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Deputy Prime Minister Trinh Dinh Dung has signed a decision No. 302/QĐ-TTg dated 21/03/2019 to form a national steering committee on the prevention and control of African Swine Fever (ASF), which is headed by Minister Nguyen Xuan Cuong, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development.

The committee is tasked with supporting the Government to direct and regulate the coordination among ministries, ministry-level agencies and relevant units in preventing and fighting ASF across the nation.

It will help the Prime Minister to connect with ministries, Government and Party agencies, the Viet Nam Fatherland Front and the community to mobilise resources for the implementation of urgent plans to prevent and combat the epidemic, while supervising the realisation of the plans.

NATIONAL STEERING COMMITTEE SET UP TO COMBAT AFRICAN SWINE FEVER



Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development Nguyen Xuan Cuong speaks at the meeting

Members of the committee, including representatives from various ministries, media agencies, the Viet Nam Fatherland Front Central Committee, and a number of organisations, will bear responsibilities for their tasks before the law and head of the committee.

According to the Department of Animal Health, from February 1 to March 18, ASF was reported in 294 communes, 62 districts of 19 cities and provinces. As many as 34,774 infected pigs were culled.

ASF is a dangerous and fatal disease on pigs. Currently, no vaccine or medicine has been found against the disease. The disease does not cause infections in humans.

African swine fever is a highly contagious haemorrhagic viral disease of domestic and wild pigs, not causing disease to other animals; infected pigs are capable of dying up to 100%; the disease spreads quickly, causing great damage; not infectious or cause disease in humans; viruses with high resistance, long-lived in the environment and in pig products. The disease is spread directly from infected pigs to un-infected pigs, pig products carry pathogens, or indirectly through intermediate hosts carrying pathogens (ticks, insects, rodents, migratory birds, etc.), human factors, means of transport, animal feed, breeding tools. Currently, there is no medicine to treat the disease ■

THE 21ST INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON EMERGING INFECTIOUS DISEASES



On February 26, Hanoi, the Ministry of Health of Viet Nam in cooperation with the U.S.-Japan Cooperative Medical Sciences Program organized the 21st International Conference on Emerging Infectious Diseases (EID) in the Pacific Rim.

More than 350 national and international delegates attended the meeting including managers and scientists in the field of emerging infectious diseases.

In the context of dangerous infectious diseases being continuously recorded in many places in the region and the world, this annual International Scientific Conference is an initiative under the framework of the U.S.-Japan Cooperative

Medical Sciences Program. It is held on a rotational within member countries in order to share scientific research experiences and to

consolidate and seek cooperation between countries in the region in the field of infectious diseases in general and dangerous and emerging infectious diseases in particular.

At the conference, delegates and experts shared scientific research in the field of emerging infectious disease prevention and control, including: bacterial and parasitic infectious diseases, immunization, cancer, nutrition and other aspects of One Health. Additionally, through this conference, agencies and researchers also had the opportunity to seek and enhance cooperation in the field in order to create a foundation for disease prevention and control as well as promoting public health in the Pacific Rim region.

Speaking at the conference, the Vice Minister of Ministry of Health, Dr Nguyen Viet Tien, said that the 21st International Conference On Emerging Infectious Diseases in the Pacific Rim hosted by Viet Nam would actively contribute in enhancing the role, reputation and position of Viet Nam internationally, demonstrating to the international community the responsibility of Viet Nam in collaborating on prevention and control of infectious diseases, especially dangerous and emerging diseases ■

VIET NAM'S PRIME MINISTER LAUNCHES THE VIET NAM HEALTH PROGRAMME

Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc has called on people to maintain healthy lifestyles to promote health for themselves, their families and the whole community.

The Prime Minister spoke on the matter at a ceremony held on Wednesday to launch the Viet Nam Health Programme in Hanoi on the occasion of the 64th Vietnamese Doctors' Day.

Praising the health sector's contribution to protecting the wellbeing of the country's people, the Prime Minister asked the health ministry to focus on raising awareness and instilling a sense of responsibility at all levels.

"The protection, care and improvement of health must be the responsibility of every citizen and the whole political system," the Prime Minister said. "In order to improve health conditions and develop body stature, it is needed to perform disease prevention, moderate eating, nutrition and physical training."

The Prime Minister said agencies must disseminate information about healthy behaviours in order to create a wide, sustainable movement that inspires people to change their lifestyles.

"Along with the work of preventive medicine, it is necessary to provide essential healthcare services for



Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc speaks at the event

all people can have health check-ups, early detection of illnesses, counselling, treatment and management, especially for those suffering from chronic diseases and the elderly," said the Prime Minister.

"Everyone must be taken care of from the time they are in mother's womb until they get old," said the Prime Minister.

The Viet Nam Health Programme

Approved by the Prime Minister on September 2, 2018, the Viet Nam Health Programme aims to implement Government Resolution No20-NQ/TW on improving care to protect people's health.

The programme sets out tasks to achieve 28 targets in 10 priority health fields, including: proper nutrition; physical exercise; health care for children and students; prevention

of harm caused by cigarettes and alcohol; environmental sanitation; food safety; early detection and management of non-communicable diseases; care and management of people's health; health of the elderly; and workers' health.

A comprehensive programme will be implemented nationwide to mobilise authorities, ministries, localities and social organisations at all levels to support the participation of people and communities in healthcare. The programme aims to improve the stature, life expectancy and quality of life of all Vietnamese people.

Speaking at the event, the World Health Organisation's representative in Viet Nam, Dr Kidong Park, said that the launch of the programme was a step forward in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

"The fact that the entire population performs daily health promotion behaviours such as proper diet, regular physical

activity, avoiding smoking and minimising alcohol is the key to the success of the Viet Nam Health Programme," said Park.

The representative of the Ministry of Health said that unhealthy behaviours are increasing the risk of diseases, and even causing disabilities and premature deaths. Non-communicable diseases, cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes and COPD account for more than 70 per cent of deaths.

The prevention of disease-causing factors as well as early detection and treatment at the grassroots level has not been given proper attention. Although the life expectancy of Vietnamese people is high, people live for an average of 10 years with diseases that reduce their quality of life. The stature of Vietnamese people has not improved much in recent years. The average height is only 164.5cm for males and 153 centimetres for females, an increase of only three centimetres over the past 25 years ■

VIET NAM CARRIES OUT NEW FOOD SAFETY MEASURES IN THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR

Large-scale production areas for key national products will be expanded this year under the country's action plan to ensure food safety in the agricultural sector, according to the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development.

Agricultural products in the country are classified into three main groups, including key national products, key provincial products and local specialties.

This year, the ministry has expanded the One Commune One Product Programme, in which each rural commune or district will develop its own specialty and apply advanced technologies, organic cultivation procedures and global Good Agricultural Practices in farming and production.

It is also strengthening chains for "safe" agricultural, aquatic and forestry products.

The origin of products continues to be traced, and the ministry has made efforts to seek markets for products.

According to the ministry's report, 1,845 farms with a total area of 80,000 hectares and more than 500 aquatic farms with an area of 2,618 hectares were issued Vietnamese GAP (good agricultural practice) certificates last year.

The country set up 1,249 safe food chains with 1,450 products last year.

Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development Phung Duc Tien said that food safety in the agriculture sector improved last year thanks to more unannounced inspections.

More than 70,500 agricultural material production and trade establishments were inspected. Among these, 5,223 were fined 39.8 billion VND (1.7 million USD) for violations.

The number of food safety violations last year fell by 38 percent compared to 2017 and the number of food



Thứ trưởng Bộ NN&PTNT Phùng Đức Tiến phát biểu tại hội nghị

poisoning cases dropped by 26 percent.

Nguyen Nhu Tiep, head of the National Agro-Forestry-Fisheries Quality Assurance Department under the ministry, said the Law on Cultivation and Law on Animal Husbandry contain clear criteria on quality and food safety for agricultural products.

Last year, the department reviewed the list of agricultural materials and rejected 1,774 plant protection products, 1,052 veterinary drugs, and 3,621 fertilisers, all of which were considered substandard and unsafe.

Tien said that producers and agricultural product traders should learn about the new food safety regulations to avoid problems in the export of vegetable, fruit and seafood.

The ministry will continue training staff for monitoring and managing food safety while upgrading testing equipment to ensure food safety that meets global criteria.

Last year, the export value of agro-forestry and aquatic products reached 40 billion USD. It is expected to increase to between 42 billion USD and 43 billion USD this year ■

399 DISTRICTS IDENTIFIED AS HIGH RISK AREAS FOR BIRD FLU

As many as 399 districts across Việt Nam have been identified as high risk areas for the outbreak of bird flu while another 314 districts are at low risk, according to the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD).

According to the national plan on avian influenza prevention and control from 2019 to 2025 approved last month by the Prime Minister, the high-risk districts are those that fall into at least one of three categories. First, they are located in border provinces of Quảng Ninh, Lạng Sơn, Cao Bằng, Hà Giang, Lào Cai, Lai Châu, Điện Biên and Sơn La.

Secondly, the districts had bird flu outbreaks or cases of bird flu reported at least twice in the last five years (2014-18) or within two years after they are removed from the low-risk district list.

Thirdly, the high-risk districts have more than 3,000 poultry farming households, over 100,000 poultry, over 100 duck farming households, or over 11,000 ducks.

Low-risk districts are those that fall in at least one of following categories including no bird flu outbreak or bird flu virus reported in the last five years, their poultry population is less than 100,000 poultry and less than 3,000 households raise poultry in a district.

Head of the Epidemiology Division under the Department of Animal Health Nguyễn Văn Long said on Friday that the zoning which identifies high/low risk areas for bird flu outbreak was one of 12 key measures Việt Nam was taking to better prevent and control bird flu until 2015.

Other measures included disease detection, response and control, vaccination, animal quarantine, and poultry slaughtering control. The country would also develop more disease-free production zones and safe production chains in conformity with recommendations of the World Organisation of Animal Health (OIE), Long said.

Now, there are six disease-free poultry production zones in Việt Nam and 654 poultry farms are certificated disease-free.

Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development Phùng Đức Tiến said monitoring the bird flu virus circulation effectively helped prevent and control bird flu.

The Department of Animal Health co-operated with the Food and Agriculture Organisation and OIE to take poultry samples for monitoring each year.

Tiến called for continued international assistance to Việt Nam in dealing with diseases including poultry diseases.

In Việt Nam, the avian influenza virus A/H5N1 in poultry was first reported in late 2003. At that time, Việt Nam was one of the first countries to declare an epidemic of this virus and suffered heavy losses when more than 45 million poultry were culled between 2003 and 2006.

Between 2007 and 2013, about 200,000 poultry were killed because of bird flu each year. Between 2014 to March, 2019, about 90,000 poultry were killed because of bird flu each year.

From 2004 to 2014, 127 people were infected with A/H5N1, of them, 64 victims died.

Since April, 2014, no one in Việt Nam has been infected with bird flu.

According to the agriculture ministry, over 12 million households across the country raise poultry, mostly on a small scale, which is said to cause difficulties in applying synchronised disease-free production measures ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

THE FIRST REFERENCE LABORATORY FOR DRUG RESISTANCE IN VIET NAM

On the afternoon of 5 February 2019, Central Hospital of Tropical Diseases (Hanoi) launched the reference laboratory for antibiotic resistance. This is the first modern laboratory in Viet Nam, helping the Ministry of Health in implementing the preventing drug resistance strategy. The laboratory confirms the results of culture, isolation and bacteria identification and collects and analyses new and special resistance cases.

The laboratory is located at Unit 2 of the Central Hospital of Tropical Diseases in Dong Anh district, Hanoi. It has received more than VND 60 billion from the UK's Fleming Fund for its construction, and has been provided with professional support from the Oxford University (UK). The function of the laboratory is confirming the results of culture, isolation, identification and producing antibiotics; collecting and analysing data on antibiotic resistance, new and special resistance cases; training technical standardization, transferring technology on culture, isolation, identification and producing antibiotics...

Associate Professor Nguyen Vu Trung, Deputy Director of the Hospital, said that the laboratory is equipped with the most modern machines and equipment, meeting international standards for the supervision of antibiotic resistance. This room will contribute a lot to the monitoring system with the aim of reducing the risk of bacterial antibiotic resistance.

Drug-resistant bacteria occur in many countries around the world. The world is running out of new generation antibiotics. In Viet Nam, the problem of antibiotic resistance is getting worse. Most types of bacteria have demonstrated resistance to antibiotics, with some resistant to many types and some even resistant to all antibiotics. The resistance rate to carbapenem antibiotics, the most powerful antibiotic group until now, is up to 50%, especially gram-negative bacteria like E.coli.

Antibiotics were first released in the early 1940s and were a major turning point in the history of human medicine.

Antibiotics have saved millions of lives from infectious diseases such as tuberculosis, pneumonia, diphtheria, meningitis, septicaemia. However, due to the natural selection process of bacteria and the improper use of antibiotics in medical and agriculture processes, the antibiotic resistance of bacteria has increased ■

UK-FUNDED DENGUE FORECASTING SYSTEM INTRODUCED IN VIET NAM

The UN Development Programme (UNDP), the World Health Organisation (WHO) and HR Wallingford company on March 19 launched a pioneering dengue forecasting system in Viet Nam, hoping to curb the spread of this disease in the country.

The D-MOSS project, funded by the UK Space Agency and led by HR Wallingford, a British civil engineering and environmental hydraulics consultancy, will be implemented in Hanoi and in Khanh Hoa, Dak Lak and Dong Nai provinces from 2019 to 2021. The project uses a combination of satellite information, weather forecasting and historical data on previous outbreaks to create an early warning system for potential dengue danger zones.

At the launching ceremony, Mr Kamal Malhotra, the UN Resident Coordinator in Viet Nam, described the project as a wonderful initiative which helps the Vietnamese health sector to combat dengue fever's impacts.

Highlighting the UK's strength in space technology, the UK Ambassador to Viet Nam Mr Gareth Ward expressed his delight at seeing the Space Agency and its partners introduce a new tool to help Viet Nam predict and respond to dengue outbreaks in a more precise and effective manner, adding that the project is a vivid illustration for the UK's commitment to supporting Viet Nam to realise the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Dengue fever is a periodic disease in Viet Nam. It has a close relationship to rapid urbanisation processes, environmental pollution, climate change, and poor access to basic services. In 2017, the country suffered a major outbreak with more than 170,000 dengue cases ■

SOLUTIONS TO CURB AFRICAN SWINE FEVER DISCUSSED

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development Nguyen Xuan Cuong chaired a meeting in Hanoi on March 14 to discuss solutions to curb and prevent further outbreaks of African swine fever (ASF), which is developing and likely to spread widely.

He recommended focusing on the prevention of the disease in small-scale pig-rearing households, cleaning the breeding facilities, and strictly managing the transportation of pigs.

ASF has occurred in 17 cities and provinces in the north and, if not controlled well, it could spread to the south and become more dangerous as the region is home to key livestock localities such as Dong Nai and Ho Chi Minh City.

Therefore, it is necessary to strictly control the transport of pigs on roads to the south, the minister stressed.

He also suggested implementing policies to support the destruction of infected pigs while raising public awareness of the issue.

Director of the Department of Animal Health Pham Van Dong said that as of March 14, ASF had been reported in 221 communes in 52 districts of 17 cities and provinces.

The total count of culled pigs was 23,422, he said, adding that most of the ASF outbreaks were found in small-scale pig farming households.

ASF does not affect humans, but causes haemorrhagic fever in pigs and wild boars that is almost always fatal. There is currently no antidote or vaccine, with the key preventative measure once an outbreak occurs being mass culling of infected livestock. The disease typically spreads by contact between infected pigs and can inflict massive economic damage on farms.

On the same day, Minister of Industry and Trade Tran Tuan Anh had a meeting with the Market Surveillance Agency and relevant agencies under the ministry to discuss measures to minimise the impact of the disease on the market ■

VIET NAM'S PRIME MINISTER APPROVES THE NATIONAL PLAN ON AVIAN INFLUENZA PREVENTION AND CONTROL FOR 2019-2025.

The Prime Minister has approved the national plan on avian influenza prevention and control for the period of 2019-2025 at the Decision No. 172/QĐ-TTg 2019 dated 13 February 2019.

The plan aims to control the large-scale outbreak and spread of avian influenza; proactively monitor the situation for the early detection and warning, and the application of prevention and control solutions; create favourable conditions for the successful construction of avian influenza-free poultry farming regions and establishments; and contribute to minimizing negative impacts of avian influenza on the public health, food security and commercial activities in Viet Nam.

Specific goals:

- Organize good control of epidemics, proactively monitor the situation to detect and handle outbreaks in a timely fashion, and prevent epidemics from spreading on a large scale.
- Prevent new branches and strains of new dangerous viruses from entering and spreading widely in Viet Nam.
- Organize the vaccination for poultry at a minimum rate of 80% of the flocks subject to vaccination.
- Successfully build disease-free poultry production regions and chains following the OIE's recommendations, aiming to meet domestic consumption and exports of poultry and poultry products.
- Contribute to minimizing or preventing human infections with dangerous avian influenza strains (H5 and H7).
- The main contents of the plan include zoning in service of effective control of avian influenza epidemics, the monitoring of the epidemics, and the handling of avian influenza outbreaks ■

RELEVANT LEGAL DOCUMENTS

DOCUMENTS ISSUED BY THE GOVERNMENT

Decree No. 06/2019/NĐ-CP dated 22 January 2019 (active on 10 March 2019) of the Government of Viet Nam on "Management of endangered, precious and rare flora and fauna and implementation of the International Convention on trading of endangered wild animal and plant species".

<https://thuvienphapluat.vn/van-ban/Tai-nguyen-Moi-truong/Nghi-dinh-06-2019-ND-CP-quan-ly-thuc-vat-rung-dong-vat-rung-nguy-cap-quy-hiem-405883.aspx>

Directive No. 04/CT-TTg dated 20 February 2019 of the Prime Minister on "Implementation of priority activities on the management and control of African Swine Fever"

<https://thuvienphapluat.vn/van-ban/Linh-vuc-khac/Chi-thi-04-CT-TTg-2019-trien-khai-giai-phap-cap-bach-khong-che-benh-dich-ta-lon-Chau-phi-407190.aspx?ac=emails>

Decision No. 172/QĐ-TTg dated 13 February 2019 of the Prime Minister on approval of the National plan on avian influenza prevention and control for the period 2019-2025.

https://cms.luatvietnam.vn/tai-file-quyet-dinh-172-qd-ttg-thu-tuong-chinh-phu-170607-d1/uploaded/VIETLAWFILE/2019/2/170607_180219180200.pdf.aspx

Decision No. 302/QĐ-TTg dated 21 March 2019 of the Prime Minister on establishment of the national steering committee on the prevention and control of African Swine Fever (ASF)

https://cms.luatvietnam.vn/tai-file-quyet-dinh-302-qd-ttg-2019-thanh-lap-ban-chi-dao-quoc-gia-phong-chong-dich-ta-lon-chau-phi-171467-d1/uploaded/VIETLAWFILE/2019/3/302_QD-TTg_210319165022.pdf.aspx

DOCUMENTS ISSUED BY MARD

Decision No. 533/QĐ-BNN-QLCL dated 14 February 2019 of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development on the "Action plan for food security in the Agriculture sector during 2019"

<https://thuvienphapluat.vn/van-ban/The-thao-Y-te/Quyết-dinh-533-QĐ-BNN-QLCL-2019-hanh-dong-bao-dam-an-toan-thuc-pham-linh-vuc-nong-nghiep-407541.aspx>

DOCUMENTS ISSUED BY MOH

Decision No. 127/QĐ-BYT dated 15 January 2019 of the Ministry of Health on approval of the "National guidelines on Antimicrobial resistance surveillance"

<https://thuvienphapluat.vn/van-ban/The-thao-Y-te/Quyết-dinh-127-QĐ-BYT-2019-huong-dan-thuc-hien-giam-sat-quoc-gia-ve-khang-khang-sinh-405219.aspx>

ONE HEALTH UPCOMING EVENTS

April, 2019

World Health Day: Universal health coverage: everyone, everywhere.
7 April, 2019

International Conference on One Health Antimicrobial Resistance (ICOHAR 2019)
16-18 April, 2019
Jaarbeusplein, Utrecht, Netherlands

World Malaria Day
25 April 2019
Geneva – Paris

May, 2019

International Conference on One Health (ICOH 2019)
London, United Kingdom
May 23 - 24, 2019

One Health Azerbaijan, 2nd International Conference: One Health - Problems & Solutions
Baku, Azerbaijan
May 24-25-2019

June, 2019

GHSA 2019
Time: 18 - 20 June 2019 8:00 AM - 5PM
Venue: International Convention Center, Sydney, Australia

RECENT PUBLICATIONS IN ONE HEALTH

World Health Statistics 2018: Monitoring health for the SDGs. Published: January 2019.
<https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/272596/9789241565585-eng.pdf?ua=1>

GHSA Action Package Renewal – 2019 Action Packages.
<https://www.ghsagenda.org/docs/default-source/default-document-library/ghsa-2024-files/action-package-renewal---2019-action-packages.pdf>

Summary of the 3rd Regional Workshop of GHSA Detect 1 - "GHSA 2024: Advancing Collaborative Efforts Across Relevant GHSA Action Packages"
<https://www.ghsagenda.org/docs/default-source/default-document-library/3rd-regional-workshop-of-ghsa-detect-1-ghsa-2024-advancing-collaborative-efforts-across-relevant-ghsa-action-packages.pdf?sfvrsn=4>

2018 Investment factsheet for CDC'S Global Antimicrobial Resistance projects. Available online at:
<https://wwwn.cdc.gov/ARInvestments/PDFDocs/Global-Summary.pdf>

Emerging Infectious Diseases Journal, Volume 25, Number 2—February 2019
<https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/eid/content/25/2/pdfs/v25-n2.pdf>

Innovations to Stop Emerging and Zoonotic Infections
<https://www.cdc.gov/ncezid/pdf/innovations-stop-infections-H.pdf>

The Mandate for a Global "One Health" Approach to Antimicrobial Resistance Surveillance. Available at URL:
<https://doi.org/10.4269/ajtmh.18-0973>

Regional symposium on pig research and ILRI One Health activities updates Q1 2019. Published on Feb 12, 2019. Available at URL:
<https://www.slideshare.net/ILRI/one-healthupdate>

Characterizing Antimicrobial Use in the Livestock Sector in Three South East Asian Countries (Indonesia, Thailand, and Vietnam). Published: 25 March 2019. Available at URL:
<https://doi.org/10.3390/antibiotics8010033>

Chinese – Origin H7N9 Avian Influenza spread in poultry and human exposure. Published on February 2019. Available at URL:
<http://www.fao.org/3/CA3206EN/ca3206en.pdf>

FAO Publication Catalogue 2019. Published on March 2019. Available at URL:
<http://www.fao.org/3/ca3601en/ca3601en.pdf>

<p>Dengue Situation Updates 2019. https://iris.wpro.who.int/handle/10665.1/14329</p>
<p>Influenza Situation Updates 2019. https://iris.wpro.who.int/handle/10665.1/14330</p>
<p>Working for better health in the Western Pacific. https://iris.wpro.who.int/bitstream/handle/10665.1/14334/WPR-2019-RDO-001-eng.pdf</p>
<p>Antimicrobial Resistance Hub. Published on Mar 8, 2019. Available at URL: https://www.slideshare.net/ILRI/amr-barbara</p>

