



◆ African Swine Fever (ASF) Prevention and Control Forum and the Final Workshop successfully held in Beijing



The African Swine Fever (ASF) Prevention and Control Forum was held in Beijing from 25-26 November 2015. This event was jointly organized by the Veterinary Bureau of the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) and FAO China Emergency Center for Transboundary Animal Diseases (ECTAD) office. Over 60 participants from the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), national and provincial animal health agencies, Chinese research institutions, international research institutions and FAO gathered together to have hot discussion and share experience on the ASF prevention and control. Twelve international experts were invited to give presentations on various topics relevant to ASF, and to work together with Chinese audience to identify the challenge and opportunities of ASF prevention and control in China.

The two-day event mainly focused on the following aspects: ASF fundamental research and vaccine development, ASF epidemiology and risk assessment, ASF global status and control strategies. Meeting discussions revolved around the prevention and control strategies for ASF and the challenges and opportunities that are specific to China. During the meeting, international and national experts actively shared experience on ASF prevention and control strategies, and there was a high degree of participation from the attendees. The forum facilitated the collaboration and information sharing among different countries on ASF prevention and control, and contributed to the improvement of capacity of ASF prevention and control of China.

The Final Workshop of the ASF Technical Cooperation Program (TCP) was held on 27 November 2015. Representatives of the Veterinary Bureau of the MoA, China Animal Health and Epidemiology Center (CAHEC), China Animal Disease Control Center (CADC), provincial animal health agencies, and FAO participated in the workshop. Dr Li Shuo from FAO China ECTAD presented on the main activities and achievements of the project. Since the launching in July 2014, the project implemented activities from different aspects to enhance the ASF prevention and control capacity of China. For instance, through the organization of trainings and desktop simulation exercise to strengthen the national counterparts' capacity on ASF epidemiology and risk assessment as well as ASF laboratory diagnostic technology; through the oversea exchange program to send Chinese scientists to the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) Reference Laboratory for ASF for training to deepen the collaboration with OIE reference laboratory; through the implementation of awareness campaign in border areas of China to raise the awareness of ASF in grass-root level veterinarians and pig farmers in high risk areas of China, etc.

The participants also discussed on the ASF prevention and control challenges, provided relevant recommendations, and explored future collaboration opportunities. This TCP will lay a foundation for future cooperation between FAO and China in animal disease prevention and control.

◆ FAO assisting China in developing prevention and control strategies for African Swine Fever (ASF)

China houses almost half of the world's pig population and its pig industry is distributed in relatively-high density and is under diverse biosecurity status. In recent years, through the globalization of the world's economy, the exchange of humans and goods between China and the world is fast growing, which increases the risk of introducing exotic animal diseases to China. African Swine Fever virus (ASFv), a virus that is famous for its high mortality and lack of available control tools such as vaccine and treatment, has caused catastrophic consequences to the pig industries of many countries in the world and is currently spreading in east and mid Europe while persisting in Africa. Hence, ASF is considered as the top-priority exotic pig disease by the Chinese government who is making great efforts in developing early detection system and control strategies against ASF incursion in China.

In order to assist China to overcome the technical problems during this process, FAO and the Chinese government jointly carried out a Technical Cooperation Program (TCP) project entitled "Developing Prevention and Control Strategies for African Swine Fever (ASF) in China". During the implementation period (July 2014 -December 2015), the project brought first-class international expertise to China to improve China's national preparedness of ASF from different aspects.

Although the outputs of the project have been successfully delivered, recommendations were made to the national counterparts who will continue working towards to strength its preventive systems and control strategies against ASF in the future. First, the public education about ASF prevention and control at the grass-root level (especially focusing on main stakeholders) should be further strengthened, including pig farmers, border control agencies, travelers to and from the infected countries, etc. Considering that China is such a big country, it is important to design targeted approaches and focus on high risk areas. Secondly, it is suggested that more coordination and communication should take place between the Chinese veterinary authority and other departments, such as border control agencies and forestry/wildlife administrative departments, to jointly conduct surveillance and carry out nationwide risk assessment which covers not only domestic pigs, but also airports/seaports and wild pig habitats. From the technical perspective, it is recommended that China should continue to strengthen its network that connects major Chinese ASF research groups with each other and with international peers, to promote communication and collaborative research, and to avoid repetitive work and waste of resources.

➤ **FAO China ECTAD attendance at the National Veterinary Laboratory Network and Management Development Strategy Workshop in Qingdao**

Dr Guo Fusheng from FAO China ECTAD office was invited to participate in and make presentation in the National Veterinary Laboratory Network and Management Development Strategy Workshop from 2-4 December 2015 in Qingdao. Dr Li Shuo attended the workshop as well. The key objective of the workshop was to strengthen the management of existing veterinary laboratory and plan for future development of veterinary laboratory system in China. Over 50 participants from the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), China Animal Disease Control Center (CADC), China Animal Health and Epidemiology Center (CAHEC), provincial ACDCs, universities, research institutions and FAO China ECTAD attended the workshop.



Dr Guo making a presentation during the workshop

The presenters of the workshop introduced the current situation and future plan of high level biosafety laboratories, laboratory accreditation and laboratory biosafety accreditation, and shared experiences in applying laboratory information management system in veterinary laboratory. Dr Guo Fusheng delivered a presentation entitled "the establishment and management of veterinary laboratory network". He highlighted the main findings and recommendations of the FAO laboratory mission in China in October 2014, which was carried out by Dr Gwenaelle Dauphin and Dr Filip Claes from the FAO HQs. The major recommendations of the laboratory mission were emphasized to the audience, including laboratory system establishment; laboratory capacity building; resource sharing within the network; and multiple departments' coordination when dealing with zoonotic diseases.

During the group discussion, the participants discussed the key problems of existing laboratory network and shared their views on the future development of Chinese veterinary laboratory network. Participants' suggestions and recommendations were noted by the Veterinary Bureau of the MoA, which will be taken into account during the policy-making process on veterinary laboratory system in the future.

! **Upcoming activities**

1. The training workshop on Veterinary Epidemiology will be held in Loudi, Hunan Province from 12-14 January 2016. The training will be jointly organized by FAO China ECTAD office and Center for Animal Disease Prevention and Control of Hunan Province.
2. The Fourth China and Viet Nam Meeting on Collaboration to Address Transboundary Animal Diseases will be held from 26-27 January 2016 in Hanoi, Viet Nam.



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