

# OFFLU

**the joint OIE-FAO global network of expertise  
on animal influenzas**

**Swine Influenza technical group**



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**Why OFFLU?**



# Historical background

- Late 20<sup>th</sup> century – shifting focus onto influenza
- Global outbreaks of H5N1 in poultry
- H5N1 cases in humans
- 2005 - launch of OFFLU – focus on Avian Influenza
- Emergence of H1N1pdm09 in humans – possible link to pigs
- Extension of OFFLU to cover all animal influenzas
  - establishment of the OFFLU SIV group
- Rapid data generation with new technologies
- Response to new biological events
  - H3N2v cases in US
  - H7N9 LPAI in China

# Global OFFLU expertise

- Avian influenza
- Equine influenza
- Swine influenza
- Links with other animal species influenza experts
- Strong links with human influenza experts and the public health sector

# What is OFFLU about?

- Not seeking to replace existing centres of expertise
- “Networking”
  - linking experts, teams and institutions
  - cross-fertilisation between host species specialists (Sw, Av, Eq, Hu)
- Co-ordination
  - ensuring the scientific community has a common perspective
  - acknowledging genuine differences of interpretation and opinion
- Providing the best possible scientific advice to international and national bodies
- Identifying gaps in our knowledge base on influenza

# OFFLU

## formal objectives

- To exchange scientific data and biological materials (including virus strains) within the network, to analyse such data, and to share such information with the wider scientific community.
- To offer technical advice, training and veterinary expertise to Member Countries to assist in the prevention, diagnosis, surveillance and control of animal influenza.
- To collaborate with the WHO influenza network on issues relating to the animal-human interface, including early preparation of human vaccine.
- To highlight influenza research needs, promote their development and ensure co-ordination

# Recognition of OFFLU

- OFFLU is a facilitator, not a funder
  - identify resource needs, and gaps
    - Surveillance strategy
    - Research agenda
    - Risk assessment
- May oversee individual projects funded by others
- Advice to laboratories (diagnostic methods, biosafety)
- Channelling advice on disease control
  - including use and composition of veterinary vaccines
  - participation in WHO vaccine composition meetings

# OFFLU contribution to WHO-VCM

- Meetings twice a year to identify the most appropriate strains to include in human influenza vaccines
- Main focus on circulating human viruses
- Assessment of risks from animal to human transmission, especially H5 H7 H9 avian viruses
- Vaccine candidates selected, including a new H5 this year.
- Tripartite group agreed that OFFLU participation should continue for a further 5 years
- OFFLU laboratories contribute data. OFFLU Scientists analyse the data for presentation. We have two places at the VCM
- Interest from WHO to extend the scope to SIV – will require substantial surveillance inputs from OFFLU



# The Swine Influenza Group

- Your work and your outputs are highly valued
  - within OFFLU management
  - by FAO and OIE
  - by public health colleagues
- Thank you for making the time available and for sharing your expertise
- Data sharing remains a top priority
- Please continue to help us refine our surveillance strategy and the research agenda
  - identify the needs so that we can lobby funders for support
  - maintain links with the other arms of OFFLU (avian, equine) and with public health

[www.offlu.net](http://www.offlu.net)

