

**30TH MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE ON SANITARY
AND PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES,
GENEVA, 22-23 JUNE 2004**

Statement by the FAO (J. Domenech)

1. The FAO and its Animal Health Service cover a wide range of activities concerning infectious and parasitic animal diseases. Particular emphasis is placed on: (i) transboundary diseases; (ii) parasitic diseases; (iii) health-environment interactions; (iv) veterinary public health; (v) the organization of veterinary services.
2. The FAO Animal Health Service is able to draw on the expertise available in the fields and subject-areas covered by the other services of the Animal Production and Health Division and by the other divisions of the Agriculture Department as well as the other departments. Thus, the approach to animal health is an integrated approach, which takes into account the general context in which the sanitary problems occur: agricultural and stock-raising systems and practices, the environment, human and animal movements, including those arising from natural or political crises, regional and international trade, global and sectoral policies and sanitary policies, and the economic environment.
3. The FAO follows two main, complementary courses of action: support for the developing countries in the form of projects carried out in the field, and standard setting. These two activities are fully interlinked and in constant interaction, each one drawing on the results and difficulties of the other.
4. The FAO Animal Health Service provides support to the developing countries in various forms, helping to implement the SPS Agreement, the aim being to enable the countries to improve the performance of their livestock sectors and to help them to adapt to sanitary standards so as to protect their livestock and trade, whether national, regional or international.
5. The technical assistance activities intended to achieve a fuller application of the SPS measures include: (i) training and exchange of information (seminars, lectures, training courses, communication and information support, such as web sites, electronic conferences, the publication of manuals and newsletters); (ii) support for national regulatory authorities; (iii) support for research; (iv) provision of technical expertise throughout the production, processing and marketing processes.

In the recent past, two events have been particularly worthy of note:

6. The signature, on 24 May 2004, of a new FAO-OIE agreement, which replaced the former agreement that was fifty years old. This agreement defines the areas of collaboration and provides for the revival of activities carried out in partnership. It is within this framework that a specific agreement to combat transboundary diseases was also signed. This initiative, known as GF-TADs (Global Framework for the Progressive Control of Transboundary Animal Diseases) seeks to develop a regional approach to these diseases and to improve monitoring, the early detection of outbreaks, warning, and the immediate introduction of measures of control. It also provides for better data collection and analysis for the development of systems and models for forecasting crises. GF-TADs

will help to ensure more effective action against animal diseases in the countries affected and better protection for the countries unaffected. GF-TADs will be implemented through the ad hoc subregional and regional organizations. It is planned to establish a comprehensive FAO-OIE system for the analysis of epidemiological data, forecasting and warning, called GLEWS (Global Early Warning System), in collaboration with WHO, for the zoonotic diseases.

7. The crisis of avian influenza in Asia, which affected much of the region and had major economic and social consequences (eight countries affected, over one hundred million birds dead from disease or slaughtered). The FAO, in close collaboration with the OIE and the WHO, provided determined and rapid assistance to the countries affected and to the countries at risk, in the form of 13 Technical Cooperation Programmes (TCP) – 9 national and 4 regional – for a total of 5.5 million dollars. It also encouraged the involvement of other donors. Such action enabled support to be provided in the field in such different areas as monitoring and detection, the implementation of action plans and training. A sustained information campaign was also initiated immediately through a specific web site and a bi-monthly information bulletin (AIDNews). A meeting of experts was held at the beginning of February 2004 in Rome and a regional conference at the end of February in Bangkok. Epidemiological studies designed to explain the growth and development of the crisis are currently under way, and subregional monitoring and diagnostic networks are being set up. At the same time, studies are being made of the socio-economic effects of the epizootic, of the requirements and procedures for restocking poultry, and of the policies and methods for the reorganization and restructuring of the sector affected by the crisis.
