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ADDRESSING INFECTIOUS DISEASE RISKS AT THE HUMAN-ANIMAL-ECOSYSTEM INTERFACE IN VIET NAM



(Photo: FAO)

On 3rd February 2015, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) in cooperation with the Ministry of Health (MOH) through the Partnership on Avian and Human Influenza (PAHI) co-organized the 3rd National One Health Conference with the theme of infectious disease risks at the human-animal-ecosystem interface in Viet Nam. The meeting was chaired

by Vice Minister Vu Van Tam, MARD and Vice Minister Nguyen Thanh Long, MOH. Besides, Mr. Ted Osius, Ambassador of the United States of America to Viet Nam, and Ms. Pratibha Mehta, United Nations Resident Coordinator to Viet Nam also attended and had the opening remarks at the opening session of the conference. More than 100 participants coming from 22 Vietnamese and 18 international agencies joined the meeting.

In recent years there has been increasing global attention to the risk of new, re-emerging and recurring infectious diseases (often referred to generally as emerging infectious diseases, or EIDs) in humans, livestock and wildlife arising at the human-animal-ecosystem interface, which have the potential for substantial, rapid and extremely far-reaching consequences to human health, livelihoods, economic development and many other issues. In response to these threats, Viet Nam has been progressively moving towards the application of a One Health approach, which aims to bring together the key related actors across multiple sectors and disciplines to identify potential public health risks related to infectious disease and to undertake aligned and coordinated prevention and control actions. The conference was an important opportunity to take stock of these efforts.

“Viet Nam has been applying its utmost efforts, together with other countries in this region and the wider world, and with the important support of the international technical agencies and other important development partners, to contain the

risk posed by avian influenza H5N1 and other emerging infectious diseases”, said Vice Minister Vu Van Tam, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development.

Following up the success of the 2nd One Health Conference held in April 2013, the 3rd One Health Conference provided an opportunity for different national and international One Health stakeholders in Viet Nam to give presentations on their activities and have important and productive discussions on how to take forward One Health in Viet Nam. Joint efforts to address disease threats at the human-animal-environment interface both inside and outside of Viet Nam were highlighted. The participants also discussed some key aspects, including efforts to strengthen national coordination mechanisms, the proposal for revising our Partnership to strengthen its One Health identity and purpose, and updates on the Global Health Security Agenda, One Health research initiatives, and efforts to strengthen the identification and management of risks related to wildlife farming and trade. Besides, key directions and planning requirements to sustain and strengthen One Health in Viet Nam in the future were outlined.



(Photo: PAHI)

“Vietnam has made good progress to date but still needs to develop a strategic One Health (OH) coordination mechanism along with an OH action plan and road map”. Said Pratibha Mehta.

It was hoped and expected that the first annual Viet Nam One Health Forum would be organized next year by the new One Health Partnership ■

INAUGURATION OF THE EMERGENCY OPERATION CENTER IN VIET NAM

The Minister of Health Nguyen Thi Kim Tien and US Ambassador to Viet Nam Ted Osius cut the ribbon to officially inaugurate Emergency Operation Center at a ceremony in Hanoi on 3 February, 2015.

This was one of the follow-up activities to the participation of Vietnam into Global Health Security Agenda (GHS) developed and committed by US Government, international organizations and other countries. At a GHS conference in September 2014, Viet Nam’s Ministry of Health committed to play an active role as one of two leading countries for the action package on prevention and control of zoonotic diseases as well as a contributing country on the action package

to apply and develop the EOC model in order to quickly and effectively response to global health issues and protect human health. Thus, Viet Nam will implement prevention and control measures, applying a One Health approach involving different sectors including human health, agriculture, information, communication, education, tourism, national defense, public security, environment, other related sectors, and international organizations, and will share lesson learned and challenges with international community.

Speaking at the ceremony, Minister Nguyen Thi Kim Tien said “Viet Nam is located in an area which has been identified as one of several global “hot spots” with a significantly heightened risk for health security. In previous years, Viet Nam was one of the first countries which successfully controlled SARS, effectively addressed to Avian influenza A/H5N1, and actively carried out surveillance for H7N9 and Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS CoV) in order to prevent disease transmission in the community”.

Ambassador Ted Osius said that under the framework

of GHS Agenda, the US Government is providing the EOC with equipment and technical support to improve the center's functions. He stressed that the EOC is an example of 20 years of US-Vietnam co-operation with both partners' commitments to building upon a foundation that led to the Comprehensive Partnership and the recent GHS Agenda.

Disease control experiences have shown that early and timely information sharing, active facilitation of resources, and joint participation of international and national stakeholders are extremely important. Previously, the EOC was established under the Decision number 1424/QĐ-BYT by the MOH dated 02 May 2013. The MOH activated the EOC during the preparedness of Ebola threat and the prevention and control of avian influenza and other emerging infectious diseases.



Minister of Health Nguyen Thi Kim Tien and US Ambassador to Viet Nam Ted Osius cut the ribbon at inauguration ceremony of the EOC (Photo: Vietnamplus)

The EOC has following tasks:

1. To be the point of contact for receiving, summarizing, analyzing, and sharing information of urgent epidemic situations from ministries, sectors, local governments and state organizations as well as from domestic and international individuals and organizations, which will be used for urgent epidemic prevention and control.
2. To develop plans, monitor and coordinate activities between Sub-Committees under the MOH's Steering Committee for the Prevention and Control of Dangerous and Emerging Diseases in order to implement appropriate responses in urgent epidemic situations.
3. To advise the MOH's Steering Committee for the Prevention and Control of Dangerous and Emerging Diseases in the coordination with relevant agencies to mobilize and regulate rapid response teams, mobile emergency teams or health staff from preventive medicine units, healthcare facilities and other related forces to participate in urgent epidemic response, prevention and control.
4. To collaborate with related agencies and organizations to mobilize domestic and international resources and implement international cooperation activities for epidemic response, prevention and control; organize the implementation of projects on urgent epidemic response, prevention and control that have been assigned ■

ENHANCING WILDLIFE FARM MANAGEMENT

On 15 January 2015, Directive No. 396/CT-BNN-TCLN was issued by Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development with purpose of enhancing effective risk prevention in farms of dangerous animals. It provides guidance from Provincial People's Committee Chair

persons to provincial functional agencies in the application of measures for significantly improving management over wildlife farming locations as well as trade and usage activities.



Crocodile farm in Ben Tre (Photo: Wikipedia)

Measures suggested in the Directive include:

1. Thorough inspection over farms of dangerous animals, with special attention to some species namely elephant, tiger, bear, alligator, python and snake within the examined area, including zoos, circuses and related facilities; and revoking farm registration licences and confiscate aggressive animals in the locations with insufficient safety and animals housing standards.
2. Planning and gradually separating aggressive wildlife farms from residential areas and areas with high potential for impact from disasters, in order to secure safety in places where aggressive animals may be on the loose.
3. Regularly conduct examination and surveillance to early detect, prevent and appropriately punish the acts of violating laws and regulations on wildlife management and illegal trading, transferring and using wild animals.
4. Set out requirements on wildlife farming standards and risks prevention measures, taking into account the local situation in each area as well as current law and regulations; instantly response in case of animals attack or escape.
5. Implement communication, education and dissemination activities about laws and regulations related to wildlife farming management; increase awareness of risks and applicable methods to secure safety in wildlife farming. Require wildlife farm owners' commitment and implementation of measures towards absolute safety for human, environment sanitary and diseases prevention.

News in brief

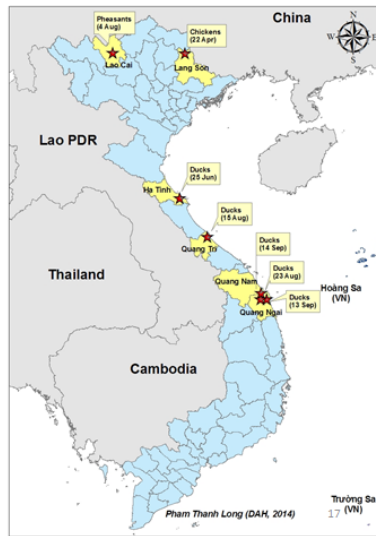
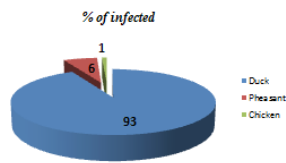
A book named "Influenza in Humans and Animals" by Assoc.Prof.Dr Nguyen Ba Hien and co-authors was published by the Agricultural Publishing House in December 2014. This is the first book to systematically present intensive and updated knowledge on influenza viruses in humans and animals in Viet Nam, applying a One Health approach. The book targets a wide range of readers including veterinarians, medical doctors, researchers, human health and animal health management officers, agricultural extension staff, lecturers, students and farmers, in order to enhance understanding on infectious disease in Viet Nam, contributing to the National programme on prevention and control of influenza and protecting community health. PAHI Secretariat has a number of books to provide related partners as a useful reference.

The document "Estimating the economic impacts of emerging infectious diseases (EIDs) in animals in Viet Nam" by Anni McLeod, Hoang Xuan Trung and Nguyen Van Long, written in English in July 2013, was translated into Vietnamese language by PAHI Office. The book was a report to project "Support to Knowledge Management and Policy Dialogue through Partnership on Avian and Pandemic Influenza for the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development. The impetus for this report came from two sources including a continuing concern about the economic impacts of emerging infectious diseases of livestock in Viet Nam, and the wish to provide a comprehensive, up-to-date estimate for use by planners and policy makers. The report covered two decades – past impacts from 2000 to 2010, and possible future impacts from 2011-2020. The document can be downloaded at www.onehealth.org.vn or available in hard-copy at PAHI Office.

A Wildlife Farms Survey Dissemination Workshop was organized by the Emergency Centre for Transboundary Animal Diseases (ECTAD) of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Viet Nam and the Viet Nam Administration of Forestry (VNForest) within the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) in Hochiminh city on 6 February 2015. The workshop shared information on the extent and types of wildlife farmed in southern Viet Nam Provinces through a baseline census. This research is a milestone for Viet Nam as it offers a starting point to bring further commitment and attention to making wildlife farming safer in Viet Nam. The census research was financed by the USAID Emerging Pandemic Threats (EPT) Program and implemented with EPT partner PREVENT.

A REVIEW OF ANIMAL DISEASE PREVENTION IN 2014

Distribution of A/H5N6 virus in Viet Nam in 2014



(Photo: Department of Animal Health)

On 10 February 2014, the Vice Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development Vu Van Tam chaired a meeting of the National Steering Committee for Prevention and Control of Avian Influenza to review livestock disease prevention in 2014.

In the meeting, Mr. Pham Van Dong, the Director of the Department of Animal Health delivered a summary of the global diseases situation and the particular situation in Vietnam during the past year. In 2014, outbreaks were reported in 158 villages/wards in 93 districts of 33 provinces/cities. There were 212,600 infections and 101,900 deaths recorded. In comparison with the same period last year, the number of outbreaks, dead and culled poultry increased 3 times this year, however, the number of affected birds accounted for only a small percentage of total poultry at 0.017%. Some influenza A/H5N6 cases were detected in several mountainous provinces in the central and the northern regions. There is no evidence at this time suggesting the circulation of influenza A/H7N9 in Vietnam.

About the Foot-and-Mouth Disease (FMD) situation in pigs, there were 81 outbreaks in 81 villages in 31 districts of 13 provinces recorded in 2014, causing 2,978 infections and 172 deaths. Compared to that of 2013, the FMD zone was narrower this year, and the number of affected villages was approximately halved and the number of culled cattle dropped by 7 times, most cases were in buffalo.

In 2014, 29 provinces reported suspected dog rabies cases within which 128 dogs were culled. With regard to human rabies prevention and treatment, post-exposure rabies prophylaxis was applied to around 333,343 people bitten by dogs. There were 61 deaths distributed in 29 provinces and cities, a decrease of 31 cases compared to 2013.

Porcine Reproductive and Respiratory Syndrome (PRRS) in pig recorded a prevention recorded a notable achievement as the disease has remained under absolute control since July 2013. No detection of PRRS cases has been reported throughout the country since that date.

In the upcoming period, infectious diseases, especially those circulating in poultry still pose a significant threat to public health. Therefore, the National Steering Committee members reached consensus on conducting Viet Nam's transformation from passive to active disease prevention in order to minimize infectious zoonotic diseases, which also contributes to livestock production growth. Besides, the Vice Minister also emphasized the need to strengthen the

News in brief

The first quarterly workshop of One Health Communication Network (OHCN) in 2015 was organized in Hanoi on 31 March. The meeting focused on updating ongoing and upcoming communication activities for EIDs of OHCN members, sharing information about activities of Global Health Security Agenda in Viet Nam, sharing experiences from recent international and Viet Nam One Health Conferences. Participants also discussed on the joint action plan for OHCN in the year 2015.

The 3rd International One Health Congress (IOHC) was successfully organized in Amsterdam on 15th-18th March, 2015. IOHC2015 brings science and policy together, aiming at the early recognition and control of emerging infectious diseases, now and in the years to come. Prevention at the source is the overall congress theme, as this is key in controlling diseases that have a growing impact on humans, animals and their ecosystems.

The 3rd International One Health Congress focused on multidisciplinary collaboration involving human, veterinary and eco-health disciplines, other life sciences, social sciences, and informatics. The One Health approach is needed to ensure an improved and sustainable human and animal health and is key to improve monitoring, analysis and prevention of novel global threats posed by re-emerging diseases and food safety hazards. The participants from Viet Nam included Mr. Vu Van Minh, Deputy Director-General of International Cooperation Department, MARD, Ms. Dao Thu Trang and Mr. David Payne from PAHI Secretariat and Dr. Pham Duc Phuc from VOHUN.

implementation of a One Health approach in diseases prevention and control.

In addition to the inter-sector cooperation among the ministries represented in the National Steering Committee, the most important determinant of effective prevention is the active participation of local authorities at all levels. The actual situation has shown that timely response to scattered outbreaks in different locations by local authorities played

a role in preventing wider spread of disease.

According to Mr. Pham Van Dong, on the veterinary side, directions will be provided from the local level upwards in order to have early detection of shortcomings and challenges, and to have timely responses. This strategy derives from recent inspection results which indicate that effective work by farmers and provincial veterinary staff would contribute to effective prevention nationwide ■

LAUNCHING THE EMERGING PANDEMIC THREATS 2 PROGRAM IN VIET NAM

On 10 March 2015, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) organized a workshop in Hanoi to launch Phase Two of the Emerging Pandemic Threats program (EPT-2). Mr. Joakim Parker, USAID's Mission Director, Mr. Tran Kim Long, Director-General of International Cooperation Department, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, and Prof. Dr. Tran Duc Phu, Director-General of General Department of Preventive Medicine, Ministry of Health, chaired and made opening speeches at the meeting.

The global EPT-2 program builds on cooperation and partnerships over the past decade among USAID and its partners, including successful cooperation on Avian Influenza, to prevent and combat newly emerging diseases at their source, including those of animal origin. EPT-2 will help more than 20 focus countries in Africa and Asia detect viruses with pandemic potential, improve laboratory capacity to support surveillance, strengthen national and local capacities to respond in an appropriate and timely manner, and provide education on ways to prevent exposure to these dangerous pathogens.

In Viet Nam over the past 5 years, the first phase of the EPT program has worked with and supported several national partners such as the Department of Animal Health, the Viet Nam University of Agriculture, and the Department of Livestock Production, within the agriculture and rural development sector, as well as the General Department



EPT-2 partners (Photo: PAHI)

of Preventive Medicine, the National Institute of Hygiene and Epidemiology, the Hanoi Medical University, the Hanoi School of Public Health and other counterparts within the health sector, to carry out a range of important initiatives for prevention and control of emerging infectious diseases.

“This cooperation represents a consolidation and extension of our earlier efforts and cooperation, building, reinforcing and taking progressive further steps in our capacity building efforts on surveillance, laboratories, research, communications and other areas”, said Mr. Tran Kim Long at the conference.

The USAID's EPT-2 program is being implemented in Vietnam with technical collaboration from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and with partners in three new project areas: Predict 2, One Health Workforce, and Preparedness and Response.

Since 2005, USAID has provided more than \$60 million to support Vietnam's programs to combat avian influenza and other pandemic threats ■

RELEVANT LEGAL DOCUMENTS

DOCUMENTS ISSUED BY MARD

Directive No. 396/CT-BNN-TCLN dated 15/01/2015 by MARD on enhancing management of farming of dangerous animals.

Directive No. 1257/CT-BNN-TY dated 02/02/2015 by MARD on setting priorities for prevention of avian influenza and different strains of infectious influenza virus strains

Official Letter No. 1962/BNN-TY dated 06/03/2015 by MARD on development of a working plan for utilizing local budget in zoonotic disease prevention

Official Telegraph No. 2144/CĐ-BNN-TY dated 13/03/2015 by MARD on prevention of Foot and Mouth Disease in pigs and prevention and blocking smuggling cattle across borders.

DOCUMENTS ISSUED BY MOH

Official Letter No. 9447/BYT-DP dated 24/12/2014 to Provincial Peoples' Committee Chairpersons on enhancing prevention of influenza and other diseases during the 2015 Tet Holiday.

Official Letter No. 598/BYT-DP dated 26/01/2015 to Provincial People's Committee Chairpersons on enhancing prevention of avian influenza transmission to humans.

Directive No. 02/CT-BYT dated 26/01/2015 of the Ministry of Health on ensuring public health services during the 2015 Tet Holiday.

UPCOMING ONE HEALTH EVENTS

April 2015

World Health Day

Theme for this year: Food Safety
07 April, 2015

Table-top Simulation Exercise

DAH, GDPM, FAO, WHO
Lang Son, 08 April, 2015
Hanoi, 10 April, 2015

Veterinary Law Project meeting

Tentatively: Hai Phong, April 2015

May 2015

GHSA Meeting

"Step towards Regional Strategic Collaboration in Asia-Pacific on Workforce Development, National Laboratory System Strengthening & Antimicrobial Resistance Prevention to Respond Global Challenges"
Bangkok, 06-08 May, 2015
<http://www.grease-network.org/news/ghsa-meeting>

Ebola Simulation Exercise

FETN office/ASEAN+3
Quang Ninh, 18-20 May, 2015

WVA/WMA Global Conference on One Health

Drivers towards One Health "Strengthening collaboration between medical and animal doctors"
Madrid, 21-22 May, 2015
<http://www.worldvet.org/index.php>

August 2015

The 25th World Association for the Advancement of Veterinary Parasitology (WAAVP) Conference

Liverpool, August 16-20/2015
<http://www.waavp2015.com>

International Conference on prevention and control of zoonotic diseases

MOH Viet Nam, MOH Indonesia, USCDC
Tentatively: Hanoi, August/2015

September 2015

32nd World Veterinary Congress

Istanbul, 13-17 September, 2015
<http://www.wvcistanbul2015.com>

RECENT PUBLICATIONS IN ONE HEALTH

One medicine one science: a framework for exploring challenges at the intersection of animals, humans, and the environment. D.A. Travis, P. Srirama Rao, C. Cardona, C.J. Steer, S. Kennedy, et al. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*. December 2014. doi: 10.1111/nyas.12601. <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/nyas.12601/pdf>

Starting from the bench – prevention and control of foodborne and zoonotic diseases. K. Vongkamjan, M. Wiedmann. *Preventive Veterinary Medicine*. November 2014. pii: S0167-5877(14)00378-X. doi: 10.1016/j.prevetmed.2014.11.004. <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S016758771400378X>

An expanded One Health model: integrating social science and One Health to inform study of the human- animal interface. S. Woldehanna, S. Zimicki. *Social Science & Medicine*. November 2014. pii:S0277-9536(14)00719-9. doi:10.1016/j.socscimed.2014.10.059. <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0277953614007199>

Antimicrobial resistance and disease control: making One Health work. *Veterinary Record*. November 2014. 175(19):473-474. doi:10.1136/vr.g6458. <http://veterinaryrecord.bmj.com/content/175/19/473.long>

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Improving animal health for poverty alleviation and sustainable livelihoods. A. Stringer. *Veterinary Record*. November 2014. 175:526-529. doi:10.1136/vr.g6281. <http://veterinaryrecord.bmj.com/content/175/21/526.full>

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The global One Health paradigm: challenges and opportunities for tackling infectious diseases at the human, animal, and environment interface in low-resource settings. W.A. Gebreyes, J. Dupouy-Camet, M.J. Newport, C.J. Oliveira, L.S. Schlesinger, et al. *PLoS Neglected Tropical Diseases*. November 2014. 8(11):e3257. doi:10.1371/journal.pntd.0003257. <http://www.plosntds.org/article/info%3Adoi%2F10.1371%2Fjournal.pntd.0003257>

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Designed by Danko Joint Stock Company

Publication permit No: 06-80/LD, dated 12 August 2014 - Comments are welcomed by PAHI Secretariat

1st Floor Bld. B1, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development - No. 10 Nguyen Cong Hoan, Ba Dinh, Hanoi

Tel: (84-4) 37711 356/357 ❖ Fax: (84-4) 37711 362 ❖ Email: pahi.secretariat@gmail.com ❖ Website: <http://www.onehealth.org.vn>