



SUCCESS STORY

Avian Flu Response Gains Strength

Region's veterinary and health specialists enhance their outbreak response skills



Dr. Kalamkas Shampiyeva, the department head of the Kazakh National Center of Reference and Veterinary Diagnostics.

Photo: Winrock.

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CHALLENGE: Adequate preparedness for the possible incursion of the highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) H5N1 had been a major issue to the Central Asia as most of its neighbors had reported cases of H5N1, some with human fatalities. The need became even more urgent in the summer of 2005, when a series of H5N1 outbreaks occurred in Kazakhstan, the largest country of the region. The region's veterinarians and other services had never had to tackle such outbreaks with their many technical and organizational challenges and no time to find the right solutions. The threat of this highly dangerous disease revealed huge gaps in activity coordination and cooperation among relevant agencies.

INITIATIVE: Through its STOP AI Program, USAID offered to help the five Central Asia Republics prepare field-level response for the potential threat. The program brought into the region the latest international know-how on the H5N1 virus and on the ways to address high priority issues, such as biosecurity. In 2008-2010, STOP AI trained 2,000 key animal and human health experts at the regional, national, and provincial levels in outbreak response planning and implementation. Specialists from various agencies worked together to design and practice coordinated activities. The training courses were given in local languages to enhance the effectiveness of the sessions.

Additionally, USAID provided local departments of the veterinary and human health services, as well as the emergency response units with laboratory kits and sets of personal protection equipment estimated at \$40 thousand. These commodities will ensure that local specialists throughout the region not only have the knowledge to fight outbreaks of H5N1 and other highly pathogenic diseases, but also have the necessary equipment to do so.

RESULT: Achieving synergy between the local veterinary and health services to jointly identify priority measures in the outbreak response is among the main results USAID has helped to achieve throughout the region. In addition, a dedicated and skillful team of 63 local master-trainers has been created to continue teaching and guiding their colleagues on outbreak preparedness. “The training skills and technical material provided by USAID have enabled me to train 50 colleagues from the veterinary services of Kazakhstan in 2009,” said Kalamkas Shampiyeva, the department head of the Kazakh National Center of Reference and Veterinary Diagnostics and the focal point for the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization in Kazakhstan. Shampiyeva and other master trainers will also play a key role in leading interagency teams in the case of zoonotic disease outbreaks in the region.