



Recommendations of the Workshop for the establishment of a Central Asian Animal Health Network (CAAHN)

Tashkent, Uzbekistan (14-15 November 2019)

The *Workshop for the establishment of a Central Asian Animal Health Network (CAAHN)*, organized by the FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia (REU) and in coordination with the OIE Subregional Office for Central Asia took place in Tashkent, Uzbekistan on 14-15 November 2019. National epidemiology and laboratory focal points from the five Central Asian countries, plus Chief Veterinary Officers (CVOs) from two countries (Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan), as well as FAO and OIE staff attended the meeting.

Animal health networks are powerful tools to harmonize policies and approaches; identify gaps, weaknesses and priorities/fulfil gaps by providing training, capacity building; exchange information and experience; standardize laboratory, field prevention/control, operating, communication and other procedures; and efficient coordination of disease/theme specific subnetworks.

The meeting's objectives were to:

- agree on the purpose, objectives, governance and structure of the network for endorsement;
- present animal health priorities and main challenges by country, including social inequalities and challenges for communicating and preventing risks (including on gender, minorities, age, etc.);
- agree on an action plan for year 1 for endorsement;
- explore the need to establish regional laboratories and epidemiology centres and modalities (i.e. per disease, per discipline, mandate, designation process, etc.), or rely on the existing international reference laboratories/centres.
- agree on routine communication modalities in between annual meetings aiming at improving information sharing in regard to prevention and control of TADs.

The proceedings of the workshop that were conducted over a period of two days enabled the participants to address the various topics highlighted in the agenda:

- Country updates that included the review of current status of animal health system, priorities, gaps and challenges;
- Presentation on existing regional animal health networks in Africa and Eurasia;
- Presentation on existing tools to assess and support animal health, most importantly the laboratory mapping tool (LMT) and the Surveillance Evaluation Tool (SET);
- OIE regional activities and initiatives;
- Outcomes of the Brucellosis Progressive Control Workshop;
- Outcomes of the pre-workshop survey to identify countries' priorities and gaps;
- Development of an action plan for year 1 of CAAHN
- Identification of the Epi and Lab leaders (countries have voted and identified Rahym Ashyrov (Turkmenistan) – an Epidemiology Network leader, and Larissa Ermakova (Kyrgyzstan) – Laboratory Network Leader)

Following fruitful deliberations, the meeting adopted the following key **recommendations**:

General

1. The *Memorandum of Understanding on the Cooperation for Central Asia Control of FMD and Animal Movement Management of OIE* to be amended by including all diseases and FAO;
2. The participants to consider Brucellosis and Echinococcosis as entry points, i.e. focus of activities, for CAAHN;
3. The participants of the Brucellosis Progressive Control Workshop to work towards control and freedom from clinical brucellosis in animals and humans Central Asia; the next meeting is proposed to be held in 2021, considering the proposals from XXX as a host country;
4. Countries and international organizations to follow the endorsed action plans for year 1;
5. Evaluate and assess the lessons learnt from other regional animal health networks (in the region and beyond);
6. Coordination of CAAHN with the West Eurasia FMD and PPR Networks.

For International Organizations (IOs):

7. The World Health Organization (WHO) to join CAAHN;
8. Strengthen the collaboration between IOs in the region in a One Health approach to optimize resources, maximize impact and avoid duplications in the activities at national and regional level;

9. Use the existing institutional network of OIE's national focal points for the coordination of CAAHN;
10. A proposal on data sharing by countries (brucellosis-focused), including a tentative template and a tool/platform to be developed by IOs and shared with countries for validation;
11. IOs to support the nomination of selected Epidemiology and Laboratory leaders by the relevant authorities, with clear terms of reference;
12. IOs to engage with donors and regional partners (e.g. European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation Program (CAREC)/Asian Development Bank (ADB), and World Bank) for support.

For countries:

13. Countries to share brucellosis data on outbreaks, prevalence and vaccination a regular basis (3 months) with the network;
14. Countries to work together with public health authorities in the control of zoonoses.
15. Uzbekistan to sign the *Memorandum of Understanding on the Cooperation for Central Asia Control of FMD and Animal Movement Management*.