Recommendation No. 1

Influenza development, including H1N1, surveillance and post-vaccination monitoring of H5N1

CONSIDERING THAT

1. Zoonotic animal diseases, including Highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) H5N1, remain a serious threat for food security and public health, social and economic progress and especially for Members where capacity is inadequate to apply appropriate prevention and control measures;

2. HPAI H5N1 virus strains have persisted in domestic poultry for 12 years and antigenic variants have been generated;

3. Most Members in the region have instituted a compensation mechanism in the event where a stamping-out policy was applied. This mechanism encourages timely notification of the occurrence of disease outbreaks and/or detection of infection;

4. It is necessary to understand the local and regional differences in animal husbandry practices, social customs, infrastructure, and the epidemiological pattern of the disease for OIE Members of Asia, the Far East and Oceania Region to better address risks of occurrence and spread of influenza viruses within the region;

5. The exchanging of relevant epidemiological information through effective regional surveillance networks is important;

6. Vaccination against HPAI H5N1, using vaccines complying with OIE Standards, and in accordance with the guidelines for the application of a vaccination strategy developed jointly by the OIE and FAO, is a relevant complementary measure in specific situations to prevent and control the disease. In these cases vaccination should be used in addition to, not instead of stamping out;

7. Vaccines directed to HPAI H5N1 are being used by several Members in Asia;

8. There is a need for a vaccination exit strategy to be included within the national policies on control of HPAI H5N1, based on appropriate risk evaluation, surveillance and the promotion of early detection and rapid response capacity of the country;

9. The OIE alone and jointly with FAO, WHO and WTO has issued clear statements, in regard to the pandemic H1N1 A/Influenza;

10. An FAO-OIE document “A Global Strategy for the Prevention and Control of H5N1 Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza” has been developed promoting multisectoral approach to controlling zoonosis, including HPAI, and targeting disease source;
11. A multiagency FAO-OIE-WHO-UNICEF document supported by UNSIC and World Bank has been published: “Contributing to “One World, One Health” A Strategic Framework for Reducing Risks of Infectious Diseases at the Animal-Human-Ecosystems Interface”;

12. FAO-OIE GF-TADs support a regional approach to control transboundary animal diseases (TAD) including zoonoses such as HPAI;

13. Effective collaboration between animal health and public health sectors in the spirit of the “One World, One Health” concept (OWOH), both at national and regional levels, is an important factor for succeeding in controlling zoonoses, including Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza H5N1 while controlling the disease at its animal source remains under the full responsibility of the Veterinary Services;

14. Good governance of Veterinary Services complying with global standards on quality allows effective early detection and control of HPAI H5N1 at its source in the animal population and thereby minimizing exposure to the human population;

15. The OIE developed different tools such as OIE-PVS evaluation, OIE-PVS Gap analysis, OIE-PVS follow up missions, laboratory twinning, modernisation of legislation and capacity building of national focal points to help Members to improve veterinary governance;

16. There exist some ongoing or planned projects within the region, funded by several Members and donors, aimed to strengthen Veterinary Services and preventing, controlling or eradicating emerging diseases;

17. Compliance with OIE Standards in respect of the quality of antigens, reagents and tests used for surveillance and diagnostic purposes, is a key factor to achieve the objectives of any animal disease control or eradication Program;

18. The OIE has developed a document endorsed by FAO and other major partners such as key donors on “Ensuring Good Governance to Address Emerging and Re-emerging Animal Disease Threats: Supporting the Veterinary Service of Developing Countries to Meet International Standards on Quality”;

19. Comprehensive and sustainable surveillance networks and diagnostic capacity are crucial for achieving an effective prevention and control of the disease;

20. It is important to use appropriate information and reporting systems in support of the effective implementation of a long-term control strategy;

21. The joint OIE and FAO world scientific network for the control of animal influenza, (OFFLU), provides technical assistance and expertise to support OIE Members in the diagnosis, surveillance and control of animal influenza;

22. The OIE has developed the Laboratory Twinning concept aimed to improve diagnostic capacity and to promote the excellence of veterinary scientific community on a Regional basis;

23. The OIE has recently published a Scientific and Technical Review dedicated entirely to Avian Influenza;
24. The Members in the region have responded on a questionnaire developed by the rapporteur to reflect on the current situation of development of influenza, including H1N1, surveillance and post-vaccination monitoring of H5N1 to guide the formulation of these recommendations.

THE OIE REGIONAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA THE FAR EAST AND OCEANIA

RECOMMENDS THAT:

1. The OIE continue its support to Members for the strengthening of their Veterinary Services through the use of the OIE PVS Tool for the evaluation of Veterinary Services, the OIE-PVS Gap Analysis and follow up as well as their complementary supporting projects such as legislation update, the laboratory twining programme and capacity building of national focal points, for improving the control of animal influenzas, and other animal diseases and promoting Veterinary public health;

2. Members review their Veterinary Services policies where necessary to implement adequate strategies to prevent the occurrence and spread of animal influenzas particularly HPAI H5N1, including, when relevant, a stamping-out policy complemented in specific situations by vaccination of susceptible species, using vaccines which comply with OIE standards and adopting an exit strategy. Such strategies should be in compliance with the OIE/FAO Global Strategy for Prevention and Control of H5N1 Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza, as developed jointly. Vaccination should always be used in addition to, and not instead of stamping out;

3. Any national strategy to prevent, control and eradicate HPAI H5N1, should consider the establishment of a proper surveillance system, including the coverage of the whole territory at risk by well trained veterinarians and para-professionals working under the control of veterinarians, and the use of laboratory diagnostic tests complying with OIE international standards;

4. OIE Members continue to improve their disease reporting system to accomplish their obligation in notifying the occurrence of avian influenza to the OIE through WAHIS;

5. Additional candidate laboratories be identified within the region to enter where relevant, into twinning projects for avian influenza with existing OIE Reference Laboratories to enlarge the availability of and access to expertise in the region;

6. Governments be encouraged and sensitised by the OIE to support animal influenza surveillance programmes, and when relevant, prevention and control activities in pigs and other relevant species, by allocating necessary resources (financial, structural and human) which will allow proper implementation of relevant preventive and control measures;

7. Donors continue to further support programmes including vaccine banks and support to Good Veterinary Governance within the region to prevent the occurrence and spread of emerging diseases in developing countries;

8. OIE Members make full and timely use for the prevention, control and mitigation of influenza and other emerging or re-emerging diseases, of the cooperation programmes made available to them by donors, in particular the new Highly Pathogenic Emerging Diseases Programme for Asia that will run from January 2010 to end 2013, and other similar Programmes;
9. OIE Members who benefitted from grants under the World Bank-administered multidonor trust fund Avian and Human Influenza Facility, accelerate disbursement of the resources offered by this instrument;

10. The joint OIE and FAO worldwide scientific network for the control of animal influenza, (OFFLU), as well as other relevant research organisations, conduct further research and investigations to improve the tools and strategies as well as develop certain standards and guidelines for preventing and controlling animal influenza. Surveillance of influenza in swine is important in the Members where H5N1 influenza virus is still circulating;

11. The OIE continue its work and further develop and up-date standards for prevention and control of animal influenzas;

12. In the H1N1 2009 pandemic context the statements made by the OIE including the document “Questions and answers”, and the other statements made jointly with FAO, WHO and WTO be used by Veterinary Services of the region as key communication tools with policy makers and the public;

13. With the support of relevant global and regional organisations, OIE Members establish at both regional and national levels, adequate cooperation mechanisms between the animal health, public health and other relevant sectors, to improve the management of the biological risks at the animal-human interface by focusing on pathogen control at the animal source using veterinary skills and the multiagency document “Contributing to One World, One Health* A Strategic Framework for Reducing Risks of Infectious Diseases at the Animal–Human–Ecosystems Interface” as a reference guiding document.

(Adopted by the OIE Regional Commission for Asia, the Far East and Oceania on 20 November 2009 and endorsed by the World Assembly of Delegates of the OIE on 27 May 2010)