



# Bridging the **gap** between awareness and practice

## FAO HPAI Programme in Cambodia

**Inter-agency information sharing meeting on AI,  
Bangkok, 3 April 2008**



# HPAI H5N1 in Cambodia

- 22 outbreaks in poultry (6 of which are associated with human cases, all fatal, 4 are children)
- 8 of 24 provinces affected; last outbreak in April 2007
- 28,084 poultry deaths, including 9,518 culled
- Over 90% of poultry raised as small scale assets under scavenger system; bio-security is low or non-existent
- Poultry are exposed to common poultry diseases (such as Newcastle Disease) as well as H5N1

# FAO HPAI Programme

- Support MAFF on: 1) surveillance, 2) laboratory diagnosis, 3) reporting and response, 4) biosecurity, 5) public awareness and education, 6) socio-economic and livelihoods study, and 7) supportive and protective legislative environment
- Focus on public awareness to improve knowledge and understanding of the HPAI problem at grassroots level
- MAFF, MOH, AED, UNICEF, WHO, MEDiCAM are partners in communication

# Key messages

- “wash hands with soap or ash” (Perceived practicability)

- “separate new poultry for 14 days” and “separate ducks from chickens” (Poor understanding)

- ‘separate ducks from chickens’ (Zero perceived - and actual - practicability)



# Key messages

- “Build fences and keep poultry in enclosures” is not practical for the majority of smallholder households that count on poultry as an asset.
- “Clean yards” is already a widely held value but “public” areas like roadsides, etc. are another matter..
- “Burn poultry faeces” is to waste a resource that is commonly used to fertilize fields and household gardens.

# Why this study?

- clarify the disconnect between high levels of “awareness” and continuing high-risk behaviors
- consider the realities of the target audiences’ lives – their beliefs, values, priorities, and considerations that influence what they do and why they do it
- directly involve communities in the development of policies and practices that will affect them

# The study

- Mixed methods, participatory tools and anthropological questions
- 20 participatory FGDs with 190 women, 151 men, in 13 districts in 7 provinces
- Multiple observations and key-informant interviews with poultry buyers and vendors

# Sampling

Participants come from villages and districts that have:

- high human and poultry densities, small holdings of household poultry, and significant cross-border poultry movements.
- had first-hand experience of outbreaks of HPAI.
- high proportions of households that rely on backyard poultry production *for income*.
- communities with large minority populations

# Main findings

**HPAI communication efforts in Cambodia have been a resounding success...**

- *High nominal awareness (but more awareness of Animal to Human transmission than Animal to Animal transmission)*
- *High understanding (with or without the help of the text)*

# Main findings

**But high “awareness” has not translated into changed behaviour**

- *Many people continue to prepare and consume sick or dead poultry.*
- *Very low levels of use of gloves or masks when handling poultry.*
- *Low levels of reporting*
- *Erroneous beliefs about HPAI transmission*
- *Biosecurity almost non-existent*

# ***Pre-existing practices & perceptions***

**The approach was to find out what people already do to protect their poultry/families and why?**

- Traditionally, protection of poultry IS protection of family.
- Use of traditional (and not-so-traditional) remedies to treat sick poultry.
- Seek the advice and products of a local animal pharmacy.
- Seek the help of the VAHW, district vet, or chief.
- Separate new poultry for a few days to keep them from wandering off

# *Pre-existing practices & perceptions*

- Keep poultry under the house at night to prevent theft.
- Buy only local poultry (AI comes from “far away,” from larger markets, and from other countries)
- Avoid commercial feed and even vaccinations because they can transmit AI.
- Sell remaining healthy poultry in the market once it appears poultry sickness is spreading in their or their neighbours’ flocks.
- Poultry is an important family asset that has already lost the majority of its value by the time it is sick or dead. To bury it or throw it away is to waste what little value is left for a household

# General recommendations

- Build on these pre-existing understandings or practices.
- **Raise awareness of why the behavior promoted in a message makes sense from the target audience's point of view.**
- Make sure that the practices promoted in IEC materials are both practical and effective.

# Specific recommendations

## 1) Work with the local taxonomy:

- *Dan kor kach* is a seasonal sickness with heavy mortality, regarded as natural and harmless to humans (though harmful to livelihood) – but seen as impossible to prevent and difficult to treat.
- *Pdash sai back sey* or *Avian Influenza* is a new term that is confused with *dan kor kach*.

## 2) Encourage a shift from a “naturalistic” to a “contagion” model of poultry death (*i.e. treatment model to prevention model*).

# Specific Recommendations

- 3) Focus on risk-perception, not fear**
- 4) Work with the indigenous sensibility that “hearing is just hearing; seeing is believing”**
- 5) Consider different approaches to households that rely on poultry as assets from those that rely on poultry for income.**

# Specific Recommendations

- 6) Gender should be a primary consideration in developing and evaluating IEC materials and communication strategy
- 7) Pioneer alternative solutions to the simple “separation” messages
- 8) Connect messages to local values and priorities  
*“Family prosperity and well-being”* is most suitable for linking priority messages to a value for which people would indeed go to great lengths.

# Project Outputs

- Training Programme for Village Animal Health Workers revised and improved
- New IEC materials developed (storyline for the community forum, leaflet, poster, T-shirts)
- Documentary film produced, shown and distributed at various meetings and workshops (in English and now in French)

# Lessons learned

- Awareness does not always lead to behaviour change
- Sound technical recommendations + realities of target audience's lives = effective communication strategies
- Collaboration, consultation and meaningful dialogue with target audience rather than imposed communication solutions

**Thank you**