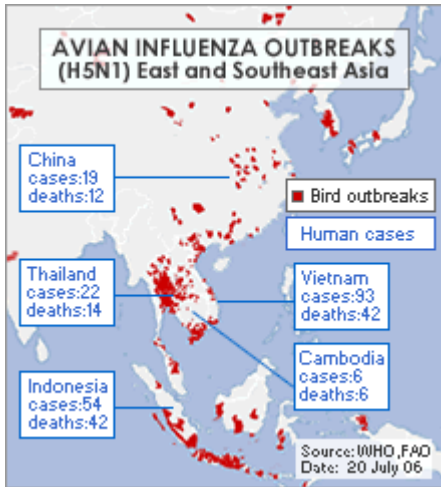




REGIONAL AVIAN INFLUENZA PROGRAM



BACKGROUND Before 1997, there was no evidence that influenza A virus subtype H5N1 could infect humans and potentially cause fatalities. However, in 1997 an outbreak of influenza in Hong Kong was identified infecting 18 and killing six. The virus resurfaced in December 2003 in Vietnam and has in the intervening three years killed millions of domestic fowl in Asia (>300 million have been culled), spread beyond Asia, and resulted in a global total of 256 persons infected with H5N1 with 151 attributed deaths (WHO: 16OCT06). Over 80% of the animal H5N1 outbreaks and 85% of human infections with H5N1 have occurred in South-East Asia.

In support of the President’s Avian Influenza Initiative, the RDM/A, in FY05 and FY06, committed over \$18.605 million for the prevention and control of animal and human influenza (AHI) in the Greater Mekong region, specifically in China, Laos, Vietnam, and Burma. However, it is clear by the nature of how H5N1 travels throughout the region and the world that there is a need to strengthen preparedness, surveillance, and control in all countries. RDM/A funding therefore supports country and regional level activities and the sharing of lessons learned thus far through enhancing South-to-South cooperation.



With the help of Superkai (or Superchicken), volunteers in Laos educate people about safe animal handling practices, biosecurity, and simple measures to protect oneself from avian influenza.

ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION The goal of USAID’s avian influenza activities is to successfully contain the H5N1 virus within the animal population by 2008. Specifically the AHI project aims to:

- Strengthen national and regional preparedness, planning, and multi-sectoral coordination.
- Strengthen capacity for early detection and early warning of AI outbreaks and human influenza cases through national surveillance system strengthening and development of community-based field surveillance
- Enhance capacity for rapid and effective response to outbreaks of AI and cases of human influenza
- Promote public awareness and education on AHI

The ability of USAID to bring quick and flexible funding to implementing partners in the region has made a significant effect on the ability of governments to develop and implement plans to prevent and control AHI. Following is a sampling of project activities:

CONTINUED >

REGIONAL AVIAN INFLUENZA PROGRAM - Continued

ACHIEVEMENTS:

Selected AI achievements are presented below:

- Approximately 7,000 animal health staff and volunteers in the region have been trained in surveillance to detect AI outbreaks.
- Working through mass organizations, such as Women's Unions, and NGOs, behavioral change campaigns in Vietnam and Laos have trained over 10,000 backyard farmers, media, and animal and human health workers in the basics of AHI, its control and prevention.
- Over 300,000 booklets, 400,000 posters, 7 radio spots, and 8 TV spots have been developed and disseminated in Vietnam and/or Laos regarding safe poultry practices.
- Over 20,000 personal protective equipment (PPE) sets have been distributed to Ministries of Agriculture and Health throughout the region.
- Baseline studies on AI knowledge, attitudes and practices (KAP) of backyard poultry farmers were conducted in Laos and Vietnam (as well as Cambodia and Indonesia through their missions) to provide information for development of public awareness materials and allow for evaluation of behavior change communication activities.

Animal Health

- FAO provided technical assistance in strategy development, training and supplies to the national vaccination campaign in **Vietnam** which has covered over 170 million chickens and 79 million ducks. Evaluation of the campaign, as well as operational research on duck vaccine dosing, is ongoing.
- Active animal disease surveillance is being established at county-level in three target provinces in Western **China** (Tibet, Qinghai, Xiangjiang), including the upgrading of existing diagnostic laboratory capacity and training in epidemiology and diagnostics.
- Cross-sectoral surveillance and rapid response teams at central and local levels in **Burma** are being trained in general epidemiological principles, field investigation, disease reporting, and outbreak containment, with a field simulation exercise for outbreak containment taking place in February 2007.

Human Health

- Table-top simulation exercises are being conducted in cross-border provinces, with participation from **Thai, Laotian, and Cambodian** local governments, to coordinate responses to pandemic influenza and other infectious disease outbreaks.
- USAID is supporting the development of regional pandemic contingency plans, a training needs assessment for pandemic preparedness, and a review of regional institutional and policy frameworks through **ASEAN**.
- An innovative 'healthy markets' project is being piloted in five provinces of **Laos** to engage the community in designing healthier markets, improving infrastructure and equipment, and providing necessary training to employees and users.

Cross-Cutting

- USAID is developing a **regional** monitoring and evaluation strategic framework in coordination with UN agencies, other implementing partners and other donors.

USAID/RDMA's partners include US government agencies (USDA, HHS, Voice of America), UN agencies (FAO, WHO), and non-governmental organizations (Academy for Educational Development, Abt Associates, CARE, Kenan Institute of Asia, International Rescue Committee, and the US Pharmacopeia).

