The 18th Meeting of the OIE Sub-Commission for FMD in South-East Asia and China was a fairly unique event. It was the first time China had hosted the meeting, and the first Sub-Commission since the commencement of Phase 4 of the SEACFMD Campaign in 2011.

Phase 4 will take into account the lessons learnt over recent years as well as the implications of the changing social and economic circumstances of the region. Dr. Gardner Murray, President of the OIE Sub-Commission, emphasised these points and stressed the critical importance of Member Countries managing FMD prevention and eradication by 2020, with the OIE SRR SEA providing an enhanced coordination framework.

Dr. Murray said the SEACFMD approach should provide a most useful contribution to the deliberations of the 2nd FAO/OIE Global Conference on Foot and Mouth Disease Control which will be held in Bangkok from 27 to 29 June 2012. He encouraged all participants to attend.

It was pleasing to hear the PR of China Agriculture Minister’s words that China was committed to FMD control and eradication and China would work closely with partner countries to support SEACFMD objectives. Minister Gao Hongbin said China will provide financial as well as technical assistance to other countries and will continue to contribute to the improvement of regional and global animal health.

Dr. Bernard Vallat, OIE Director-General, strongly welcomed the great effort made by China as he emphasised the socio-economic importance of FMD. Dr Vallat pointed out that the SEACFMD model could be used, as it had been, as a regional and sub-regional tool for the management of a range of other trans-boundary diseases. He emphasised the importance of the control of animal diseases as a global public good.

The attendance of 120 participants from the region and other parts of the world attests to the importance of the SEACFMD.

The OIE wishes to thank AusAID for providing funds under the STANDZ initiative to enable the SEACFMD to continue until 2015. Thailand’s Department of Livestock Development is also to be thanked for hosting the SRR SEA in Bangkok. Finally, China is to be congratulated for organising a first-class meeting.
The 18th Meeting of the OIE FMD Sub-Commission for South-East Asia and China took place in Lijiang, Yunnan, China from 5 to 9 March 2012. The meeting provided updates on key achievements of the SEACFMD campaign, the FMD situation in the region, and current laboratory findings from the World Reference Laboratory for FMD in the U.K. and the Regional FMD Laboratories in Pakchong, Thailand and Lanzhou, China.

Updates on the FMD situation in SEACFMD member countries (Cambodia, China, Lao PDR, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam) and other representation (Chinese Taipei and Republic of Korea) were also shared, as well as the ongoing FMD-related activities of partner organisations and other Sub-Commission members.

Delegates and observers took part in separate workshops to discuss key thrusts for 2012 and 2013, sharing the “burden” between countries and donors, animal identification and traceability, sample submission and vaccine matching, vaccine bank, STANDZ SGF, One Health, and forthcoming key events relevant to FMD control. Capacity building and One Health were also discussed, which included sharing of country views about the Performance of Veterinary Services and One Health.

The Australian Center for International Agricultural Research shared the results of its animal movement project in Lao PDR and Cambodia. The Association of South-East Asian Nations presented the challenges and opportunities with the single market by 2015 which will usher in free flow of goods and services.

Dr. Ronello Abila, OIE SRR-SEA Representative, presented the achievements of the SEACFMD programme in particular the direct applicability of its coordination approach to prevent and control other transboundary animal diseases such as avian influenza and hog cholera.

Cecilia Dy, OIE SRR SEA Communications Officer, presented the communications strategy and the SRR’s gender policy noting the importance of an audience-focused communication. The changing socio-economic landscape in the region as well as shifting responsibilities within households need to be considered in mapping out effective communication strategies, she said.

Key recommendations from the meeting included priority actions of SEACFMD Member Countries in 2012: updating of National FMD Control Programmes and their submission for OIE recognition where applicable; submitting proposals for SGF support; increasing sample submission rate to reference laboratories; implementation of targeted control ac-

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**SEACFMD Key Achievements**

- AusAID’s approval of A$12.74 million Stop Transboundary Animal Diseases and Zoonoses (STANDZ) Initiative (2011-2016) with SEACFMD as its flagship programme
- OIE recognition of zone 2 of Luzon island in the Philippines as FMD free zone, making the whole country FMD free without vaccination
- Maintenance of Brunei, Singapore and Indonesia as FMD-free countries without vaccination
- OIE recognition and maintenance of Eastern Malaysia (Sabah and Sarawak) as FMD-free without vaccination
- Finalization of the 2nd edition of the SEACFMD 2020 roadmap
- Expansion of SEACFMD with participation of new members – Brunei, P.R. China and Singapore
- Operationalisation of Small Grants Facility under AusAID-funded STANDZ
- Operationalisation of the OIE FMD Vaccine Bank for Asia which was established under the European Union-funded Highly Pathogenic Emerging and Re-emerging Diseases Programme
- Creation of Upper and Lower Mekong Working Groups and Tri-state commission of Myanmar-Thailand-Malaysia to coordinate control efforts
- Political support from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)
- Information sharing through ARAHIS, Epinet and LabNet
- OIE accreditation of the Regional Reference Laboratory in Pakchong, Thailand, the first OIE-accredited laboratory in South-East Asia
- Ongoing cooperation with ACIAR, AusAID, EU, FAO and JICA
Compulsory vaccination key FMD control measure in China

China has put FMD at the centre of its national plan on animal disease prevention and control which was launched this year. Within the SEACFMD framework, China has adopted compulsory vaccination as a key measure in the plan with an exit strategy and culling of clinically sick and infected animals to support it. Some 2.82 billion ml of FMD vaccines were administered in 2011 reaching more than 90 per cent of FMD-susceptible animals. Other strategies adopted include timely sharing of disease information and control experiences, cross-border prevention and control mechanism with neighboring countries, enhancing multi-sectoral cooperation, and joint research on diagnosis and integrated control measures.

Dr. Zhang Zhongqiu, China Director General, presents the Ministry of Agriculture’s Strategy on FMD Prevention and Control

Private quarantine stations lower outbreaks in Malaysia

Malaysia’s revised strategy for control and eradication of FMD has not only resulted in a huge reduction in the number of outbreaks during its early years but also provided some savings to the government.

Since the 2005 increase in prices of imported livestock from Australia, Malaysia reviewed its FMD control and eradication plan to address the risks of FMD incursion with increased importation from the northern border states. Majority of these importations involved infected animals entering Malaysia illegally resulting in significant increase in outbreaks from 2006 to 2008.

Part of the new FMD control strategy (2009-2016) is private sector engagement to facilitate trade. Malaysia’s Department of Veterinary Services (DVS) began engaging the private sector recognising that private quarantine stations were needed to augment the limited number of government-owned quarantine stations. DVS temporarily granted licenses to 55 private quarantine stations. This has led to a steady increase in registered imports from FMD-endemic countries from 66,477 in 2008 to 102,770 in 2011 while reducing FMD outbreaks from 146 in 2008 to 26 in 2011.

Lao PDR receives grant for pilot vaccination in hotspots

Lao PDR received the first Small Grants Facility (SGF) of $41,339 for a pilot vaccination campaign in four ‘hotspot’ provinces in the north of the country. In addition, Lao PDR received first delivery from the OIE FMD Vaccine Bank of 200,000 doses. This will augment the 20,000 doses provided by SRR-SEA last December together with equipment for ear-tagging 10,000 animals.

To support the vaccination programme, Lao PDR is conducting the following activities: refresher training for district and provincial staff, animal identification and serum collection, serological analysis, monitoring and negative reporting, communication and public awareness. The aim is to safeguard the FMD-free status with vaccination of the upper Mekong FMD control zone through targeted vaccination and improved communication and public awareness activities.

Vietnam adopts integrated approach to FMD control

Recognising that single measures cannot lead to successful control and elimination of the FMD virus, Vietnam has adopted an integrated control programme using the combination of measures best suited to its existing situation. The programme includes identification of the foci of infection as soon as possible using an effective surveillance system, culling of affected herds, movement control, increasing herd and animal immunity to FMD by vaccination, and mobilisation of political and public support for national FMD control and eradication programmes through effective communication and public awareness campaigns. The use of vaccination in combination with other control measures has resulted in a reduction in the number of FMD outbreaks in Vietnam. The five-year programme (2011-2015) received a budget of USD 31 million from the national government.
Countries endorse SGF

SEACFMD member countries have endorsed the Small Grant Facility (SGF) under the AusAID-funded Stop Transboundary Animal Diseases and Zoonoses (STANDZ) initiative of the SRR-SEA. SGF provides funding for eligible members to support national systems strengthening, specific disease management response for FMD and rabies and research with regional significance.

Dr Dirk Van Aken, SGF Coordinator, said the facility is designed to provide opportunities for member countries to respond to the Performance of Veterinary Services (PVS) pathway, or to trial new ways of implementing disease control activities that are promoted in the OIE regional strategies. The intent is to stimulate engagement, and look for ways to further attract resources to improving member countries’ veterinary service performance. The SGF also provides the opportunity to trial effective approaches to disease control in the sub-region and to further inform OIE’s policy development to ensure that recommendations are evidence-based and sensitive to the South-East Asian context.

So that the SGF can support policy implementation, a key feature of the facility will be strong member country involvement in: the identification of important issues to address, the delivery of the proposed actions, and effective utilisation of any relevant information or lessons that emerge. Decision-makers and technicians will be encouraged to take the primary role in activities supported under the facility.

Vaccine Bank rolls out

The OIE FMD Regional Vaccine Bank for Asia funded by the European Union made its first delivery of 200,000 doses to Lao PDR in May 2012 to support its vaccination campaign in ‘hotspot’ provinces. Interested countries must include in their application the justification for the request, unavailability of FMD vaccines in their countries and details of the vaccination plan.

A ‘Specific Request for Vaccines Delivery’ must be submitted by the OIE Delegate to the OIE Director-General specifying the number of doses and serotypes needed, the expected delivery date, among others. The request should include a commitment that the vaccines will enter the country duty-free, that no further testing (of sera, antigens or vaccines) will be carried out.

Countries receiving vaccines bear the responsibility of making sure cold chain activities and distribution channels work effectively. The vaccine bank is a virtual rolling stock provided by the supplier, Merial SAS, to least developed member countries based on their requirements. The vaccine bank aims to support targeted emergency vaccination in: buffer zones around FMD-free zones, well-defined areas that are at risk of FMD resurgence, in hotspots where vaccination will contribute to reducing the risks of FMD and areas where exceptional circumstances exist. That merit consideration of Vaccine Bank supplies.

Serotype O dominates global and regional FMD outbreaks

The SRR-SEA received reports of 1,335 FMD outbreaks in 2011 from Cambodia, P.R. China, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam majority of which (84.7 per cent) took place in the first quarter of the year. Brunei, Indonesia, Philippines and Singapore remained FMD-free as well as Sabah and Sarawak of Malaysia.

The reports reflect the continuation of the major epizootic which started in late 2010. Reported outbreaks began to taper off towards March and April, particularly in Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam which together accounted for 93.6 per cent of the total outbreaks reported. Serotype O dominated in most parts of the region following the global trend as reported by the World Reference Lab for FMD (WRLFMD). Thailand was an exception where Type A accounted for 50 per cent of reported outbreaks, a big jump from the 6 per cent reported in 2010. Malaysia was the only other country that reported serotype A in 2011. During that year, WRLFMD also detected Asia 1 in Afghanistan, Bahrain, Pakistan, Iran and Turkey. However, the 2011 Asia 1 isolate is antigenically different from Asia 1 Shamir.

As in the previous year, no serotype C and SAT 3 were detected globally. Dr Mary Joy Gordoncillo, OIE SRR-SEA Project Officer, requested SEACFMD countries to promptly and frequently submit samples to the regional FMD laboratories and WRL so that circulating serotypes can be monitored and vaccine matching conducted. "This would inform the design and implementation of control measures."
OIE, together with ASEAN, FAO and WHO conducted a workshop to develop a regional strategy for rabies control and eradication. At a workshop in Chiang Mai last January, 73 participants representing the human and animal health sectors from 12 countries in Asia agreed that regional and national step-wise action plans for the progressive control of animal rabies with a special focus on dogs are needed. They also recommended, among others, that OIE finalise the guidelines for the use of, and access to, the Rabies Vaccine Bank.

Country presentations showed that there was a lack of a comprehensive and multi-sectoral rabies control programme in some countries due to competing priorities and budgetary constraints. Vaccination of stray dogs is a major challenge in rabies endemic areas. Dr. Subhash Morzaria presented FAO’s multi-sectoral approach to control rabies and other diseases. Field control programmes in Bali, Indonesia and Bohol, Philippines show that, with good governance and an effective multi-sectoral strategy including mass vaccination, the battle against rabies can be won.

The OIE SRR-SEA is supporting Lao PDR, Myanmar and Cambodia in updating their national FMD plans in line with the SEACFMD 2020 roadmap and according to the principles of the FAO/OIE FMD Progressive Control Pathway.

Dr. Ray Webb, SRR SEA Consultant, travelled to the three countries in April and May to consult with key animal health officials in charge of FMD control efforts as well as people involved in interventions at the provincial, district and village level. Discussions focused on the current situation of FMD, difficulties and limitations faced in implementing current control plans, and ideas that relevant officials could contribute towards achieving freedom by 2020.
Myanmar hosted the 10th Meeting of the Upper Mekong Working Group (UMWG) on FMD Zoning and Animal Movement Management from 7-9 February.

H.E. U Khin Maung Aye, Deputy Minister for Livestock and Fisheries, opened the meeting as he highlighted the significant role of livestock in Myanmar’s economy and the efforts of the Ministry to eradicate animal infectious diseases with strategic plans, as well as cooperation and collaboration with other countries in South-East Asia. Participants from member countries and member organisations recognised that effectively addressing the risks of animal movement remains to be the biggest challenge in the zone. They recommended promoting the trading of livestock products in lieu of live animals and setting up of facilities for slaughtering and processing animals. Other recommendations included cross-border meetings of livestock traders, continued monitoring of animal movement patterns and coordination with partners to examine measures that reduce the risks of FMD transmission along the animal movement pathway.

The SRR-SEA and the Department of Veterinary Services Malaysia conducted the 11th Meeting of the Tri-State Commission for Malaysia, Thailand and Myanmar (MTM) Campaign in Penang from 30 January to 1 February. The meeting aimed to realign the MTM plans with the existing strategic framework of the Revised SEAC-FMD Roadmap 2020, review member states’ classification against the 5 stages of the FAO/OIE Progressive Control Pathway (PCP) and plan how to move them up to the next level. Participants also discussed how the STANDZ initiative which has subsumed Phase 4 of the SEACFMD campaign can support FMD control efforts in Malaysia, Regions 8 and 9 of Thailand, and the Thanintharyi region of Myanmar. Member countries are expected to continue to move forward in their PCP, given the specific country commitments and the regional support identified.

Dr Karanvir Kukreja, STANDZ Project Officer

Karan has a BVSc degree from the University of Sydney, and has experience in small- and mixed- animal practices as well as government laboratories in the Asia-Pacific region. He also has experience volunteering in health care, development, and disaster relief in Africa and Thailand. Karan is passionate about participating in the development of an improved animal health status in South-East Asia and in turn playing a part in improving the livelihoods of people in the region.
Melbourne hosts laboratory strategy planning workshop

The OIE SRR-SEA’s IDENTIFY programme and the Australian Animal Health Laboratory (AAHL) in Geelong organised the national animal health laboratory strategic planning workshop in Melbourne from 20 to 24 March 2012. The workshop aimed to build capacity of laboratory directors in the principles and tools of developing strategic plans, to directly assist them in drafting a strategic plan, and to provide them with guidance on the further elaboration and stakeholder buy-in of the strategic plan back in their respective countries.

Reviews of laboratory performance and capacity through OIE PVS Evaluations and Gap Analyses, laboratory assessments made by various international partners as well as country and laboratory visits by OIE staff indicate that national animal health laboratories in the region often lack guiding policy and strategic plans. This includes both the National Laboratory and the capacity building of the network of sub-national laboratories in a strategic and sustainable manner. To address these gaps, the workshop assisted Laboratory Directors in initiating a draft strategic plan from a generic template. Day 1 of the workshop focused on topics and concept central to an understanding of strategy, beginning with determining the essence of strategic thinking. Day 2 focused on the stakeholders in general and more specifically on the key stakeholders, those groups or individuals that can influence the strategy of the organisation and in strategic thinking, analysis and action. Day 3 discussed organisational culture while Day 4 discussed strategic options and choices. The last day focused on the key elements fundamental to bringing a strategy to life. The workshop concluded with participants discussing and presenting activities that would help them to continue this process of strategic planning back home.

Focal Points on Wildlife trained to improve reporting

Sri Lanka’s Ministry of Livestock and Rural Community Development hosted the training workshop for OIE National Focal Points on Wildlife in Colombo last April. The training aimed to improve reporting of wildlife diseases to ensure transparency in the global animal disease situation, including zoonoses. Organised by the OIE SRR-SEA with support from OIE Regional Representation for Asia and the Pacific and OIE Headquarters, the training programme illustrated the measures developed by the OIE to enhance the timely and transparent reporting of diseases occurring in wildlife. Using case studies, the training explained the implementation of surveillance networks.

Upcoming Events

- 2nd FAO/OIE World Conference on FMD
  27-29 June 2012 (Bangkok, Thailand)
- HPED Steering Committee and GFTADs Meeting
  17-19 July 2012 (Bangkok, Thailand)
- SEACFMD National Coordinators’ Meeting
  3-7 September 2012 (Manila, Philippines)
- FMD LabNet Meeting
  15-17 October 2012 (Lanzhou, China)

Participants from China, Laos, Vietnam, Thailand, Malaysia, Philippines, Timor Leste, Indonesia, Australia & OIE SRR SEA

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Members support One Health network of networks

SEACFMD member countries reaffirmed their opposition to a new institution on One Health but expressed their support to a network of networks. During the last day of the SEACFMD Sub-Commission meeting in China, and OIE Delegates/Chief Veterinary Officers from ASEAN and China agreed to develop the One Health community into a network of networks which does not have a single ownership. Member countries also supported the position of the OIE to use existing tools managed by tripartite group such as the Global Early Warning System (GLEWS) as key partners of the One Health network. Members noted the importance of cross-sectoral collaboration and supported the position of OIE, FAO and WHO that One Health is more than zoonoses and has strong links between animal disease and food security. FMD’s link to food security makes it a key component of One Health. OIE sees One Health as an opportunity for veterinary services to attract more resources, considering that it is in the frontlines for the prevention of pandemics of animal origin. The 18th SEACFMD Sub-Commission meeting in China encouraged member countries to participate in the second One Health conference, the Prince Mahidol Award Conference in Thailand in 2013 and the EcoHealth Conference in Kunming in October 2012 which have regional and global importance.

Photo Gallery: 18th Sub-Commission Meeting on FMD