



OFFLU STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

27th February 2023

Participants:

WOAH: Gounalan Pavade, Gregorio Torres

FAO: Madhur Dhingra, Lidewij Wiersma

OFFLU committee: Les Sims, Ian Brown, Frank Wong, David Swayne

Questions:

- What is OFFLU doing?
- Should we be doing more?
- Is there anyone working on looking deeper into avian species which are thought to be perpetual transmission hosts? Which healthy bird species are carrying the virus?
- Do we have systematic surveillance? Do we have genomic surveillance?
- Is there any intelligence we aren't sighted on?
- Are there places where we know there is no surveillance?
- What are the other gaps?

Summary of discussion:

- Gaps in timely reporting to WAHIS. For example, notifications have been quiet in Southeast Asia perhaps due to reporting fatigue. Few countries doing tracking and live bird surveillance in poultry markets with exception of Indonesia and Cambodia. FAO RAP has a quarterly update on surveillance which could be helpful to get this information in. WOAH regional office in Tokyo arranges annual meetings for the Asia Pacific region on avian influenza and regional surveillance information on avian influenza shared from Members.
- OFFLU experts are contributing a lot and putting in extra additional hours for many tasks in network functioning and there is no need to repeat what tripartite are doing with situation updates or information which will go out-of-date quite quickly. Many members of the network are currently very busy in diagnostic activities but if the Steering/Executive Committee decide to write statements on any important influenza events, it needs to be decided clearly the mechanism (including the validation and approval process) how these statements are developed and finalised and timelines to synthesise information and share this outside the network.

- Wildlife group have always focused on surveillance and diagnosis, but it would be good to expand and include expertise in ornithology to help identify issues on species. The membership of the group needs to be revisited.
- Encourage meetings with regions with regional experts from each region to assimilate information on what is going on in wild birds and poultry. Need to address the trust issue and work within smaller groups by region and respect confidentiality of information.

Action points:

- Les to draft a one pager OFFLU statement describing the current situation and what information is missing. OFFLU well positioned to bring fact and define risk profile.
 - Amelia to produce a short summary document from OFFLU VCM reports and digest it into a one-page report picking out key points from meeting outputs.
 - Committee to assist in pulling together a list of questions for the regional meetings to ask – 6-8 critical questions to give insight (FAO).
 - Organise meetings with different OFFLU technical activity groups especially avian, epidemiology, socio economic to discuss contribution to the FAO global AI consultation meeting. Encourage those from outside the laboratory network to join in the discussion. Regional groups to meet briefly and provide one page summary based on questions.
 - Reach out to wildlife group → Scientific taskforce on wild birds and refresh membership.
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