

### BANGLADESH: School/Madrasha teachers increase surveillance for AI

*Panchagarh Sadar, Panchagarh; Trishal, Mymensingh; and Sreepur, Gazipur*

A new initiative in surveillance is being established in Bangladesh to complement the active surveillance and diagnostic activities conducted by the Department of Livestock Services (DLS) of the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock, with the support of FAO.

An expansion of passive surveillance, with backyard and commercial poultry raisers reporting unusual sickness or mortality of poultry, is crucial in enhancing the response to HPAI. Rural households, particularly those with small flocks of village chickens, will be encouraged to recognise the disease, the threat it poses to livestock, livelihoods and humans, and to understand the importance of reporting its possible presence to the DLS. The initiative focuses on children of school age as communicators of HPAI awareness to adult family members, resulting in an increase in surveillance and reporting. Information will be provided by their school teachers who are respected members of rural society; present in most villages and well-positioned to deliver messages which are of social and economic importance.

The project will be implemented by the FAO Technical Unit located within the DLS and will initially involve three *upazilas* (selected on the basis of heightened HPAI risk: Panchagarh Sadar, Panchagarh; Trishal, Mymensingh; and Sreepur, Gazipur), with the potential for expansion if successful and funds are available. Headteachers of all primary schools in each *upazila* and head teachers/superintendents of high schools and Madrashes (approximately 766 persons in total) will receive one day of training on the nature of HPAI, control procedures for

addressing it and reporting responsibilities and methods. The information will then be imparted to school students

FAO assistance, with the support of USAID and Swedish Special Funds for Emergency and Relief (SFERA), includes funding for an improved diagnostic capability in the central and regional laboratories, salaries for field personnel to expand disease surveillance and investigation to 150 *upazilas*, (involving 450 Community Animal Health Workers and 50 Additional Veterinary Surgeons), field transportation, diagnostic materials and equipment.

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Upazilla Livestock Officers, FAO Staff and Education officers discuss the Training of School/Madrasha Teachers in AI awareness (FAO 2009)

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