DOCUMENT 1

REFINING GUIDELINES AND CHECKLISTS FOR SUCCESSFUL CONTINGENCY PLANNING FOR AVIAN INFLUENZA IN ANIMALS

Objectives:

1. To review guidelines and checklists and determine to what extent they direct the management strategies, surveillance, vaccination, and risk communication and other factors related to the threat of Avian Influenza to the English-speaking Caribbean.

2. To determine (using the guidelines and checklists) the specific needs for strengthening the epidemiological capacity, animal disease surveillance, and AI disease prevention and control, considering clinical evaluations, laboratory diagnostics, prevention and control strategies, public education, and strategies for vaccination, among other matters.

Group Exercises:

Task 1: Getting Started (Prevention and Emergency Preparedness)

Discuss the human resources currently available to address all aspects of emergencies posed by an outbreak of Avian Influenza at the country and regional levels, indicating whether decision-makers have the authority and support to enable them to make difficult choices that may arise before, during, and after the outbreak. (Discuss the political and administrative commitments and any support by industry, the farming community, and the wider public).

Task 2: Establishing the National Animal Disease Preparedness Action Plan

Discuss to what extent CARICOM states are prepared for the occurrence of Avian Influenza among animals (birds) by determining their (1) early warning capability; and (2) their plans and strategy for early reaction to the disease.

Prompts: - Consider the previous assistance to Member States by IICA and the CPA in the preparation of draft National Emergency Disease Preparedness Plans (NAEDPP). Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean States should also take into account provisions enshrined in the newly drafted legislation on the Animals (National and International Movement Disease) Act and the Food Safety Act (where applicable). Recall that early warning capability (Annex 2) is directed at ensuring the detection of the disease within the shortest possible time of its introduction or prior to its introduction into the country.

Task 3: Organizing the Veterinary Services

Describe the national, country command structure following the recommendations as spelt out in the NAEDPP. Take into account, the existing human resource, inclusive of the potential for mobilizing on non-governmental country resources that could supplement existing personnel during the time of crisis and of greatest need.

Task 4: Starting or Enhancing Active Animal Disease Surveillance

Determine whether there is a coordinated, functional approach for surveillance, and to what extent it is essential to muster support from stakeholders as soon as possible.

Prompts: In considering the design of the programme, think of such factors as the contacts that domestic poultry may have with wild birds. Consider also the different types of biosecurity levels and production systems, and whether there is a mixture of several susceptible species of animals in the farming community (more particularly, on the farm). Use the definition of production sectors as elaborated by FAO.

The FAO defined production sectors, based on farm biosecurity and farm management and marketing systems, are:

- Sector 1 – An industrial integrated system that has a high level of biosecurity and commercial birds and poultry products. This sector includes farms having a broiler production operation that has well defined standard operating procedures for biosecurity.

- Sector 2 – A poultry production system in which the bioscurity is moderate to high and, like Sector 1, has birds that are reared indoors continuously, with no contact with other poultry or wildlife.

- Sector 3 – A commercial poultry production system with low to minimal biosecurity and in which birds and poultry products enter the live bird markets. This includes farms at which there are caged birds, kept in open sheds, where birds may be allowed to go outside the sheds at times, and in which there are both poultry and waterfowl production.

- Sector 4 – Backyard poultry systems with minimal to almost no biosecurity, and where birds are consumed by the producer or sold locally to the community.

The surveillance strategy would therefore depend on the probability of infection in the various sectors, with Sectors 3 and 4 posing the highest probabilities of infection.

Task 5: Monitoring of Poultry Farms and other Nesting Grounds of Birds

Discuss the actions that have been taken at the national level for the monitoring of farms and nesting or roosting grounds where wild birds are known to frequent.

Prompts: Mention the roles of farmers, the poultry association, other agriculturists, hunters, and wildlife clubs, among others from the general public. Determine the level of collaboration between governments, the farming community, hunters association and wildlife clubs, as well as the general public.

Task 6: Training in Clinical Diagnosis and Pathology of the Disease

Discuss the clinical parameters that are essential to detect the presence of Avian Influenza. Clinical findings should include increased mortality, decrease in egg production, respiratory signs, reduced feed and water consumption,

Task 7: Early Reaction

Discuss plans for rapid reaction, as far as possible, in the event of disease occurrence so that the outbreak could be controlled and/or the disease eliminated.

Task 8: Communication[c5]

Consider the presentation on Communication, and discuss what strategies can be used to strengthen the response of national institutions in an atmosphere in which panic is minimized but impact is created.

Prompt: The emergency plan for Avian Influenza must take into account the need to heighten the awareness of all stakeholders in matters related to Avian Influenza, with care being taken to ensure that the public and stakeholders are not paralyzed by fear due to the prevailing climate of information while countries are being assisted to reach a desirable level of national preparedness and disease responsiveness.