



AQUACULTURE AND AQUATIC ANIMAL HEALTH MANAGEMENT ISSUES IN THE ASIA – PACIFIC REGION

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Aquaculture is the fastest growing food production sector in the world. In 2008, about 53 million tonnes of farmed fish and shellfish was produced globally. More than 90% of this was produced in Asia. Global trade in seafood in 2008 was US\$ 102 billion. The epidemic spread and devastating impacts of aquatic animal diseases in the Asia-Pacific Region have clearly demonstrated the risks associated with international trade and the vulnerability of aquaculture systems to disease emergencies. Implementation of effective national/regional bio-security strategies is essential to address health issues effectively, support sustainable aquaculture development and comply with international standards (e.g. *OIE OIE Aquatic Code*).

Development and adoption of the FAO/NACA 'Asia regional technical guidelines (TG) for responsible movement of live aquatic animals' by 21 Asia-Pacific countries was a major advance facilitated by NACA during 1999-2001. Considerable progress has been made in the areas of disease diagnosis, aquatic animal health certification and quarantine, disease surveillance and reporting and farm level health management. The quarterly aquatic animal disease (QAAD) reporting system in the Asia-Pacific region, a joint activity among NACA, FAO and OIE Regional Representation (Tokyo) since the second quarter of 1998, is testimony to this progress. The QAAD disease list includes all diseases listed by OIE in the latest edition of the *OIE Aquatic Code*, plus other diseases of concern to the Asia-Pacific region. Over the coming 2-3 years, the regional QAAD reporting system will be gradually transformed to OIE-NACA WAHIS Regional Core to support online reporting. NACA works closely with the OIE and FAO to promote the role of the region in contributing to the international standard setting process through the work of the Asia regional advisory group on aquatic animal health.

The Asia-Pacific region is now in a much better state of preparedness to deal with aquatic animal disease emergencies and meet international standards. Continued national commitment must be ensured for effective implementation of bio-security governance and to improve compliance to international standards so as to promote sustainable aquaculture and responsible international trade.

Keywords: OIE – NACA – QAAD – WAHIS – Asia – Pacific – health management – biosecurity – transboundary diseases – disease reporting – international standards