OFFLU summary report for the WHO vaccine composition meeting, February 2023

25th February 2023

Since 2011 the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH, founded as OIE) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)'s Network of Expertise on Animal Influenza (OFFLU), have attended the World Health Organisation (WHO) bi-annual Vaccine Composition Meeting (VCM) organized by the Global Influenza Surveillance and Response (GISRS) team. Within the VCM meeting the need to update candidate vaccine viruses which may be prepared as part of the pandemic response for zoonotic influenza. OFFLU brings important data from the animal health community which allows context to be added to zoonotic avian and swine influenza cases in humans. Zoonotic diseases with pandemic potential caused by animal influenza viruses remain a threat to the international community and OFFLU works towards helping to improve pandemic preparedness by strengthening the WOAH-FAO-WHO tripartite response.

The OFFLU VCM team gathers data through the network in the form of sequences, surveillance data and phenotypic data from avian and swine contemporary circulating influenza viruses. This collaborative effort between animal influenza laboratories strengthens the data available for analysis and contributes to evidence based decision making. OFFLU specifically acknowledges the involved network laboratories, research programs and collaborators for the significant and kind contributions of sequence data and antigenic characterisation of viruses as well the GISAID network, EMPRES-I and WAHIS. OFFLU also thanks all colleagues involved in the data analyses, information sharing and generation of its reports.

- There were over 2000 avian influenza outbreaks reported between September 2022 and February 2023
- 795 H5 sequences were submitted through the OFFLU network: 712 clade 2.3.4.4b (14 antigenically characterised); 38 clade 2.3.2.1a (3 antigenically characterised); 4 clade 2.3.2.1e (3 antigenically characterised)
- 305 H9 sequences were submitted through the OFFLU network: 88 Y280 sequences submitted (5 antigenically characterised); 217 G1 sequences submitted (3 antigenically characterised)
- 34 H7 sequences were submitted through the OFFLU network (27 HPAI)
- 69 H1 sequences submitted through the OFFLU network; 16 clade 1A (7 antigenically characterised); 3 clade 1B; 50 clade 1C (9 antigenically characterised)
- 7 H3 sequences submitted through the OFFLU network (3 antigenically characterised)

The OFFLU swine report which was presented at the February 2023 VCM is available here

The OFFLU avian report which was presented at the February 2023 VCM is available here

A recording of the WHO information Meeting on the composition of influenza vaccines for use in the 2023 southern hemisphere influenza season can be found here

The WHO report on the genetic and antigenic characteristics of influenza viruses can be found here