

## **WOAH Workshop on Lumpy Skin Disease Control in South Asia: Building Epidemiology and Laboratory Networks to Support TADs Control in the Sub-Region**

Kathmandu, Nepal

06-08 August 2024

WOAH RRAP organised a workshop on the prevention and control of lumpy skin disease (LSD) and other transboundary animal diseases (TADs) in South Asia to enhance the collaboration and strategic planning for Epidemiology and Laboratory Networks in the Sub-region. This workshop was attended by 6 out of 8 invited SAARC Member States, experts on LSD, representatives of WOA, and observers. Member country participants consisted of CVOs, focal points/members of Veterinary Epidemiology and Focal Point/member of Laboratory Director's Forums.

### **Considering:**

- the ongoing spread of LSD in South Asia and substantial impacts of LSD on livelihoods and food security, particularly among smallholders, and implication on movement of live bovines and their products;
- new developments in terms of disease epidemiology and control tools globally, regionally and at the country level;
- the interventions made by the Members and Partners including production and use of homologous LSD vaccines and heterologous goat pox vaccines to prevent and control LSD;
- the need to re-vitalise SAARC EpiNet and SAARC Laboratory Directors' Forum for the timely sharing of information and coordination for TADs among the countries in South Asia and laboratory capacity building and harmonisation of techniques respectively;
- the importance of cross border collaboration and regional coordination for the effective control of TADs and to facilitate safe trade.

### **The workshop notes the importance of:**

- the prevention and control of TADs in the South Asia region through harmonisation of regulations, improving communication and sharing of information on animal diseases between countries, enhancing animal identification and traceability, conducting thorough risk assessments and surveillance, use of vaccination and standardising laboratory diagnostic protocols in accordance with international standards;
- establishing formal agreements and promote regulated cross-border trade to ensure that measures may be applied for the safe movement of animals;

- reaffirming or establishing disease and laboratory contact points within each Member to ensure continued dialogue and participation in collaborative structures and efforts like the EpiNet and Laboratory Directors' Forums to build capacities and exchange information in real time to effectively and efficiently tackle TADs and other animal diseases;
- coordination and forum meetings (virtual and in-person) to continue exchanging of information on TADs and its control;
- the Strategic Action Plans such as the sub-regional work plans (GF-TADs) and national Strategic Plan for TADs.

### **The workshop recommends:**

#### **Cross border collaboration for TADs control**

- Conduct a value chain study covering Indo-Gangetic and Brahmaputra regions and to identify drivers for animal movement and risk pathways for the spread of disease;
- Strengthen mechanisms to regulate cross-border trade so that measures may be applied to reduce the risk of disease transmission across borders;
- Consider harmonisation of protocols for diagnostics, vaccines, quarantine and surveillance to attain WOAHA prescribed standards, and coordinate vaccination and outbreak investigation and response across the border districts/states/provinces/divisions, and;
- Development of bilateral or multilateral memorandums of understanding for cross border collaboration.

#### **Lumpy skin disease control**

- Designate an aspirational goal of freedom by 2030 to inspire control measures;
- Develop a sub-regional strategy that is customized to local socio-epidemiological contexts so that fit-for-purpose measures may be applied;
- Strengthen the sub-regional laboratory diagnostic capacity for LSD through engagement with WOAHA/ FAO Reference Laboratories, and;
- Support the quality evaluation of LSD vaccines produced in the sub-region, develop a policy brief on the importance of using quality vaccines and provide guidance on the use of LSD vaccines according to international standards.

#### **South Asia EpiNet and Laboratory Directors' Forums Re-vitalisation**

- The interim Working Group led by the two co-lead countries to finalise the Terms of Reference of the Forum (SLDF), including its governance and submit for endorsement at the next SAARC CVO forum;

- Formalise governance structure including review of the current focal point and alternate focal points from each member country as to their appropriateness and if needed propose replacements in consultation with respective CVOs
- Organise the EpiNet and Lab Forum meetings back-to-back with the SAARC CVO Forum meetings if SAARC Secretariat requests and FAO and WOAHA are supporting the CVO forum meetings, and;
- SAARC Secretariat and Regional GF TADs Secretariat/WOAH RRAP – to convey all action plans and the recommendations drafted from this workshop to FAO RAP for their support as “strong recommendation” from the Member States

**Follow up actions/endorsement by SAARC CVO Forum:**

- the revised Sub-Regional GF-TADs Workplan 2024-2026 for South Asia region;
- the recommendations of this workshop;
- revised TORs (Terms of reference) for the EpiNet Forum and SAARC Laboratory Director’s Forum including the proposed Governance Structures.

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