



Credit: FAO/G. Seck

Rapid and immediate implementation of movement control following an outbreak. Communication tools, like this sign in Ghana, are essential components of any emergency action plan

THE ISSUE

Transboundary animal diseases (TADs) can have severe consequences worldwide. Both recurring and new animal diseases affect animal health and food security, and can have a serious impact on human health. By reducing animal production and productivity, TADs such as, African swine fever and foot-and-mouth disease affect livelihoods and exacerbate poverty for a wide range of people. Many TADs, for example, Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza and Rift Valley fever, can be transmitted from animals to humans and pose serious risks for human health; others, such as brucellosis, affect

food safety. All of these diseases can affect trade.

Both new and well-known TADs continue to emerge and spread across national borders. Agricultural expansion, changes in land utilisation, livestock population growth, climate change, trade liberalisation, rural migration, urban concentration, environmental degradation and globalization are some of the factors that have contributed to the increased incidence of animal diseases in recent decades. This trend is likely to continue.

THE FACTS

TAD response efforts must be immediate, coordinated and planned to stop diseases before they spread, in order to minimise their impacts upon animal health, human health, and trade.

The Crisis Management Centre – Animal Health (CMC-AH) is a lead facility of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) for animal disease emergency response. The CMC-AH provides technical and operational assistance to help governments develop and implement immediate measures for the prevention and control of animal diseases.

CHALLENGES AND GAPS

The devastating effects of animal health emergencies and the uncertainty as to when and where new diseases may emerge require that important questions be addressed:

- ▶ Do capacities to deal with animal emergencies exist in high risk areas?
- ▶ Can investments in preparedness and surveillance systems ensure that governments rapidly recognise and respond to animal disease emergencies?
- ▶ How can the development of national and regional capacities be best supported?
- ▶ How can risk management principles be best applied to anticipate threats and needs?
- ▶ Are all stakeholders engaged in order to ensure that an integrated, multidisciplinary approach can be applied to complex problems such as prevention and control?



Veterinary authorities sample a suspect pig on a smallholder farm for laboratory diagnosis in Viet Nam

FAO'S POSITION

FAO works with other United Nations and international agencies to help countries prevent and prepare for emergencies affecting agriculture, livestock, food safety, fisheries, forestry, and man-made and natural disasters. In the case of animal disease crises, FAO helps governments rapidly respond through the CMC-AH, which applies a multidisciplinary approach based on sound technical expertise and coordinated emergency operations. The CMC-AH fields rapid deployment teams within 48 hours when required and ensures those teams provide quality assistance through rigorous methodologies and refined response tools.

Since its establishment in 2006, the CMC-AH has planned, deployed and supported over 42 missions to 30 countries. Along with emergency response methodologies, the

CMC-AH has produced outbreak communication tools and trained national and international response experts as part of its overall support to governments. This support has included:

- ▶ Emergency preparedness for at-risk countries.
- ▶ Coordinated missions to countries experiencing disease emergencies.
- ▶ Three- to six-month action plans identifying priority prevention and intervention activities.
- ▶ Emergency funding packages enabling governments to begin implementing immediate response solutions.

In addition, the CMC-AH facilitates the transition from emergency assistance to longer-term support through resource mobilization and project proposal formulation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Countries and partners must work collaboratively to combat the complex challenges presented by animal disease emergencies, through:

- ▶ Sharing information on confirmed and rumoured animal health events to the Global Early Warning and Response System (GLEWS) for analysis.
- ▶ Actively engaging with the CMC-AH to assess risks in advance of possible incidents and preparing for those risks accordingly.
- ▶ Implementing appropriate and tested tools, guidance, and models to strengthen national capacities for emergency response.

References and Resources:

- www.fao.org/emergencies/programmes/CMC-AH
- www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/tc/tce/pdf/CMC-AH_Activity_Report_Oct06-Sep08.pdf
- www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/tc/tce/pdf/CMC-AH_Missions_Oct06-Oct08.pdf

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