ANIMAL DISEASES PREVENTION AND CONTROL:

Avian Influenza

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Fact sheet

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Prevention and control of diseases worldwide positively impacts a whole range of sectors crucial to animal and human health. Since 2003, the global H5N1 highly pathogenic avian influenza crisis shows how infected countries grapple with important socio-economic impacts if appropriate animal diseases prevention and control measures are missing. Impacts, that could prove devastating on a global scale.

Controlling AI at source

National Veterinary Services (VS) are at the very core of the system for the prevention and control of avian influenza (AI). They are responsible for early detection and rapid response to outbreaks of emerging or re-emerging animal diseases such as avian influenza. Enhancing VS governance must be the focus worldwide so that, based on appropriate legislation and control system, quality and efficiency are improved.
VS in developing and in transition countries are most in need of resources and technical assistance so they will be able to guarantee animal health and thus public health.

Notification of AI

Avian influenza is one of the 100 terrestrial and aquatic animal diseases listed by and notifiable to the OIE by the VS of Member Countries, i.e. the first occurrence or the re-occurrence of a disease or an infection in their country, including follow-up reports as the situation evolves.

Compensation: key to transparency

The existence of a compensation scheme encourages early notification of disease by farmers who are the first sentinels in the occurence of diseases. In face of an AI infection, the only efficient control measure is stamping-out of animals in the infected farm. Farmers will more easily report the infection if they are assured of getting compensation for flocks killed as part of governmental stamping-out measures.

Testing of AI suspect samples

Once notified of an AI outbreak, the national and international community alerted, confirmation and characterization of samples of animal origin can be determined in OIE Reference Laboratories for AI, OIE has a global network of 200 reference laboratories and collaborating centres covering relevant animal diseases.

OFFLU and virus sharing

OFFLU, a joint OIE/FAO network of expertise, was established with the objective of sharing permanently updated biological material and data, scientific information and expertise on efficient control methods of AI. This pro-active scientific approach helps infected countries eradicate the disease and free countries protect themselves from it. OFFLU collaborates with WHO human influenza network on issues relating to the animal-human interface, including early development of human vaccines.

The Scientific Committee of OFFLU, made up of world leading veterinary experts on avian influenza, lobbies for: further collection, characterization and exchange of avian influenza viruses, the expansion of the genomic database for animal influenza viruses.
Sharing virus strains, samples and sequences- animal and human - is a critical part of the global work on the surveillance and control of the highly pathogenic H5N1 virus and supports the development of human vaccines.
Under this unique impetus strains will be sent to the US National Institute for Health for sequencing and deposited in full transparency on the free-access database, «GenBank».

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Vaccination: where do we stand?

Vaccination is not a form of treatment. Stamping-out policy is still the best way of controlling and ultimately eradicating the disease. Where this policy cannot be fully implemented, vaccination is an additional strategic measure because it can raise the level of protective flock immunity in a given target population. It has been shown that the use of high quality vaccines in countries where the virus has become endemic does not only protects healthy birds from clinical disease but also reduces virus excretion by infected birds and thus, the transmission of the virus to other birds and to humans. It also decreases the probability of the development of a human pandemic.

Implementing a vaccination strategy

Before launching a vaccination campaign Member Countries need to look at critical pre-requisites to guarantee a successful outcome:vaccine quality and an exit strategy.

www.oie.int/downld/AVIAN INFLUENZA/Guidelines on AI vaccination.pdf

Biosecurity

Biosecurity gathers policies and measures taken to protect human, animal and plant health from all biological hazards.

In the field of animal health, so that appropriate biosecurity levels are in place at global scale, compliance by Member Countries and Territories with OIE standards and guidelines, training where relevant for those involved, and the availability of appropriate material and human resources, are necessary.

Applied biosecurity

In case of a disease outbreak, humane stamping out using OIE standards, disinfection of establishments, equipments and vehicles, ban or control of movements of animals, efficiently prevent the spread of pathogens.

Find out more on OIE recommendations on biosecurity:

Hygiene and Disease Security Procedures in Poultry Breeding Flocks and Hatcheries: *Terrestrial Animal Health Code, 2008 (Chapter 6.3)*

http://www.oie.int/eng/normes/mcode/en_chapitre_1.6.3.htm

Vaccine quality: **vaccines should be produced in accordance with international guidelines prescribed in the OIE Manual of Diagnostic Tests and Vaccines for Terrestrial Animals. Ensuring a permanent cold chain (continuum of temperature control) is critical to the successful implemention of a vaccination campaign.**

Exit strategy: **a vaccination campaign must include a return to classic disease control measures in order to avoid disease reoccurrence.**

SANITARY STATUS OF MEMBERS REGARDING AVIAN INFLUENZA

The World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) draws up a list of Member Countries, or zones within countries, officially recognised as free from four specific diseases: rinderpest, bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE), foot and mouth disease (FMD) and contagious bovine pleuropneumonia (CBPP).

Self-declaration

Member Countries may make, under their own responsibility, self-declarations of freedom from other OIE-listed diseases for which no official recognition procedure exists. Among which, lists highly pathogenic avian influenza.

Members may do this based on the criteria and standards defined in *the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code (the Code).*

THE OIE CODE

The *OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code,* which gathers the organisation's international recommendations and guidelines on animal health, specifically guides on how to prevent and control AI infection in poultry.

Notification of animal diseases: chapter 1.1
Avian influenza chapter: 10.4

Surveillance and vaccination guidelines: article 10.4.27
Biosecurity measures: chapitre 6.3

Other relevant information:

AI world situation update: www.oie.int/wahid

AI web portal: http://www.oie.int/eng/info_ev/en_AI_avianinfluenza.htm

OFFLU: www.offlu.net

Compensation:
www.oie.int/eng/info/en_influenza.htm

Animal disease summaries:
http://www.oie.int/eng/ressources/en_diseasecards.htm