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EMERGENCY SUPPORT FOR THE CONTROL OF FOOT AND MOUTH DISEASE (FMD) IN MALAWI

December 2024

SDGs:



Country:

Malawi

Project Code:

TCP/MLW/3901

FAO Contribution:

USD 500 000

Duration:

2 June 2022–31 December 2023

Contact Info:

FAO Representation in Malawi
FAO-MW@fao.org

Implementing Partner

Department of Animal Health and Livestock Development (DAHLD).

Beneficiaries

Livestock producers, animal-rearing rural communities.

Country Programming Framework (CPF) Outputs

Malawi Vision 2063, Pillar I. Agricultural Productivity and Commercialization.



BACKGROUND

The agriculture sector in Malawi employs over three quarters of the total population, generating over 80 percent of national export earnings and contributing 23 percent of GDP.

Official records from the Department of Animal Health and Livestock Development (DAHLD) indicate that livestock accounts for a significant proportion (around 80 percent) of food for rural families in the country, as well as a livelihood alternative. With commercial traders accounting for only 15 percent of all livestock owners, a large proportion of owners practise subsistence livestock farming, often under communal grazing. In this context, animal diseases have a significant impact upon the country's rural economies and livelihoods, making it critical to prevent and manage outbreaks.

In Malawi, different transboundary animal diseases (TADs) such as Foot-and-mouth disease (FMD), Peste des petits ruminants (PPR) and African swine fever virus (ASFV) have the potential to affect thousands of small-scale farmers and animal-rearing communities, while having broader repercussions on the country's economy, trade and food security. Control of TADs requires cooperation and collaboration at different levels and with neighbouring countries, in order to curb risks and mitigate the negative consequences of outbreaks at regional level. In an effort to protect the livestock sector, the DAHLD sought the technical and financial assistance of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) to contain the outbreak of FMD caused by serotype O, which had occurred for the first time in Malawi.

The support provided as part of the project was designed to enhance control of livestock movement in affected areas, with vaccinations for at-risk populations, post-vaccination monitoring and a range of other interventions, such as disease surveillance, reporting and technical training for community animal health workers (CAHWs).

IMPACT

The expected impact of the project was to increase the resilience of Malawi's livestock sector, allowing it to contribute effectively to the food security, nutrition and income of livestock producers in the country.

ACHIEVEMENT OF RESULTS

The project served to increase Malawi's capacity to control TADs, including the current outbreak of FMD. Under Output 1, this was achieved through the procurement of 158 000 bivalent FMD vaccine doses, sensitization meetings were conducted in the targets districts of Mchinji and Lilongwe – attended by 200 key community stakeholders – and a vaccination campaign covering the districts of Mchinji, Lilongwe, Dowa, Kasungu, Mzimba and Chikwawa.

As part of Output 2, items were procured to enhance diagnostic capacities in laboratories in the country, the National Risk-Based Strategic Plan was finalized and approved, while 80 extension workers from Mchinji and Lilongwe districts received training. In addition, cross-border coordination meetings were held with representatives from Mozambique and Zambia.

IMPLEMENTATION OF WORK PLAN AND BUDGET

All activities were implemented within the planned budget, although some delays were experienced in the disbursement of funds. FMD was a new disease in the target districts of Mchinji and Lilongwe. With limited knowledge of the disease among farmers and field staff, the project served to empower those most affected by the outbreak, while an enabling environment was created for control of FMD and other TADs, with communities now able to suspect and report diseases and take the lead in implementing disease control measures.





FOLLOW-UP FOR GOVERNMENT ATTENTION

The project aimed to create a community that is actively involved in surveillance of FMD and will constitute an integral component of responding partners in the event of an outbreak, using real-time surveillance to assist in the early warning and response. It is recognized, however, that a failure to operationalize the real-time surveillance system could be damaging to future DISEASE monitoring efforts.

SUSTAINABILITY

1. Capacity development

The project built a strong partnership with community and council leaders. These partnerships are key to the sustainability of the project's achievements and outputs, providing conducive political and social environments. However, the partners in question, have limited access to financial resources. The Malawi Risk-Based FMD Control Strategy is one legal framework that will shape the progress of fighting both FMD and other TADs. To sustain the outcome of the project, other frameworks such as a compensation policy and readily available funds for emergency response are needed. No support for the development of such frameworks has so far been identified.

2. Gender equality

There was equal gender participation among livestock-keeping communities and community society organizations in the project and in its decision-making processes.

3. Environmental sustainability

In some areas, the project utilized poles provided by the local community to construct cattle holding pens during vaccination exercises. Tree-planting sensitization meetings were conducted alongside the vaccination campaigns, encouraging communities to plant more trees and even to build permanent structures.

4. Human Rights-based Approach (HRBA) – in particular Right to Food and Decent Work

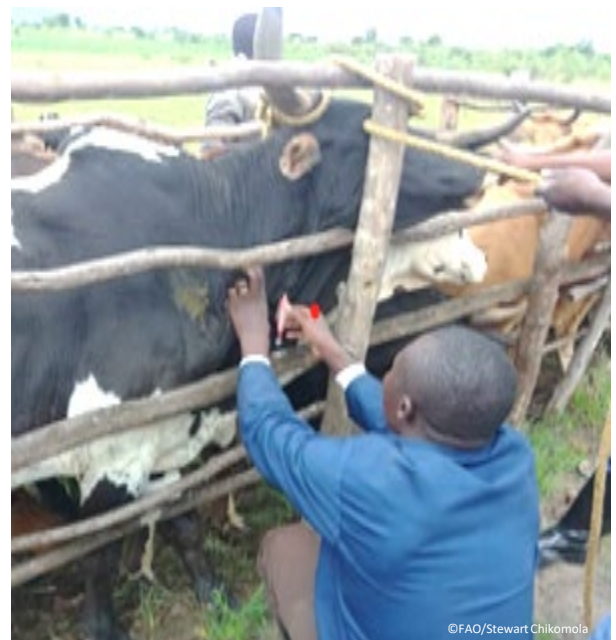
The FMD has serious implications for the lives of farmers and related communities. In case of an incursion of FMD, control measures include a ban on livestock and livestock product movement, and even slaughter of animals. These measures disturb livelihoods, both socially and economically. For instance, farmers and butchers were unable to sell affected animals, thereby depriving them of a source of income for their families. The project, however, helped to rid the target districts of FMD, helping different players along the value chain to continue their business activities and earn a decent living.

5. Technological sustainability

The Events Mobile App (EMA-i) technology required more training and expensive maintenance. As a result, the application was not rolled out as scheduled.

6. Economic sustainability

Despite the human resource and skills available to stakeholders as a result of the project, continued monitoring and feedback, as well as financial support for some activities, will still be required. For instance, support for the mobility of extension workers to reinforce community surveillance is critical.



DOCUMENTS AND OUTREACH PRODUCTS

- ❑ **Chilanga, F.** 2023. *Malawi Risk-Based Strategic Plan (RBSP) for Control of Foot-and-Mouth Disease.*

ACHIEVEMENT OF RESULTS - LOGICAL FRAMEWORK

Expected Impact	The livestock sector becomes resilient in order to contribute effectively to food security, nutrition and income of livestock producers.		
Outcome	Strengthened		
	Indicator	Incidence of reported FMD outbreaks in the two affected districts.	
	Baseline	A number of cases of FMD reported.	
	End Target	No FMD cases reported (O serotype) and reduction in the number of cases of other strains circulating.	
	Comments and follow-up action to be taken	Although most of the key activities were implemented, some were not implemented, such as the establishment of an early warning system for TADs in the affected districts. The failure to establish such a system may undermine the achievements made in this project in the near future.	
Output 1	Capacity to control TADs including the current outbreak of FMD built		
	Indicators	Target	Achieved
	- Inputs procured. - Awareness-raising events. - Vaccination campaign conducted. - Sero-monitoring.	- 150 000 doses of FMD vaccine, and associated materials and reagents. - 10 sensitization meetings. - Vaccination reports. - Post-vaccination monitoring (PVM) reports.	- Yes - Yes - Yes - Yes
	Baseline	A number of cases of FMD reported	
Comments	All activities were achieved successfully. Community awareness must continue if the community ownership of the activities is to be sustained.		
Activity 1.1	Procurement of inputs		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	A total of 158 000 bivalent (SAT 2 and Type O) FMD vaccine doses were procured and administered in Mchinji and Lilongwe West districts. The neighbouring districts of Dowa, Lilongwe East, Kasungu and Mzimba were also covered in order to prevent further spread of the disease.	
Activity 1.2	Awareness and community mobilization campaign		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	Ten sensitization meetings were conducted in Mchinji and Lilongwe, reaching 200 key community stakeholders (166 male and 34 female). The aim was to empower stakeholders to further sensitize the rest of the community members.	
Activity 1.3	Conduct vaccination campaign		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	146 467 vaccine doses were administered in Mchinji, Lilongwe, Dowa, Kasungu, Mzimba and Chikwawa. Challenges encountered included delays in resource provision (fuel and subsistence allowances), which, in turn, led to a prolonged storage of vaccines; poor road networks, especially in the rain season, and a lack of trust in the vaccine by some community sectors.	
Activity 1.4	Sero-monitoring		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	Two rounds of PVM were conducted and population immunization levels tested in Mchinji and Lilongwe. The exercise was extended to all districts in which the bivalent (Type O and SAT 2) vaccine doses were administered. The level of population immunity achieved varied among districts, with the average across districts standing at 48 percent.	

Output 2	Resilience to prevent future outbreaks built through enhanced surveillance, laboratory diagnosis and cross-border coordination		
	Indicators	Target	Achieved
	- Capacities in laboratories enhanced. - Surveillance strengthened. - National Risk-Based Strategic Plan finalized. - Cross-border coordination.	- 15 assistant veterinary officers (AVOs) from Lilongwe trained on the EMA-i, with training rolled out to Lilongwe West and Mchinji; 70 AVOs and animal health surveillance assistants trained. - National Risk-Based Strategic Plan finalized. - Two meetings carried out with authorities in Mozambique and Zambia.	- Yes - Yes - Yes - Yes
Baseline	0		
Comments	A total of 39 participants.		
Activity 2.1	Enhance laboratory diagnostic capacity		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	Mini-fridges, automatic syringes, FMD ELISA kits, a centrifuge and other consumables were purchased. No laboratory technicians were trained.	
Activity 2.2	Enhance active and passive surveillance		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	This activity could not be implemented as the project was awaiting the roll-out of the EMA-i.	
Activity 2.3	Finalize the National Risk-Based Strategic Plan		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	A consultant was awarded a contract to draft the National FMD Risk-Based Contingency Strategic Plan. The report was drafted and subsequently validated by stakeholders.	
Activity 2.4	Cross border coordination		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	Cross-border meetings were conducted in Angonia District (Mozambique) and Chipata District (Zambia), which share borders with the Dedza and Mchinji districts of Malawi, respectively. Platforms for information on disease events and related trade-sharing among officers patrolling the borders were created.	

Partnerships and Outreach

For more information, please contact: Reporting@fao.org

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