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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The workshop “Crossing Borders in HPAI Control Training” took place in the Charlemagne Building, Brussels, on April 2nd, 2008. This activity was organised within the framework of the EU’s “Better Training for Safer Food” Initiative. The purpose is to ensure (i) high level of food safety, animal health, animal welfare and plan health, (ii) uniform, efficient approach towards official controls, (iii) level playing field for business and (iv) co-operation with third countries to increase trade and familiarity with EU standards. Member States, associated countries, third countries and international organisations attended. A total of 78 delegates participated, including some 12 DG SANCO and EC delegates.

The meeting was opened by Ms. Paola Testori Coggi, Deputy Director General.

The purpose of the workshop was to address the following topics: review of training and/or assistance activities related to HPAI; exchange of experiences of the "Better training for Safer Food" training programme on the Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) and follow-up, including results of questionnaires; exchange of general information on the HPAI situation and most recent developments in fighting the disease from a global perspective; exchange with other international organisations active in HPAI control and ways to address shortcomings.

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Presentations were delivered on global training programmes in HPAI and their effectiveness; experiences of training in HPAI in the Balkans, Eastern Europe and Turkey; HPAI training needs in affected non-EU countries and the roles of OIE and FAO; training related options for HPAI control in Africa; and DG SANCO HPAI training initiatives in ASEAN countries. Five highly experienced tutors including the chairman of the workshop were selected by the Contractor based on years of experience in the concerned fields, and approved by the Commission these were drawn from UK, Bulgaria, Italy, Kenya and the Netherlands. In the afternoon 3 discussion groups were formed and they covered organisational issues of training; technical issues to be covered by HPAI training; and DG SANCO contribution in HPAI training. Reporters from each discussion group presented the conclusions of the discussions at the general assembly.

The workshop was well attended; this was demonstrated by the large number of delegates. Delegates attended from most EU Member States, Candidate and Accession Countries, Third Countries, ENP's, international organisations, associated countries and DG SANCO representatives, all participated in the in-depth discussions and high evaluation scores were given to the tutors.

It brought forward clear conclusions and recommendations to use for future activities in the "Better Training for Safer Food" programme of DG SANCO.

1. Delegates and attendance

Most Member States, Associated Countries (Norway, Switzerland), Candidate Countries (Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Montenegro, Macedonia, and Turkey), Accession Countries (Croatia) Third countries (Belarus, Cambodia, Georgia, India, Indonesia, Moldova, Myanmar and Thailand), International Organisations (ILRI, IAEA, OIE, WB, FVO, EFSA), and several persons active in previous DG SANCO and EC funded HPAI projects attended the workshop. Mr. Salvatore Magazzu, Mr. Lauro Panella and Mrs. Isabelle Rollier represented DG SANCO Training Group. A total of 66 delegates attended, 6 registered delegates did not attend, and 12 DG SANCO/EC representatives attended.

2. TECHNICAL CONTENT

This section deals with the technical content of the workshop activities.

2.1. Agenda: Format

The workshop commenced April 2nd at 9 am. Prof. Cecil McMurray, Dr. Giovanni Cattoli and Dr. Remco Schrijver chaired the 3 Discussion Groups.

2.2. Opening Remarks

Ms. Paola Testori Coggi, Deputy Director General opened the Workshop underlining the importance of HPAI control and DG SANCO's ambition to contribute to it in the 'Better Training for Safer Food Programme'.

Dr Barbara Logar, Veterinary Administration, Slovenia, welcomed the delegates on behalf of the Slovenian Presidency of the EU.

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2.3. Presentations

The opening remarks were followed by a speech of Prof. Dr. Cecil McMurray who explained the background and objectives of the workshop. The following presentations were given:

- Ø Global training programmes in HPAI and their effectiveness by Cecil McMurray
- Ø Experiences of training in HPAI in the Balkans, Eastern Europe and Turkey by Yanko Ivanov
- Ø HPAI training needs in affected non-EU countries and the roles of OIE and FAO by Giovanni Cattoli
- Ø Training related options for HPAI control in Africa by Samuel Muriuki
- Ø DG SANCO HPAI training initiatives in ASEAN countries by Remco Schrijver.

2.4. Discussion Group Sessions

Working group sessions were held over 3 key areas:

2.4.1. Organisational issues of a training (Main workshop room) (Chair: Cecil McMurray)

This group concentrated on the way HPAI affected countries organise the different activities necessary for effective HPAI control, and the inadequacies and gaps they identify in doing so. HPAI control involves acting with and between different stakeholders such as government, veterinarians, farmers, industry, general public, and animal welfare groups. The chain of control involves different activities such as Contingency planning, Outbreak management, Culling, Laboratory diagnosis, Vaccination, and Monitoring and surveillance, which requires different people from different organisations. In training different topics, the main issue is how to ensure training does not remain confined to the individual who has been trained, but is actively spread and consolidates in the stakeholders involved.

2.4.2. Technical issues to be covered by HPAI training (Chair: Giovanni Cattoli)

This group concentrated on the technical content of the trainings, and the training format. Specific attention was paid to the following subjects, that were considered important for 3rd countries: expert missions (side by side working), laboratory diagnosis training (in 3rd countries or in HPAI reference laboratories), training of veterinarians and farmers (bio-security). The format of the trainings was also discussed

2.4.3. DG SANCO contribution in HPAI training (Chair: Remco Schrijver)

This group concentrated on the way target countries could best benefit from DG SANCO's Better Training for Safer Food programme in HPAI control. Because many organisations provide assistance to countries in HPAI control, and because the resources of DG SANCO are relatively small compared to other initiatives, it is important to target the training activities so that the impact is maximal, and to avoid duplication of activities.

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2.4.4. Questionnaires

A number of questions on DG SANCO's HPAI Training programmes were submitted to the delegates in advance of the workshop and a significant number of responses was obtained

The questionnaires were received from approx. 25 delegates. All delegates, including from EU MS, welcomed further training. The respondents mentioned that capacity building and training on organisation management was required, over the whole chain of poultry production, including farmers and field vets, and also industry. The favoured format and content of training was expert missions, laboratory training, both in the home countries as well as abroad, but with practical lessons, as well as biosecurity, and simulation exercises. E-learning was considered important, but easy accessible to the target countries, so available in the native language, be updated and interactive. The development of a sustainable training format was considered important.

2.4.5. Summary Working Group Sessions

The following is a summary of what was discussed and experiences exchanged amongst the delegates.

TOPIC A: Organisational issues of a training (Main workshop room) (Chair: Cecil McMurray, Rapporteur: Alex Park)

The discussion session was led by Prof Cecil McMurray and was attended by Dr Samuel Muriuki (tutor) and by Lauro Panella (DG SANCO training team). There were 35 delegates present including the representatives from international organisations.

IAEA – There are problems with co-ordination in that many countries affected by, or at risk from, HPAI are at different stages of development. It would be useful if there was a mechanism whereby countries could report training which is underway.

World Bank – are struggling with the issue of co-ordination. They have 45 HPAI projects running currently worldwide. They are developing a joint web portal with the UN which will enable 2-way interaction for countries either carry out or requiring training. The beta version of the web portal will be running in the next few weeks.

Netherlands – the delegate worked on the DG SANCO funded HPAI training project in 2007. He wanted a database specifically for training needs.

He also indicated that the 1st training course supplied to any country should involve training in how to source appropriate training and how to manage it.

IAEA – it would be helpful if the EU could set standards for HPAI experts involved in training

Estonia – The National Competent Authority must take the lead role in disease control and in the planning of training. The training should be demand based, an issue previously raised by Dr Schrijver in his presentation

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World Bank – Organisations such as EU, FAO, OIE need to organise regional training on a long term basis as short term courses do not tend to be sustainable

OIE – need to define “more co-ordination”. The proposed joint WB/UN web portal is more about information than co-ordination as co-ordination should be about avoiding replication. We should look at specific countries initially and consider training provision in laboratory analysis, linked to the supply of the analytical equipment.

Germany –supported the WB attitude in that training should be demand driven and the demand should come from the country

Netherlands – also supported this view above.

UK – we have both institutional and curriculum based training. We favour the holistic approach and curriculum based training

Conseil Sante – are currently implementing an HPAI project in Turkey under EC funding. In their experience different donors can work together in a country to provide training but it is important that different people are trained each time

Aidco- provide technical assistance and equipment supply to external countries. They support veterinary services which request training in HPAI and support the need for more co-ordination in the delivery of projects

IBAR –are carrying out rapid assessment in many countries in Africa, jointly with FAO, African Union, EU. Initial projects provide GAP analysis and identify training needs

WB – there are many good examples of collaborative training being provided by 1 training team being funded by 2 donors

UK – wanted to know which countries are the net providers of training and which are the net beneficiaries

TAIEX – help co-ordinate technical assistance and training for accession, candidate and pre-candidate countries

IAEA- there should be a quality standard for train-the-trainer trainers. It is normal for disease control training to be delivered for multiple diseases rather than just HPAI, as the trainees are usually responsible for multiple diseases. Distance learning is a useful tool and they are using Moodle open source software with some success. Such e-training modules could be beneficial for laboratory technicians, practising veterinarians, veterinary students. This is an area where the EU could make an impact

WB – to train a good expert for a train-the-trainer programme can take a year or more and cannot be done properly in a short term project. In developed countries it is the universities which traditionally provide the training. The challenge is how to institutionalise training schemes and also to broaden the training programmes to include other zoonotic diseases, as well as HPAI

TAIEX – has implemented regional train-the-trainer programmes and these have been successful and this is done partly in country and partly in a Member State

CYPRUS- is a small country and would like to be able to see best practice in implementing an HPAI contingency plan in other Member States. Could they send veterinary officials to another country following an outbreak to see how the control is handled

Estonia – thought this was a reasonable request and could be accommodated

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UK – favour a network approach for sharing best practice. Would it be possible for the EU to arrange regional workshops to enable countries to see and share best practice.

IAEA- supported the concept of regional training and this should be promoted by DG SANCO

DG SANCO – confirmed that the “Better Training for Safer Food” initiative is largely aimed at Member States, with some 25% of activities implemented in external countries

Estonia- already share experience with Nordic countries and the other 2 Baltic States

Bosnia Herzegovina – requested that when training was to be offered this should be done well in advance to enable the national competent organisation time to schedule appropriate staff. There have been instances where less than 1 week notice of training programmes have been given

Germany – requested that the results of this workshop and the workshop report should be made available without delay to all delegates.

TOPIC B: Technical issues to be covered by HPAI training (Chair: Giovanni Cattoli, rapporteur Yanko Ivanov)

This group, represented by 20 persons, from Slovenia, India, Germany, Poland, Spain, Cambodia, Thailand, Luxemburg, fYROM, Croatia, Austria, Indonesia, and DG SANCO discussed the technical content of the training courses and of the training format.

General aspects

The basic idea which emerged from the working group discussion was that there is a need of a master training scheme, but the training courses should be tailored on the specific needs and requests of a given country, area and situation.

This is particularly important for the diagnostic approach and the control policy. For example, in certain areas of the world AI can now be considered endemic while in other areas it is still sporadic or absent. Thus, control strategies, surveillance methods or compensation policy may vary according to the new epidemiological situation.

All the delegates agreed that the best way to learn is “by doing”. Thus, most of the training courses should have practical feedback and should involve repeated practical exercises. For the same reason, it appears necessary to plan and sustain follow-up initiatives and guarantee the maintenance of a satisfactory level of preparedness of the delegates.

Key points

Specific attention was paid to the following subjects, which were considered important for Third Countries and should be included in future training courses.

Ø Training on Avian Influenza control, legislation and compensation policy.

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All the delegates agreed upon the importance of training courses specifically dedicated to these issues, with particular emphasis to planning, implementing and evaluating disease control measures, including mass culling, carcass and manure disposal, cleaning & disinfections procedures, in the event of major outbreaks.

Simulation exercises and training sessions focussing on field outbreak investigations and post-outbreak management were considered significant by the delegates.

These types of training courses should involve public veterinary authorities, field veterinarians, the poultry industries and stakeholders.

Ø Training on risk communication and public awareness.

Delegates from India, Spain, Thailand and Indonesia highlighted the importance of training courses on these issues. Considering the zoonotic potential of this infection, the final aim of controlling AI in poultry is to prevent its spread into humans.

How to communicate the risk, how to disseminate the correct information in a timely manner and to the right target should therefore be part of future training courses.

These types of trainings should involve the whole processing-chain, starting from public authorities to farmers and poultry industries.

Ø Training on AI diagnosis, monitoring and surveillance, including wild birds
Training courses should be provided on the most suitable, useful and flexible techniques available for AI detection. Specific attention should be paid on continuing education. With regard to diagnosis, training projects should be planned and organized in order to guarantee a minimum and continuous number of samples submitted to the laboratories and the evaluation of their performance on a regular basis through the organization of proficiency tests.

Training focussing on the adoption of GLPs and Quality Assurance Systems should also be planned.

Appropriate seminars and specific guidelines should be provided in order to present the correct approach for useful and informative wild bird surveillance.

Ø e-training

Within the working group, the idea of developing and implementing courses on different aspects related to avian influenza through the web received a general consensus. Alternative methods, such as CD-roms, should also be planned for situations in which internet access is uneasy. E-learning should be considered as a supportive tool to the classical training courses to facilitate dissemination of information and not as an alternative training method.

TOPIC C: DG SANCO contribution in HPAI training (Chair & Rapporteur: Remco Schrijver)

The discussion session was led by Dr. Remco Schrijver and was attended by Mrs. Isabelle Rollier (DG SANCO training team). There were 20 delegates present.

A “tour de table” revealed the following remarks:

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Bulgaria: Was unaware of previous DG SANCO training activities in Bulgaria. Considered that information was less an issue, more the support for actual implementation of HPAI control activities in the field in the whole chain from farm to government.

Moldova: No activities of DG SANCO had reached Moldova. Training of Veterinary Services was considered important.

Indonesia: Compartmentalisation had been addressed by Dg SANCO training. Important issues for the future were: monitoring and surveillance, farmers, language, culture differences within the country also had to be addressed. Important was to use “best practices” and use these as examples for other countries.

Belarus: No activities of DG SANCO had reached Belarus. Training of not only veterinary officers, but also veterinary practitioners and farmers should be organised. Also trans-boundary simulation exercises were considered important

Italy: The idea of e-learning was proposed.

FVO delegates: use FVO reports more for input for gaps in control and inspection system in a country

2.4.6. Overall Summary

As overall conclusions from the questionnaires and discussion groups the following points were raised:

Recommendation

- Ø Trainings must be better adapted to the local needs, which implies more involvement at the planning stage by the competent authority of a beneficiary country.
- Ø Training must be demand driven and not supply driven, and the training must avoid overlap with other activities:

Suggestion

- Ø A Training Need Analysis must precede any training for a particular country

Recommendation

- Ø Training information must be better disseminated in a country

Suggestion

- Ø Train-the-trainer approach must be better incorporated and better developed in future training programmes, including supply of tools for these trainers
- Ø Trainings should involve repeated practical exercises.
- Ø Training should involve public veterinary authorities, field veterinarians, the poultry industries and stakeholders

Recommendation

- Ø Trainings must be organised on a common training platform, and not been designed from scratch every time. This platform can then be adapted and renewed following new insights and/or evaluation of trainings given.
- Ø The training format must allow sustainability of the training and must have maximum impact

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Suggestion

- Ø Include e-learning as tool for future trainings
- Ø Introduce 'Best Practices' to benchmark performance of HPAI control system in target countries
- Ø Develop training formats for practical trainings:
 - a. Introduce side-by-side working (participation of experts from target countries in outbreak control in developed countries; introduce practical training programmes of experts to HPAI laboratories)
 - b. Introduce simulation exercises: "learn to do it and do it"
 - c. Cross borders by trans-boundary trainings
 - d. Introduce "twinning" for HPAI control

Recommendation for technical issues in future trainings:

- Ø Bio-security, laboratory diagnosis, and awareness raising remain important subjects
- Ø Avian Influenza control, legislation and compensation policy
- Ø Training on risk communication and public awareness.
- Ø Training on AI diagnosis, monitoring and surveillance, including wild birds

3. DELEGATE FEEDBACK

The feedback from delegates was very positive and there was wide approval for the content of the Workshop and of the quality of the presentations given and following discussions. All delegates were in agreement that they made useful contacts which will be beneficial to their future work.

Details of comments on the workshop received from delegates who completed the evaluation forms by the delegates are summarised below:

Name of Tutor	Overall Rating
McMurray, Cecil	81%
Ivanov, Yanko	83%
Muriuki, Samuel	85%
Cattoli, Giovanni	92%
Schrijver, Remco	88%

4. CONCLUDING REMARKS

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The workshop seems to have been very successful and many of the delegates took time to tell us how much they appreciated the opportunity to discuss with DG SANCO and implementing organisations how to improve trainings in HPAI control and expressed the value of the discussion groups. This was considered to be a valuable and informative event. The workshop provided a platform for cross-fertilisation and delegates exchanged views and information on future training initiatives for HPAI in the Better Training for Safer Food Programme.