



OFFLU wildlife/wild bird influenza surveillance technical activity

Background:

- OFFLU (the OIE-FAO network of expertise on animal influenza) supports and coordinates global efforts to prevent, detect and control important influenzas in animals, also reducing risks for public health
- OFFLU works as a global open network of expertise encompassing world leading experts from a range of disciplines
- OFFLU technical activities deliver outputs including global advice and guidance on surveillance and diagnostics in animals, review papers on the global influenza situation in different species, advocacy for surveillance, development of risk assessment tools, guidance on control measures e.g. vaccination
- OFFLU advocates and coordinates sharing of important virological and surveillance data with the wider scientific community, so that it can be used to inform surveillance programmes and control strategies
- OFFLU collaborates with WHO on influenza issues at the human animal interface including providing information to WHO to assist with selection of viruses for vaccines
- OFFLU provides ad hoc advice to WHO on relevant issues at the human animal interface
- The OIE Working Group on Wildlife Diseases (WGWD) had previously submitted a proposal to OIE for low cost targeted global influenza surveillance in wild birds. This was supported by the OIE Scientific Commission and the OIE Applied Epidemiology Group
- At the recent Steering Committee meeting of the OIE-FAO Global Framework for Transboundary Animal Diseases, it was recommended that OFFLU should engage wildlife experts.

Previous engagement of the wildlife sector in OFFLU

- The OIE Wildlife Working Group drafted a chapter 'surveillance for avian influenza in wild birds' for the 'OFFLU Strategy Document for Surveillance and Monitoring of Influenzas in Animals'.
- OFFLU experts have developed a chapter in the OFFLU Research Agenda, 'OFFLU Research Priorities on Avian Influenza: Wild Birds' and in the OFFLU-STAR IDAZ consultation to develop a global animal influenza research agenda
- Wild Birds and Avian Influenza: An introduction to applied field research and disease sampling techniques. FAO Animal Production and Health Manual No. 5 (2007).
<http://www.fao.org/docrep/010/a1521e/a1521e00.htm>
- Wild bird highly pathogenic avian influenza surveillance: Sample collection from healthy, sick and dead birds. FAO Animal Production and Health Manual No. 4 (2006).
<http://www.fao.org/docrep/010/a0960e/a0960e00.HTM>

Potential to further involve the Wildlife Sector in OFFLU

- To provide a platform for discussion, coordination, and data sharing between key wildlife experts involved in influenza surveillance and research
- Regular review of the OFFLU Research Priorities on Avian Influenza: Wild Birds
- To review existing findings from 10 years of extensive wild bird surveillance and highlight the main outputs
- To explore and answer specific technical questions including
 - What evidence is there that wild birds act as a bridging species between poultry and the wild bird reservoir? Are there biosecurity implications for the poultry sector?
 - What is the relevance of influenza infections in other wildlife species?
 - What are the benefits of wild bird influenza surveillance? How can the benefits be optimized?
- To decide whether there is a need to develop/coordinated a low-cost targeted wild bird surveillance strategy at a global level accounting for existing surveillance programmes
- To provide OFFLU with technical expertise on influenzas in wild animals