Project Support

< Back

International Poultry Disease Control Expert, Banda Aceh, Indonesia

From April to July 2006, The International Rural Poultry Centre (IRPC), subcontracting to GRM International BV, assigned an International Poultry Disease Control Expert to the FAO Representation in Indonesia to assess the efficacy of the national strategy towards Newcastle Disease and Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) in Banda Aceh and North Sumatra in Indonesia.

South-East and East Asian countries have been severely affected by highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) for more than two years following the emergence of a new virulent strain of virus in southern China in 1996 and its subsequent spread in the region from 2003 onwards. On past precedents it is understood that the intimate contact between livestock (poultry and swine) and people in parts of Asia creates a favourable situation for the evolution of a human pandemic strain. The current strain of the virus (designated H5N1 by virtue of the characterisation of surface markers) has already demonstrated its ability to infect and kill people (it has been fatal in approximately 50 per cent of people who have tested positive for the disease). To date, there is limited evidence of person-to-person transmission and swine and other affected mammals appear to be only incidentally infected, playing no significant role in virus transmission. However, this situation could change rapidly and the emergence, by recombination or mutation, of a highly pathogenic strain of influenza A which could transmit rapidly between people to cause a global pandemic is a matter of international concern. Clearly the most effective means of protecting human welfare would be to effectively combat the precursor virus in its avian hosts, thus pre-empting appearance of a pandemic strain.

Newcastle Disease is a major constraint to rural village chicken production, which typically impacts poorest households whose only livestock is poultry. Newcastle Disease (ND) is highly pathogenic and every year outbreaks occur, killing up to 90% of the chickens, making it a major constraint to village chicken production.

The advisor assessed the history of HPAI and Newcastle Disease occurrence in Banda Aceh and North Sumatra, the progress made in control and the current status of poultry population, as far as this can be assessed, and assessed the efficacy of surveillance, compliance with national reporting obligations and diagnostic procedures identifying any constraints.

The advisor created standard operating procedures (SOPs) for prevention, containment and control of avian influenza and Newcastle disease in poultry distribution schemes and vulnerable communities with reference to Aceh; assessed emergency preparedness procedures for HPAI and advised on improving the current system; convened two workshops for FAO staff, NGO staff and local government staff on HPAI/Newcastle disease recognition, diagnosis, prevention and control; assessed the attitude of NGOs to poultry distribution schemes, their intentions and understanding of addressing the animal health/zoonotic disease hazards; and documented the findings in a comprehensive report aimed at providing guidance for FAO, official veterinary services and NGOs.