World Organisation for Animal Health
Founded as OIE

Pandemic preparedness:

WOAH workshop on risk analysis of spill over events in wildlife in Japan

Yugawara, Japan

13-14 December, 2023

WORKSHOP REPORT

Executive summary

The World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) Wildlife Health Framework recognises that multi-sectoral collaborations—linking Veterinary Services and other authorities and professionals—are needed when addressing health threats. Country and regional pandemic preparedness will help mitigate impacts of future pandemic events.

WOAH, in partnership with the Japan Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF), Ministry of Environment (MOE), and Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare (MHLW) held the "**Pandemic preparedness: WOAH workshop on risk analysis of spillover events in wildlife in Japan**" on 13-14 December 2023 in Yugawara, Kanagawa Prefecture. There were 24 participants, representing animal husbandry, human health and wildlife and environmental sectors.

Workshop content included a mixture of plenary presentations, group work, question and answer discussions, as well as plenary panel discussions. Through the workshop, participants' knowledge on risk analysis for diseases originating from wildlife was enhanced. They performed two simulation exercises on disease spillover events to better understand the factors involved in risk assessment, risk management, and risk communication. Participants worked together to identify and prioritise gaps in the risk analysis system in Japan. Further to this, they identified areas on which to focus to improve national risk analysis system in the future.

Key areas identified for future work include: joint identification of priority diseases and implementation for sustainable wildlife disease surveillance, multisectoral training and community awareness program, advanced digitalisation of health data to improve efficiency of data sharing and reporting, and further multisectoral activities at national and local level.

1. Background

The World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) is the global authority on animal health, focused on transparently disseminating information on animal diseases, improving animal health globally and thus building a safer, healthier and more sustainable world. The WOAH Wildlife Health Framework "Protecting wildlife health to achieve One Health" recognises that multi-sectoral collaborations are needed, linking Veterinary Services with other authorities and professionals in addressing health threats. WOAH is using Guidelines, Standards and risk reduction strategies to identify gaps and needs relevant to spillover events between wildlife, domestic animals and humans. This "One Health" approach of collaboration and coordination is essential for a sustainable future for wildlife, ecosystems, humans and domestic animals alike.

As evidenced by the COVID-19 pandemic, there is a need to increase country and regional pandemic preparedness to mitigate the impacts of future pandemic events in the Asia and the Pacific Region. WOAH is working together with partners in the Quadripartite—United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), World Health Organization (WHO) and United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)—to tackle this issue. It is important to enhance cross-sectoral One Health collaboration to improve pandemic preparedness and management of disease spillover events in the region via activities such as this workshop.

2. Objectives of the workshop

- To enhance knowledge for relevant stakeholders on risk analysis for diseases originating from wildlife: considering the likelihood and consequences of exposure.
- To perform a gap analysis of risk analysis (assessment/ communication/ management) in Japan.
- To better understand the factors involved in risk analysis by performing a simulation exercise using fictional and/or real-life data.
- To increase communication and awareness among different stakeholders responsible for surveillance and response to possible spillover diseases.

3. Participants

The target group were those who would be involved in risk analysis of a spillover event – namely, participants from different sectors (veterinary, public/human health, wildlife/environment) and at different levels (ministry, prefectural, and municipality). There were 24 participants (6 female, 18 male) with

approximately equal representation across sectors: 10 in animal health (nominated by MAFF), 7 in human health (nominated by MHLW), and 7 in wildlife/environment (nominated by MOE).

Participant response in online survey:

1. What is your main field/sector?

Domestic/livestock animals	9
Public health	7
Wildlife health	6
All three ("One Health")	2
Other	1

4. Trainers

The training was provided by the Data Integration Department and Preparedness and Resilience Department at WOAH headquarters with the WOAH Regional Representation for Asia and the Pacific.

5. Outline of the workshop modality

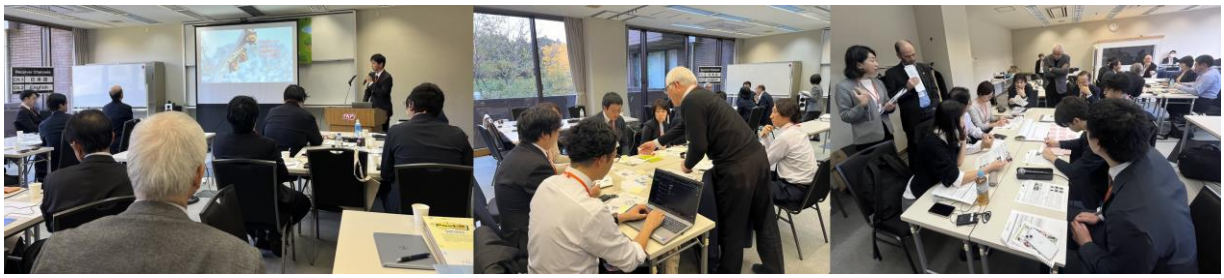
Workshop content included a mixture of plenary presentations, group work, question and answer discussions, as well as plenary panel discussions.

- *Introductory presentations on risk analysis so all participants had the same understanding of terminology*
- *Presentations on disease surveillance, including the situation in Japan for livestock, wildlife, environment and humans*
    - Participants undertook a short online survey.
- *Panel discussion on potential gaps in the disease surveillance system in Japan*
    - Panellists represented all sectors at the workshop and were from outside the central ministries as legislators. They drew on their experiences to discuss the biggest gaps.
- *Risk analysis simulation exercise on disease X*
    - This exercise considered how different stakeholders would respond to a fictitious spillover event by a novel infectious disease affecting multiple species. This first simulation exercises also had the objective to help participants to start familiarising with the theoretical concepts explained in previous sessions.
- *Presentations on risk communication*

- *Risk analysis in Japan, with a simulation exercise on severe fever with thrombocytopenia syndrome (SFTS) virus, including a communications session*
    - The objective was to illustrate that understanding of ecosystem complexity is required when dealing with a wildlife health issue. This coupled with the challenges of communicating with stakeholders, and how disease risks are managed effectively and feasibly as a result of the risk analysis approach.
    - The "press conference" wrap up session pitched an "expert panel" (7 participants) against the "media" (all other participants), to practice communication skills in a stressful situation.
- *Panel discussion on prioritisation of gaps in the risk analysis system in Japan and the way forward*
    - Panellists represented all sectors at the workshop. They discussed priority actions for Japan in relation to spillover events in wildlife. Audience participants also had opportunity to contribute.

A copy of the workshop agenda is included at the end of this report. The workshop presentation PDFs can be found on the regional WOAH website here.

Presentation and group discussion sessions



6. Prioritised gaps in risk analysis system in Japan

These were formulated using information from presentations by participants, responses to the online survey, panel and plenary discussions.

Key barriers identified in the online survey had some cross-over in:

- (i) **coordination/communication with other sectors** – e.g., a lack of financial resources, lack of human resources and workforce capacity, lack of legislation related to wildlife diseases, and lack of national information system for wildlife diseases
- (ii) **wildlife disease surveillance** – lack of financial resources, lack of expertise in wildlife disease investigations within wildlife services, and lack of human resources and workforce capacity to conduct surveillance

- (iii) **wildlife disease reporting** – lack of financial resources, lack of enforcement of legal requirement for disease notification, and lack of national information system for wildlife diseases.

Panelists and participants discussed and agreed upon the prioritized gaps during the plenary panel discussion time.

a. Lack of sustainable capacity for wildlife sampling and diagnostic
b. Human resources including education and capacity building
c. Data sharing and reporting
d. Communication and collaboration between sectors and stakeholders
e. Lack of joint prioritization for diseases (animals and humans) at the national level

7. Way forward in Japan

Further to the identified key gaps, panellists and participants identified these areas on which to focus on in the future:

a. Develop criteria for joint prioritization, identify priority diseases and implementation for sustainable wildlife disease surveillance
b. Multisectoral training and community awareness program
c. Advanced digitalization to improve efficiency of data sharing and reporting
d. Plan further multisectoral activities at national and local level (e.g. national bridging workshop, simulation exercises)

8. Conclusions

The workshop was considered a success by participants (with most participants rating it as 4 or 5 (out of 5) overall in the post-workshop evaluation survey). Several participants identified that their future work will be positively impacted by the workshop, particularly in multi-sectoral communication and collaboration.

However, there is still much work to be done to move forward with prioritized actions in Japan. Output from these discussions can be used to inform future activities. Experiences by participants in simulation exercises—discussing disease risk analysis including risk communication—are a building block for improving intersectoral understanding and cooperation.

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Pandemic preparedness:
WOAH workshop on risk analysis of spillover events in wildlife in Japan

13-14 December, 2023
9am-5pm (JST)
[LecTore-Yugawara, Yugawara, Japan]

Programme

DAY 1: Wednesday 13 December 2023		
08:30 – 09:00	Registration and welcoming of participants	WOAH Regional Representation for Asia and the Pacific (RRAP)
	Session 1: Opening	Chair: Nahoko Ieda, WOAH RRAP
09:00 – 09:15	Opening remarks	Masatsugu Okita, WOAH Delegate of Japan *[delivered by MAFF representative]* Hirofumi Kugita, WOAH Regional Representative for Asia and the Pacific, WOAH RRAP
09:15 – 09:20	Introduction and objectives of the workshop	Lesa Thompson, WOAH RRAP
09:20 – 09:30	Importance and challenges of disease reporting in wildlife	Paolo Tizzani, Data Integration Department, WOAH headquarters
09:30 – 09:50	Participant introductions (icebreaker)	Led by Nahoko Ieda
09:50 – 10:00	Group photograph	All
10:00 – 10:20	*Coffee break*	
Time	**Session 2: Risk analysis – introduction**	Chair: Kiyokazu Murai, MAFF
10:20 – 10:40	Basics of risk analysis	Paolo Tizzani
10:40 – 10:55	WOAH Standards and guidelines with relevance to risk analysis	Lesa Thompson
10:55 – 11:15	Factors involved in risk analysis of spillover events in wildlife: real life case examples*	Dharmaveer Shetty, Preparedness and Resilience Department, WOAH headquarters
11:15 – 11:25	WOAH survey on wildlife disease (2020)	Lesa Thompson, WOAH RRAP, & Masahiro Kitomi, MoE
11:25 – 11:45	Current risk analysis system in Japan – overview of current multi-sectoral cooperation	Masahiro Kitomi, MoE
11:45 – 12:00	Discussion and Q&A	
12:00 – 13:00	*Lunch*	
Time	**Session 3: Disease surveillance**	Chair: Lesa Thompson
13:00 – 13:30	Disease surveillance systems: types of surveillance, data integration, evaluation of reliability and sensitivity	Paolo Tizzani
13:30 – 13:50	Risk-based management in Japan: participants' survey	Facilitated by Nahoko Ieda
13:50 – 14:35	Current systems in Japan: Human disease surveillance in Japan	 - Takafumi Shimizu, MHLW

	Livestock disease surveillance in Japan Wildlife disease surveillance in Japan	- Yu Sanai, MAFF - Masahiro Kitomi, MoE
14:35 – 14:40	Review survey results	Paolo Tizzani
14:40 – 15:00	Plenary panel discussion: brainstorming on potential gaps in disease surveillance system in Japan	Chair: Nahoko Ieda, WOAH RRAP Panellists: Kazunori Hamada, Shigeki Hirata, Tatsuya Horikiri
15:00 – 15:20	*Coffee break*	
Time	**Session 4: Risk analysis simulation X**	Chair: Lesa Thompson
15:20 – 16:20	Simulation exercise in groups: risk analysis of a spillover scenario	Facilitators: WOAH staff & local facilitators Sonoko Kondo Tsubasa Narita Manabu Onuma
16:20 – 16:45	Plenary feedback from groups, with Q&A	Rapporteurs from each group
16:45 – 16:50	Session summary by chair	Lesa Thompson
	Session 5: Risk communication	Chair: Nahoko Ieda
16:50 – 17:05	Risk communication: how to do it, and avoiding disinformation and misinformation	Paolo Tizzani and Lesa Thompson
17:05 – 17:25	Multi-sectoral information sharing in Japan	Yuu Sanai, MAFF
17:25 – 17:45	Messaging to different audiences: adapting your message*	Basilio Valdehuesa, WOAH RRAP
17:45 – 18:00	Discussion and Q&A	
19:00	***Reception dinner offered by WOAH***	

**Recorded presentation*

DAY 2: Thursday 14 December 2023		
09:00 – 09:15	Recap from day 1 and agenda for day 2	Lesa Thompson
	Session 6: Risk analysis in Japan	Chair: Paolo Tizzani
09:15 – 10:30	Simulation exercise in groups: risk analysis of a disease spillover (SFTS virus) in Japan /cont.	Facilitators: WOAH staff & local facilitators (as above)
10:30 – 10:50	*Coffee break*	
10:50 – 12:00	/cont. Simulation exercise in groups	Facilitators: WOAH staff & local facilitators
12:00 – 13:00	*Lunch*	
13:00 – 13:55	Plenary feedback from groups, with Q&A	Rapporteurs from each group
13:55 – 14:00	Exercise summary	Paolo Tizzani
14:00 – 15:00	Group work: risk communication exercise	Facilitators: Paolo Tizzani & Nahoko Ieda
15:00 – 15:35	Plenary feedback, with Q&A and summary	All
15:35 – 15:40	Exercise summary	Paolo Tizzani & Nahoko Ieda
15:40 – 16:00	*Coffee break*	
	Session 7: Way forward in Japan	Chair: Takafumi Shimizu, MHLW
16:00 – 17:00	Plenary discussion: Prioritise gaps identified in Japan risk analysis system & discuss way forward	Chair: Hirofumi Kugita Panellists: Mizuki Hirayama, Masahiro Kitomi, Tomoshi Nagata, Takafumi Shimizu
17:00 – 17:30	Evaluation, certificates and closing ceremony	Hirofumi Kugita and Paolo Tizzani, WOAH
17:30	Participants depart	

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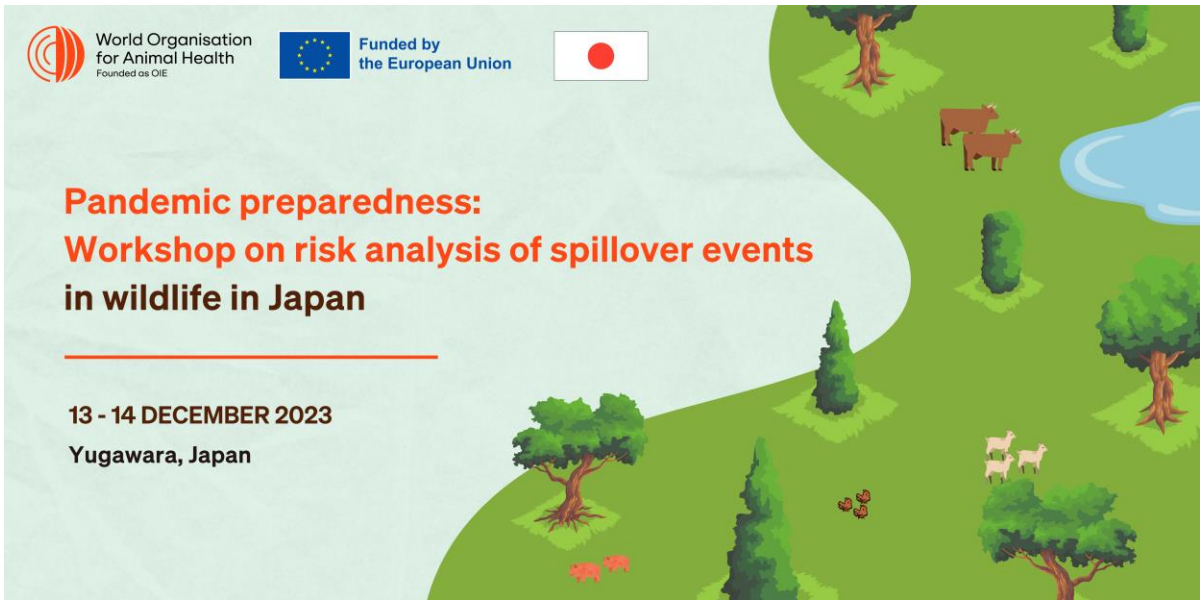

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