to develop the roadmap to eradicate HPAI H5 virus infection in Southeast Asia by 2020, based on which each member state is working on the alignment of its national strategic plan in order to achieve the goal of the roadmap.
11. The progressive Control Pathway (PCP) for FMD developed by the FAO and the OIE is an important tool to control FMD, which should be a useful and applicable tool in controlling HPAI H5N1 in combination of Performance of Veterinary Services (PVS) provided by the OIE.

Considering the above points, the meeting therefore recommends the following course of action:

1. The OIE, the FAO, other technical partners and Members should continue to tap and support existing platforms for sharing and exchanging information about HPAI situation and experience in controlling the disease in Asia.
2. Attempts should be made to consolidate experiences in reducing risks in the poultry market chain and to identify good practice guidelines and options for disease control.
3. Members should consider all HPAI control strategies including vaccination when and where appropriate.
4. The HPAI H5N1 issue should be considered more as a regional priority and common concern to be dealt with on a regional level by actively and regularly exchanging information, experiences, lessons learned, views and insights on the disease among Members, for which international organizations like the OIE and the FAO, donor agencies and Members should play roles in the region.
5. Members should strengthen field studies and surveillance programme to monitor and better understand the HPAI H5N1 situation in their territories, based on which appropriate and adequate control and prevention measures should be followed to mitigate the risk of the disease.
6. Members particularly persistently and sporadically infected countries should consider developing a realistic and tangible course of action in the next 5 years to be undertaken to systematically and progressively break the virus circulation.
7. A national strategic plan to improve the poultry production and marketing systems on a progressive approach should be considered and developed with a realistic and viable goal, for which competent authorities of food safety and rural development should be involved in the development and the implementation of the plan.
8. The applicability and value of FMD PCP as a template for the control, prevention and eradication of H5N1 HPAI in Asia should be considered by the OIE, the FOA as well as Members.

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in Asia. It is expected that such support and efforts will continue in the next 5 years.