Information received on 16 May 2007 from Dr José David Bolaños, Delegate of El Salvador to the OIE, Head of the Animal Health Division, Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAG), San Salvador, El Salvador.

In El Salvador, commercial poultry production is one of the most dynamic sectors of the national economy. It has become a driving force for agricultural and agribusiness development. Furthermore, it is a key factor in food security since it plays a part in the production of affordable animal protein, producing annually around 1.17 billion eggs and 223 million pounds of meat.

Consequently, the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAG), through the official Veterinary Services of the Directorate-General of Plant Protection and Animal Health, and within the framework of the Avian Disease Prevention, Control and Eradication Programme, intends to maintain the country’s sanitary status of freedom from highly pathogenic avian influenza, Newcastle disease, avian infectious laryngotracheitis and fowl typhoid/pullorum disease, and to pursue its aim to control and eradicate low pathogenic avian influenza.

It is also envisaged that MAG will become a unit to facilitate the development of this sector, through the application of international sanitary standards, and the maintenance of export levels of poultry and poultry products and by-products to the Central America region.

Background
From 2001, the monthly report on the situation in El Salvador with regard to avian diseases was regularly submitted, and details of the situation were published in the OIE Bulletin No 1, 2005.

Actions and strategies
- Updating and adaptation of the legal framework and monitoring its application
- Census of poultry farms (with more than 500 poultry)
- Vaccination programme (strategic)
- Epidemiological surveillance system (active and passive surveillance)
- Application of biosecurity measures in farms (evaluation)
- Strengthening of laboratory diagnostic capabilities
- Training and outreach programme
- Setting up of a national emergency plan for avian influenza.
Epidemiological surveillance

During 2006, four monitoring operations were carried out in exporting farms and three in zones surrounding the aforementioned farms, including other farms as well as backyard flocks in cantons within these zones.

Since 2005, monitoring of domestic poultry has been conducted on land adjoining wetland areas and up to 1.5 km away from the border of these areas. This activity is designed to enable early detection of avian influenza in wild aquatic birds. In addition, samples are taken in poultry abattoirs and targeted serological screening is conducted nationwide.

Samples are processed at the MAG Veterinary Diagnostic and Quality Control Laboratory using agar gel immunodiffusion (AGID) for avian influenza and avian infectious laryngotracheitis, haemagglutination inhibition (HI) for Newcastle disease and isolation of the causal agent for fowl typhoid/pullorum disease, the latter procedure not being applied to samples from wetland areas. All the results obtained so far have been negative.

In addition, 83 clinical and/or serological cases, detected during screening in different parts of the country, were followed up. This included on-site examinations, post-mortem examinations and laboratory tests – in particular bacterial and viral cultures –, resulting in the detection of the causal agents of diseases including fowl pox, pasteurellosis, colibacteriosis, and infectious coryza, internal parasitic diseases, and nutritional and farm management deficiencies.

Results

Within the framework of the Programme, the following are kept under control, either because of their importance for international trade or because they are located in areas at risk (wetlands): 655 commercial farms with an estimated total population of 58,273,033 poultry and 58 epidemiological units (i.e. cantons) with backyard flocks.

During epidemiological surveillance, 63,370 tests have been carried out for the four diseases covered by the Programme, and we should also underline the surveillance efforts in areas adjoining wetlands.

Goals achieved

Since December 2002, no circulation of low pathogenic avian influenza virus has been detected. In broilers, the last case was in July 2001.

El Salvador has maintained its status as a country free from highly pathogenic avian influenza, Newcastle disease, avian infectious laryngotracheitis and fowl typhoid/pullorum disease.

According to the information received, the flow of trade in poultry and poultry products to Guatemala and Honduras remains stable.

Capacity building for laboratory diagnosis, with the use of new techniques, such as polymerase chain reaction (PCR) should be reinforced.

The successes and the results achieved by the Avian Disease Prevention, Control and Eradication Programme are the fruit of positive efforts by, and coordination between, the public sector and the poultry producers’ sector, under the terms of the Cooperation Agreement.

### Farms registered within the framework of the Programme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Production type</th>
<th>No. of farms registered</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Development of light breeders</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Light breeders (layers)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of layers</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Layers</td>
<td>494</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of heavy breeders</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heavy breeders (broilers)</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broilers (7 cycles/year)</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>655</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>