

# **ASF Coordination meeting for South East Asia 18 June 2020**

## **Brief report of the discussions & recommendations**

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### **I. Context**

Following its introduction in China reported in August 2018, the African swine fever (ASF) situation is continuously evolving in the region which is in parallel impacted by COVID19 and its restrictive measures.

The OIE Sub-Regional Representation for South East Asia organised a virtual meeting on 18 June 2020 on “**ASF epidemiological situation, progress on ASF prevention and control and current needs**”. It gathered countries from South East Asia, plus PR China, as well as key partners.

The objectives of the meetings were:

- to update our knowledge and understanding of the ASF situation in SEA countries;
- to share success stories and challenges faced by Member Countries and partners in ASF prevention and control;
- to discuss the needs of countries in the prevention and control of ASF.

41 participants or group of participants joined the virtual meeting from South East Asian countries, as well as from regional and international partners.

### **II. ASF situation update**

While presenting the regional situation with regard to ASF, Dr Ronello Abila, the OIE Sub-Regional Representative reiterated the importance of timely reporting of outbreaks by veterinary services, including via submission of regular follow-up reports, to ensure transparency and fulfil their international notification obligations. Reporting is paramount to monitor those outbreaks and evolution of the disease. It was reminded that the closure of outbreaks should also be reported as an important indicator of the evaluation of ASF; indeed, the OIE World Animal Health Information System (WAHIS) consider both the new and the cumulative number of outbreaks.

Participants were updated about the OIE activities on ASF in Asia including on:

- The Standing Group of Experts under GF-TADs' umbrella, and its future work plan. One of the next topics of importance to be discussed is wild boar, with the objective to understand wild boars' distribution, ecology, management and epidemiological role in swine diseases of domestic pigs. To best prepare this meeting, participants were encouraged to submit a poster on wild boar following the provided template (See Annex 1).
- The finalisation of the guidelines ASF on compartmentalisation, expected in July 2020.
- a video developed by the Hong-Kong laboratory on "ASF laboratory biosecurity measures" which will be uploaded on the OIE website after necessary approvals.

### **III. Country update**

Amongst the success stories in ASF prevention and control shared by countries figure:

- reinforcement of screening of pigs and pigs' products at checkpoints and slaughterhouses;
  - pig and pig product movement control;
  - ASFV test using RT-PCR, portable PCR (Myanmar);
  - establishment of ASF control committees at all administrative levels;
  - measures adopted for progressive reduction and prohibition of swill feeding. (China);
  - simulation exercises for ASF preparedness; (Philippines);
  - risk assessment of pig farms using mobile application (Thailand);
  - stakeholder awareness and communication on ASF prevention and control (Laos);
  - development of a National ASF Control plan 2020- 2025 (Vietnam).
- Participants also shared the key challenges they encountered in ASF prevention and control, including:
- the implementation of biosecurity practices and measures in free range backyard production system and small holders;
  - the complexity of pig value chain with multiple risk factors and various stakeholders to manage (e.g traders, vehicles);
  - the swill feeding management even more challenging after Covid-2019;
  - the dependence on donor for diagnostics especially reagents;
  - the unknown role of wild boar in ASF epidemiology.

### **IV. Update on ASF cross border risk assessment study**

Pr. Dirk Pfeiffer introduced the OIE ASF cross border risk assessment study in South East Asia (plus China, Timor Leste and Papua New Guinea). The aim, activities, methodology to be undertaken under the study were explained to the meeting participants. Besides, characterizing risk pathways in study countries and developing ASFV risk assessment models, the capacity building of national animal health staff in risk assessment was particularly highlighted as an important objective the study. The countries interested to participate in and who have not responded to the expression of interest yet were invited to nominate a contact person as soon as possible.

## V. Partners by update

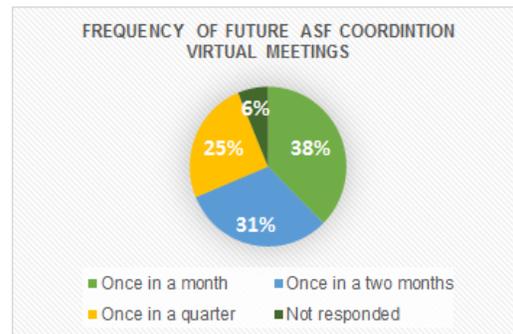
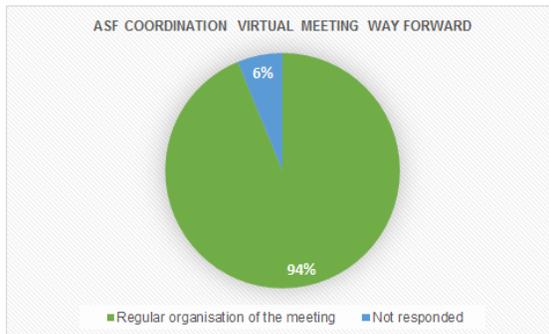
Partners highlighted the progress on ASF activities.

1. The Australian Centre for Disease Preparedness presented some research activities:
  - whole genome sequencing of SE Asian and Pacific isolates for improved molecular epidemiology. To date: 7 were sequenced from isolates from Vietnam, Timor Leste and PNG;
  - comparative evaluation of PCR diagnostic tests for the detection of ASFV virus DNA in oral fluids and whole blood.
  - developing early detection surveillance for African swine fever in feral pigs in remote areas of Australia.
  - evaluation of suitable dry swabs to withstand high temperature.
2. FAO reminded the ASF regional collaborative framework for South East Asia and (East Asia) updated participants on their activities in the region. The objective of the framework is to prevent the spread and mitigate the impacts of ASF in South East Asia and (East Asia). Some of the key points described -
  - to have understanding of ASF, conducting studies and capacity building programmes on Pig value chain.
  - captive wild boar through regional FETV programme and upcoming study on wild boar ecology and ASF risk.
  - development of laboratory guidelines through Lab technical group at ASEAN.
  - since random collection of samples in healthy Pigs is not working hence approach is to improve overall syndromic surveillance and disease reporting of swine diseases.
  - risk communication training module will be rolled out.
  - 4-week online training course was completed
  - Provision of field equipment's such as portable PCR, laboratory supplies.
3. GREASE is a research and training platform coordinated by Cirad and its partners in Southeast Asia". The network shared their research update:
  - Collaborate with FAO to list the research activities on ASF in the region, including on vaccine and diagnostics, risk assessment and risk analysis.
  - Remote meeting on new funding capacity of ASF region.
  - upcoming activities on distribution and movement of wild boars which is currently a knowledge gap in the region with context to ASF
  - evaluation of wild boar and domestic pig contact patterns particularly in the free-range pigs and commercial farms
  - native wild pigs' conservation in Philippines and Indonesia.
  - the upcoming project on Biosecurity measures for small scale farmers in the region and work is currently ongoing on developing protocol.
4. ASF epidemiological situation, progress on ASF prevention and control and current needs Agronomes et Vétérinaires Sans Frontières (French for Agronomists and Veterinarians Without Borders, also known by its acronym: AVSF) explained their experience working in the region highlighted need to complement those institutional supports with operational projects in support to rural communities and local veterinary services including public/private veterinarians, CAHWs.
5. The coordination meeting also gave opportunity to identify the following needs:

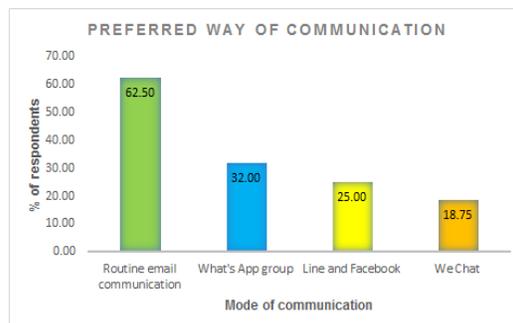
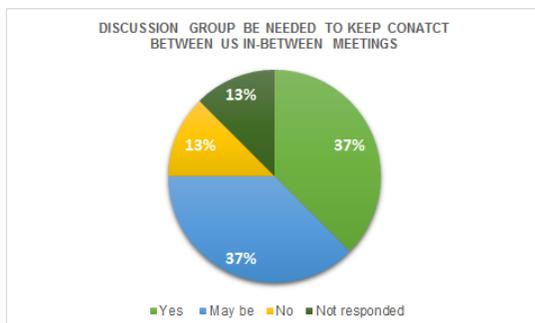
- training on outbreak investigation particularly tracing and modelling for ASF spread.
- guidelines on ASF compartmentalisation.
- Laos requested support for laboratory supplies particularly primers for diagnostic; (FAO confirmed to support during the meeting).
- Indonesia requested assistance in building biosecurity measures which are feasible amongst smallholders, in evaluating pig supply chains particularly in identifying stakeholders and their management for ASF control, and in engaging with hunters and profiling to identify wild boar population.
- Thailand may share experiences that how they manage to prevent ASF despite the border with infected countries and spread in the region.
- Vietnam has proposed to have key recommendations of this coordination meeting.
- Guidance and recommendation were also requested from the standing group of experts (SGE) on the closure of outbreak (whether 60, 45, and 21 days) after the last case is reported in that specific epi unit.

## VI. Update on poll survey

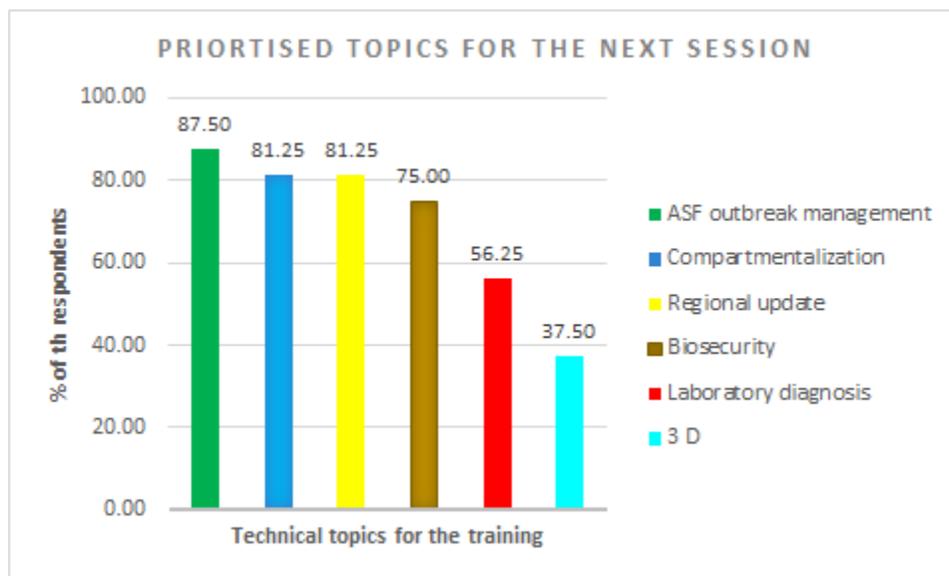
At the end of the meeting a poll survey was proposed to explore the preferred ways forward. 15 out of 16 (93%) votes supported the regular organisation of coordination meetings such as this one. The frequency of the meeting has been proposed once in a month by 6 participants, once in two months (n=5); once in a quarter (n=4) and one participant has not responded.



37% considered that a group discussion should be set up to keep contact in-between meetings, 37% considered it was maybe needed and 13% considered it was not needed. Amongst responders, routine email communication (62.5%) suggested as the preferred way of communication, followed by What's App group (32%), 25% have suggested using Line and Facebook, and 18.75% proposed We Chat mobile application.



The topic of interest for the next session of the virtual meeting was listed as ASF outbreak management (87.5%), compartmentalization (81.25%), regional update (81.25%), biosecurity (75%), lab diagnosis (56.25%) and 3D (37.5%).



#### VII. Recommendations:

1. South- East Asian countries should report any epidemiological change in their country to the OIE via WAHIS, as well as regularly submit follow-up reports. These follow-ups should include the closure of outbreaks when relevant.
2. The OIE will ask the Standing Group of Experts for ASF in Asia to provide guidance and recommendation on the timeline to close an outbreak after the last case is reported in that specific epi unit.
3. Countries interested to participate in the regional cross-border risk assessment for ASF and who have not responded to the expression of interest yet should nominate a contact person by the end of June 2020.
4. To best prepare, the Standing Group of Experts meeting on wild boars' distribution, ecology, management, and epidemiological role countries should fill in and submit a poster on wild boars following the provided template (see Annex 1).

Please refer to meeting documents including presentations [here](#).