SECOND G7 CVOs FORUM

ROME, ITALY, 5 OCTOBER 2017

G7 CVOs DOCUMENT ON AVIAN INFLUENZA

Viruses genetics, ecology and epidemiology interact with economic, political and policy processes in a variety of geographical areas across the world so that the international response to Avian Influenza is an issue requesting a deep involvement of science, policy and politics.

How achieving an appropriate interaction of the international and national responses in facing new emerging health and veterinary threats has been the challenge over the last decades at global level.

Substantial resources have been deployed on tackling streaming diseases such as Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza and building a global capacity for a pandemic response.

The serious consequences of the pandemic H1N1 occurred in 2009-2010 are well documented. This emergence raised the alarm, so that in the following years strategies were adopted with the aim to upgrade surveillance systems, create stockpiles of antiviral drugs and influenza vaccines (especially for public health purposes) and improve veterinary and public health systems. More recently HPAI H5N8 has challenged the poultry farming and virus subtypes such as H7N9, H5N6 and H9N2 have raised concern for their impact on human health.

Lessons learnt from these experiences inspired initiatives to be undertaken for the future, in view of a large involvement of the international community, because animal health threats cannot be addressed by individual countries acting alone.

Building upon the conclusions and commitments on transboundary animal diseases (TADs), shared during the 1st G7 Chief Veterinary Officers Forum in Tokyo, the G7 CVOs Group, to ensure the continuity of work on TADs, intends to pay a special attention to avian influenza and share a common approach according to the following recommendations:

1. Collaborative promotion of disease prevention, hygiene training, sharing of surveillance data at the human-animal interface, in the "One Health" perspective, and implementing joint surveillance activities between the human and animal health sectors; Strengthening the

efforts to understand the socio-economic and environmental drivers at the animal human interface.

2. Strengthening the global preparedness, facilitating and funding global, researching urgent questions (i.e. monitoring virus evolution and defining appropriate approaches to check vaccine efficacy); facilitating the formation of consortia on funding to support actions on all front.
3. Supporting research and scientific collaborations to establish which are the viral, host-related and environmental factors that regulate the dynamics of avian influenza in poultry and other host species, so as to understand the mechanisms that allow the virus to mutate from LPAI to HPAI and to recognize the markers of zoonotic potential, host adaptation, transmission and origin of escape mutants; supporting research on evolving viruses and a particular focus on vaccines; addressing epidemiological studies from a veterinary perspective.
4. Taking advantage of well-established platforms for sharing genetic and epidemiological information of viruses in a timely manner, while protecting the rights of the owners to the viruses.
5. Strengthening the veterinary services, to ensure AI suspicion/recognition capacity at the first detection level and to guarantee the prompt adoption of adequate control and eradication measures; defining suitable strategies and actions to improve early detection and outbreak management.
6. Promoting and optimizing global wild and domestic bird surveillance, including active surveillance in domestic and wild birds, when appropriate, in order to develop quantitative and predictive models to be used for an effective prevention of avian influenza epidemics.
7. Evaluating the need to review the management of the poultry chain in the light of the current epidemiological situation of HPAI viruses in wild birds and of the repeated introduction of LPAI viruses from wild to domestic species, with risk of HPAI emergence (i.e., how to conciliate the free-range breeding systems with the necessity of reinforcing biosecurity measures); stimulating private poultry industries to produce and adopt a holding-specific biosecurity guidance (adjusted to each specific husbandry system) to guarantee the enforcement of effective and sustainable AI prevention measures at a farm level.

8. Strengthening the synergies with the farming community to increase the effectiveness of animal health policies and to redefine the role of poultry companies in devising effective surveillance, control strategies and cooperative actions at an international level.
9. Improving the collection of economic data and the assessment of the direct/indirect losses caused by AI outbreaks; evaluating their impact on the poultry value chain, on the economy of developing and industrialized countries and on a social level, in order to address appropriate short-, medium- and long-term policies for the prophylaxis, control and/or eradication of AIV infections, and for the management of the recovery operations to be applied post-culling.
10. Evaluating whether the current approaches for notifying and controlling low pathogenic H5 and H7 viruses are proportionate to the sanitary risk and impact they have on the production and considering the possibility of establishing risk-mitigating measures proportionate to the risk and impact they have on poultry sector and trade.
11. Developing improved interventions for control through vaccination, using new technologies for vaccine design and delivery adapted to regional needs, taking into account significant variability in field virus requiring improved vaccine match. Promoting actively pursued research on vaccines for the different AI viruses and domestic bird species.
12. Ensure full adherence and application of OIE standards, promoting zoning and compartmentalization to reduce direct and indirect losses and to reduce impacts on poultry resources and export markets.
13. Evaluating the possibility to adapt the OIE Code in order to use AI vaccination without trade barriers for vaccinated animals and their products. Incentivizing scientific studies to evaluate the effectiveness of different scenarios to control AI outbreaks based on vaccination and/or stamping out (preventive or pre-emptive culling).
14. Strengthening the regulatory framework and the public and private financial resources needed for effective compensation policies.
15. Effective communication to all stakeholders, including farmers and consumers, of risks to animal and human health, identifying routes of transmission and how they may be mitigated and scientific opinion on poultry products that are safe for human consumption.