



**FAO Meeting to Strengthen Actions for the Prevention
and Early Detection of Highly Pathogenic Avian
Influenza (HPAI) (H5N1 Asian) in Latin
America and the Caribbean¹**

***30-31 October, 2007
Santiago, Chile***

Organized by:

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean (FAO/RLC)

¹ Regional Projects of Emergency Assistance for the Prevention and Early Detection of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) in Latin America and the Caribbean (TCP/RLA/3103, TCP/RLA/3104, TCP/RLA/3105, TCP/RLA/3106)

TECHNICAL BACKGROUND NOTE

1. INTRODUCTION

The importance of the poultry sector in the economies of Latin American and Caribbean countries has increased during the recent years and can be identified due to its effect over the use of resources made by the sector and the multiplying effect over other areas of the economies. In addition, this sector plays an important role by providing meat and eggs to the population, becoming the most consumed animal protein at low price in the region. Therefore, the preservation of optimal conditions for poultry health is essential at national and regional levels.

The Western Hemisphere is free of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI), subtype H5N1, from Asiatic lineage which, since 2003, has been shown to be an important Transboundary Animal Disease (TAD) to be considered a welfare emergency of international concern in extensive regions of Asia, Middle East, Africa and Europe, due to the losses to poultry production², bans imposed for international trade of poultry and its products, increased the unemployment of people involved in the poultry sector, affecting the lifestyle and food security of populations from affected countries, hence HPAI has become a threat for other regions.

As 10 September, 2007, the mortality of 200 people has been confirmed, in 11 of the 12 countries where human infection caused by HPAI (H5N1) virus has been detected. However, sustained transmission of the virus among humans has not occurred yet, thus fighting against the disease in domestic birds is essential to reduce the amount of circulating virus, therefore reducing the risk of infection in human beings and the threat of a possible avian influenza pandemic.

Although subtype H5N1 of HPAI has not been detected in the Western Hemisphere, other highly pathogenic viral subtypes have been detected in Mexico during 1994 (H5N2), Chile in 2002 (H7N3) as well as Canada (H7N3) and the United States (H5N2) in 2004, showing the feasibility of this type of virus to infect poultry populations in the region, but also the capacity of some countries to detect, control and eradicate the disease.

In response to the international emergency raised by the speed of spread of HPAI and the risk of introduction into the region, in February 2006, several countries requested technical assistance from FAO to prevent its introduction. In response to this, on April 2006, the FAO General Director- approved four sub-regional projects of emergency assistance up to a total amount of US\$2 million. Projects were directed towards the early detection of HPAI in the Caribbean (TCP/RLA/3103), Central America (TCPRLA/3104), Andean Region (TCP/RLA/3105) and the Southern Cone (TCP/RLA/3106).

<http://www.rlc.fao.org/prior/segalim/animal/aviar/tcp/proyectos.htm>

The projects were coordinated by FAO through its Emergency Centre for Transboundary Animal Diseases (ECTAD), the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean (FAO/RLC) and the Official Veterinary Services (OVS) from the 33 countries involved, with additional support from regional animal health organizations, under the Global Framework for the Progressive Control of Transboundary Animal Diseases (GF-TADs).

<http://www.rlc.fao.org/prior/segalim/animal/enferm.htm>

² Economic studies conducted by FAO indicate that in Southeast Asia alone the poultry sector losses reached up to US\$10,000 MM and that systematic culling in Africa has resulted in an additional loss of US\$60 MM for the local poultry industry. Until August 26, 2007, there had been 5,222 cases reported from the commercial poultry industry in 44 countries.

2. BACKGROUND AND JUSTIFICATION

FAO has an important role in the control and eradication of the epizootic HPAI, providing technical assistance to the affected countries in Asia, Middle East, Europe and Africa, establishing a global strategy with the support of the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE), World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Bank (WB), through the GF-TADs initiative. On February 2006, based on the "Strategic guidelines for the prevention of Avian Influenza in the American countries" the four projects were established in the region

The activities for each project began on May 2006, establishing the programmed in accord with representatives from the OVS from the 33 countries, considering the conclusion by October 2007. The sub-regional participating countries where for **The Caribbean** (15 countries) Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Surinam, Trinidad and Tobago, having its subregional office in Barbados (FAO Sub-regional office), **Central America** (8 countries) Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua and Panama, with office in El Salvador (OIRSA office), **Andean Region** (4 countries) Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela, with office in Peru (CAN office) and **MERCOSUR** (6 countries) Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay, with its office in Argentina (OIE office).

The projects were executed in compliance with the established program, with the support of the 33 National Coordinators, one from each country, specialist consultants in different topics, an international HPAI specialist consultant, four sub-regional coordinators, one for each project, professional and operative personnel from FAO headquarters and FAO/RLC. In addition, to avoid duplicity of activities, these were complemented by the invaluable support of personnel and resources from the following international organizations: PAHO/PANAFTOSA, IICA, OIRSA, CAN, OIE, CVP, CARICOM, USDA and USAID.

Technical cooperation project activities were aimed to improve the strategies of the surveillance, early detection and control of an eventual introduction of HPAI in the region, achieving the following results i) improvement of the laboratory diagnosis systems where 110 professionals were trained in basic and molecular Avian Influenza diagnosis procedures and four laboratories were identified to work as sub-regional support for reference for the early detection of the disease, located in each of the four sub-regions (Barbados, Brazil, Colombia, Guatemala); ii) Training on wild birds and backyard poultry epidemiology, management and sample collection, preservation and shipping to the reference laboratories, including risk assessment for wetlands and for poultry, poultry products and wild birds trade; iii) a methodology for epidemiological surveillance for early detection, including risk analysis aspects for HPAI; iv) Preparation of national contingency plans and prevention programmes against the disease following a guide prepared by FAO which contained a checklist of critical points to be verified; v) implementation of a georeferenced epidemiological information system to assist in the early detection of disease outbreaks, facilitate the creation of risk maps for possible introduction into the country, sub-region or region, including a regional wild birds trade database for the last 5 years; vi) implementation of *in-situ* simulation exercises of the disease and development of a e-learning format to conduct an outbreak simulation exercises; vii) assessment of the advantages and disadvantages of vaccine and vaccination programs against HPAI in accordance to local circumstances following the international recommendations from FAO/OIE; viii) identification of possible national economic compensation systems to stimulate disease notification and to compensate the losses for the producers; ix) development of electronic and printed material for communication and information; x) implementation of an ongoing regional strategy for social communication and information; xi) establishment of regional specialist networks in diagnosis, social communication and HPAI epidemiology and xii) national, sub-regional and regional project proposals aimed to continue the strengthening HPAI prevention.

The projects results in the countries will be crucial in the event of HPAI introduction given that actions have been directed towards the prevention and preparation for a rapid response against a possible outbreak of the disease. However, due to geographical dimensions, epidemiological, institutional and socio-economic differences between some countries, it is indispensable to continue strengthening disease prevention and control systems and poultry populations to reduce the risk of a pandemic.

For the above mentioned reasons the main actors in the implementation of FAO regional projects are invited to attend to the "Meeting to Strengthen Actions for the Prevention and Early Detection of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) (H5N1 Asian) in Latin America and the Caribbean."

3. MEETING OBJECTIVES

1. Analyze the information from activities jointly carried out by FAO and the beneficiary governments in the implementation of an early detection, prevention and immediate response system against the disease in the region.
2. Determine future activities that should be established for the prevention of HPAI at the national, sub-regional and regional levels.
3. Establish cooperation, coordination and regional communication channels between the different sectors involved in the prevention and control of this TAD.

4. PROGRAMME ACTIVITIES

The International Meeting will be held on October 30- 31, 2007 at the facilities of the Hotel Crowne Plaza, Santiago, located in Av. Libertador Bernardo. O'Higgins 136, Santiago, Chile.

The proposed programme for the implementation of activities is as follows:

Tuesday, October 30, 2007			
ISSUE	TIME	ACTIVITY	RESPONSIBLE PERSON
1	08:30 – 09:00	Registration of participants	Organization team
2	09:00 – 09:20	Opening Ceremony	Dr. Jose Graziano da Silva, FAO Regional Representative for Latin America and the Caribbean
3	09:20 – 10:20	Situation of the highly pathogenic avian influenza H5N1 (Asian) epizootic and the role of FAO	Dr. Juan Lubroth (FAO/AGAH)
4	10:20 – 10:50	FAO intervention in activities towards the prevention and control of HPAI in Latin America and the Caribbean	Dr. Moisés Vargas-Terán (FAO/RLC)
	10:50 – 11:10	Coffee Break	
5	11:10– 11:40	Briefing of activities implemented by the four regional projects and their products	Dr. Juan García García (FAO/RLC)
6	11:40 – 12:20	HPAI prevention and contingency programmes in America; a regional challenge	Dr. Héctor Campos (FAO/RLC)
7	12:20 – 13:00	Current situation and perspectives of HPAI diagnosis in the region through regional support laboratories for Latin America and the	Dr. Christian Mathieu (FAO/RLC)

		Caribbean	
	13:00 – 14:00	Lunch	
8	14:00 - 14:40	Methodology systems for surveillance and early alert including risk analysis aspects of HPAI	Dr. Jorge Hernandez (FAO/RLC)
9	14:40 – 15:30	Geographical information system for epidemiological purposes to survey HPAI in Latin America and the Caribbean; coordination among countries	Dr. Emilio Leon (INTA – ARG)
10	15:30 – 16:00	Regional communication strategy for the prevention of HPAI	Lic. Cecilia Ballesteros (FAO/RLC)
	16:00 – 16:30	Coffee Break and review of panels with posters and messages developed by the communication and information teams of the projects	
11	16:30 – 17:00	FAO/OIE vaccination strategy for the prevention and control of HPAI in the American continent; advantages and disadvantages	Dr. Juan Garcia Garcia (FAO/RLC)
12	17:00 - 19:00	Complementary interventions conducted by: PAHO/PANAFTOSA, IICA, OIE, USDA, CAN, OIRSA, USAID, CARICOM and CIRAD, to prevent HPAI in Latin America and the Caribbean	OIE, USDA, CAN, PAHO, OIRSA, USAID, CARICOM and CIRAD
	19:00 – 21:30	Welcome cocktail	
Wednesday, October 31, 2007			
ISSUE	TIME	ACTIVITY	RESPONSIBLE PERSON
13	09:00 – 09:20	Welcome to the second day meetings and review of first day activities	Organization team
14	09:20 – 10:00	FAO Technical Cooperation Programme: a response tool for the needs of member states	Ms. Admira Mara (FAO/TCEO)
15	10:00 – 10:40	Presentation of the proposed compensation mechanisms to respond in the event of an HPAI sanitary emergency	Dr. Claus Köbrich (FAO/RLC)
	10:40 – 11:00	Coffee Break	
16	11:00 – 11:40	Socio-economical impact of avian influenza; challenges for the region	Dr. Cesar Falconi (IADB)
17	11:40 – 12:30	Financing mechanisms for the animal health sector in Latin America and the Caribbean	WB, IADB, USDA, USAID, countries, producers
	12:30 – 14:00	Lunch	
18	14:10 - 14:40	Proposal of a regional strategy and action plan for the preparation and early response against HPAI	Dr. Moises Vargas-Teran (FAO/RLC)
19	14:40 - 15:20	Discussion forum for present activities and future actions	Discussion panel
	15:20 – 16:00	Coffee Break	
20	16:00 – 16:30	Agreements and recommendations for the meeting	Discussion panel
21	16:30 – 17:00	Closing ceremony	Dr. Jose Graziano da Silva, FAO Regional Representative for Latin America and the Caribbean

5. ORGANIZATION

The meeting is organized by ECTAD through its Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean (FAO/RLC.)

6. PARTICIPANTS

The meeting is directed towards the Chief Officers of the Veterinary Services (OVS) from the 33 beneficiary countries of four projects of FAO on emergency assistance for the early detection of HPAI. In addition, representatives from international and regional organizations involved in the protection of human and animal health, international financial institutions and the private sector linked to poultry production.

7. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Assistants must arrive at Santiago de Chile on Monday, October 29. Departure must be programmed the night of Wednesday 31 October or Thursday, November 1st, depending on flight availability.

Lodging:

The International Meeting organization team has selected the **CROWNE PLAZA, SANTIAGO** hotel for the accommodation of assistants

HOTEL CROWNE PLAZA SANTIAGO

Av. Libertador Bernardo O'Higgins 136

P.O. BOX 488 - CORREO 21

SANTIAGO, CHILE

Reservations: (56-2) 685 5000

Reception: (56-2) 638 1042

Fax: (56-2) 633 6015

Email: sales@crownsantiago.cl

Internet: <http://www.crowneplaza.cl>

Meeting Facilities:

The organization team has selected the Crowne Plaza Santiago facilities, located at Av. Libertador Bernardo O'Higgins 136, Santiago, Chile to held the meeting.

Language:

The working languages will be Spanish and English with simultaneous translation. Working documents and presentations will be available in both languages.

Travel Expenses and Airplane Tickets:

Economy airfares and a Daily Subsistence Allowance as per UN standard procedures, rates and liability will be covered by FAO and made available through FAO Representative Offices

(FAO) in each participating country. After confirmation of assistance, an e-mail will be sent to all participants with their respective air ticket reservations to Santiago, Chile. Participants are responsible for the collection of their air tickets and taking their corresponding flight.

Visa Entry

Invited participants must consult the Chilean embassies at their respective countries for visa requirements to entry into the country. For further information, please visit the following website: http://www.gochile.cl/Info_s/Hbook/visas.asp

Currency

The local monetary unit is the Chilean Peso and it can be acquired at banks and exchange houses in and outside the country. As October 2007, estimated parity with one United States dollar would be 520 pesos. Most major credit cards are accepted, namely Visa, American Express, Mastercard, etc.

8. MEETING COORDINATION TEAM

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