

FAO ECTAD China and CAHEC strengthen collaboration for 2014

FAO Emergency Center for Transboundary Animal Diseases (ECTAD) China and China Animal Health and Epidemiology Centre (CAHEC) held a meeting in Qindao on 17 February 2014. The main objectives of this meeting were to discuss the ongoing collaboration between ECTAD China and CAHEC in 2014 and to exchange opinions on several important projects that need joint efforts from both sides. Dr Ma Hongchao, Director General of CAHEC, Dr Huang Baoxu, Deputy Director General of CAHEC and other staff participated in the meeting and associated events during the day.

A number of key topics were discussed by both sides, including collaboration on the proposed market chain analysis of the meat chicken market chain in Jiangsu and Anhui Provinces in 2014, the China Field Epidemiology Training Program for Veterinarians (FETPV) work plan in 2014, CAHEC's application for FAO Collaborating Centre, the impact of large scale live poultry market closure the resulting poultry movements and the potential for contamination of markets and human cases in other provinces. There was also discussion on the epidemiological analysis of result of H7N9 surveillance in provinces of China and the need for targeting and improved systems for collation, analysis, mapping and interpretation of results. This meeting has further strengthened the communication, collaboration and long-term partnership between FAO ECTAD China and CAHEC.



▲ Meeting with CAHEC in Qingdao

Visit to University veterinary schools in China to promote epidemiology education

As part of the planned follow up from the first course in veterinary epidemiology training for university academics from 17 universities in January, FAO ECTAD China staff paid a visit to three universities from 25th February to 4th March 2014. The visits were to Zhejiang Agricultural & Forestry (A&F) University, Nanjing Agricultural University, and Henan Agricultural University and the aim was to enhance advocate the importance of epidemiology with senior staff and plan for further visits by Dr Cai Chang, a Chinese epidemiologist from Murdoch University in the next few months. Dr Cai Chang was a co-trainer in the initial training and she will implement a program with the three universities to give a presentation on epidemiology, and assist with planning and development of curricula for epidemiology, teaching methodology, postgraduate training and case studies that can be used for epidemiology training.



▲ Visit to Nanjing Agricultural University



▲ Visit to Henan Agricultural University



▲ Visit to Zhejiang Agricultural & Forestry (A&F) University

The team met with senior staff, faculty and postgraduates from veterinary schools of these universities. Prof John Edwards, Senior Technical Coordinator of FAO ECTAD China presented FAO's vision on epidemiology capacity development in China. Dr Cai Chang also delivered a presentation on epidemiology and facilitating epidemiology education for Chinese universities. At all locations there was positive and active discussions about the possibilities for future cooperation on promoting epidemiology capacity development.

The mission achieved a number of positive outcomes, including assistance with curriculum development, capacity development for young faculty, conduct joint epidemiological research, develop case studies based on the current research data, etc. The visit to these universities also gained support from university senior staff for future development of epidemiology education.

The second wave of H7N9 Influenza in 2014

Since October 2014 H7N9 has re-emerged in eastern China and by the end of February 2014 there have been 252 human cases and H7N9 has been detected in live bird markets in the worst affected provinces.

Features of the second wave include a shift in focus to the south with the main affected provinces being Guangdong and Zhejiang.

Provinces such as Shanghai, Jiangsu and Anhui that were most severely affected in the first wave have been less affected in 2014 and this is thought to be due to significant improvements in biosecurity in live bird markets and reduced numbers of poultry in these areas.

The threat of the H7N9 virus to humans has reduced demand for live birds and wide scale closure of live bird markets in these provinces. This has resulted in reduced prices and limited market access for live birds and severe disruption of supply chains during January and February.

FAO ECTAD China has responded by closely monitoring the situation and working with the Veterinary Bureau of the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), its China Animal Health and Epidemiology Centre and the FETPV network to implement projects to understand the market chains for the poultry industry, the behavior and evolution of influenza viruses, and to carry out training in surveillance, value chain analysis and biosecurity to assist with limiting the spread within China and to neighbouring countries.



▲ H7N9 human cases in the 2nd wave in China

FAO ECTAD China prepares for the commencement of African Swine Fever (ASF) Project

The Technical Cooperation Program (TCP) project entitled "Developing Prevention and Control Strategies for African Swine Fever (ASF) in China" was approved by FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (RAP) in January 2014. The project aims at improving the capacity of the national government in the preventing the incursion of ASF. More specifically, the project will improve the overall national level of preparedness for ASF through capacity building activities on risk assessment, diagnostic techniques and epidemiology, as well as through the organization of awareness campaigns for farmers and veterinarians. The project will also contribute to strengthening national ASF laboratory coordination mechanism and networking. FAO ECTAD China is currently preparing for the commencement of this project.

Upcoming Activities:

1. Field sampling for the Emerging Pandemic Threats Plus (EPT+) project in Guangdong and Hunan Provinces will be conducted in the first two weeks of March 2014.
2. Training on strengthening surveillance, value chain analysis and biosecurity for H7N9 Influenza in China will be held in Guangzhou from 18th to 21st March.
3. Dr Guo Fusheng, Nation Technical Advisor of FAO ECTAD China will attend the External Consultation Meeting on Disease Surveillance in Live Bird Markets from 24th to 26th March in Rome.
4. China Field Epidemiology Training Program for Veterinarians (FETPV) field mentoring by Chinese trainers and veterinary epidemiology training to the provinces will be rolled-out in April 2014.