WHO/FAO/UNICEF
adhoc meeting on behavioural interventions for avian influenza risk reduction
14-16 March 2006, Geneva

Summary and recommendations

**Background**

The unprecedented spread of a highly pathogenic avian influenza virus (H5N1) in birds and other animals, including humans raises the spectre of a severe human influenza pandemic. There is a global consensus that to reduce the risk of the H5N1 virus becoming adapted to humans and thus causing a pandemic, it is vital to control the outbreak in animals and prevent human infections.

Various messages addressing specific behaviours have already been developed and disseminated in different settings. Building on the work to date at country and regional level, this meeting aimed to define the priority behaviours, with indicators to monitor the effectiveness of communication strategies, that contribute to reducing the risk of H5N1 transmission.

**Method**

The meeting recommended a focussed approach to communication, emphasising the four highest priority behaviours (see figures in panel), as the highest priority key behaviours. These were developed from seven behaviours that had been selected from the range of behaviours previously recommended by FAO and WHO. Selection was based on discussion around the impact and behavioural feasibility. For each of these seven behaviours the outcomes, enabling factors, indicators (including method of data collection) were proposed to guide the development of behavioural strategies at country level.

Three important premises are:

- at present the extended spread of the H5N1 virus among animals is of great concern and therefore human behaviour reduce the further dissemination of the virus needs to be addressed as an entry point for reducing the risk of human infection
- information about the spread of the virus in birds and the specific risk factors that have led to human infection is limited - therefore there will be a need to adjust the behavioural interventions as more evidence becomes available; and
- behaviour change requires addressing important socio-cultural and economic factors, such as compensation for reporting sick/dead birds at the community level.
**Priority Behaviours**

- Report unusual sickness/death among poultry, wild birds and other animals immediately to the authorities
- Seek treatment immediately if you have fever after contact with sick birds
- Wash hands frequently with soap and water
- Clean clothes, footwear, vehicles and cages with soap or disinfectant
- Separate your poultry species, and from wild birds, new birds and living areas
- Handle, prepare and consume poultry safely
- Burn and/or bury dead birds safely

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**Proposed outcomes and indicators**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavioural Outcomes</th>
<th>Enabling Factors</th>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Method</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Report unusual sickness/death among poultry, wild birds and other animals immediately to the local authorities</td>
<td>Compensation provided for loss of poultry resulting from reporting&lt;br&gt;Local authorities respond promptly and appropriately*&lt;br&gt;Community feedback mechanisms</td>
<td>% of reports within XX hours&lt;br&gt;% who find dead bird who report them&lt;br&gt;% who know who to report to, where, and when&lt;br&gt;% who know how to access compensation</td>
<td>Local authority report cards&lt;br&gt;Rapid survey</td>
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<tr>
<td>Seek treatment immediately if you have fever after contact with sick birds</td>
<td>Free and accessible health care for suspect cases&lt;br&gt;Trained health care workers and traditional healers to identify/manage cases</td>
<td>% of suspect cases (with fever within 7 days after contact with sick birds)&lt;br&gt;% of suspect cases seeking treatment</td>
<td>Health facility data / investigation forms&lt;br&gt;Rapid survey</td>
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<td>Wash hands with running water and soap (or ash if soap not available) often, especially after touching birds and before and after food preparation</td>
<td>Access to water and soap</td>
<td>% who wash hands appropriately* after touching birds and before and after food preparation</td>
<td>Rapid survey (with demonstration to check accuracy and appropriateness)</td>
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<td>Clean clothes, footwear, vehicles and cages with soap or disinfectant</td>
<td>Local authorities regulate and enforce safe* market practices</td>
<td>% washing cages on entry or exit of markets and farms&lt;br&gt;% washing vehicles on entry or exit to markets through troughs&lt;br&gt;% washing clothes/footwear, vehicles and cages&lt;br&gt;% cleaning and washing area appropriately&lt;br&gt;% markets with regular market closure for intensive cleaning</td>
<td>Self-report and observation samples</td>
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<td>Separate poultry: (i) new stock kept apart for 2 weeks; (ii) from wild birds, (iii) from each other by species, (iii) from living areas, (iv) from children</td>
<td>Household/community resources to build coops</td>
<td>% farms reporting separation of new and unsold birds and their faeces by physical barriers from any contact with flocks for 14 days&lt;br&gt;% farms with domestic birds separated by physical barriers from any contact with wild birds and their faeces&lt;br&gt;% farms with poultry separated from living areas&lt;br&gt;% farms where children do not have contact with poultry</td>
<td>Self-report and observation samples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handle, prepare, and consume poultry safely*</td>
<td>Local authorities regulate and enforce healthy market settings&lt;br&gt;Understanding of cultural practices</td>
<td>% of people who report/ are observed to/ and demonstrate that poultry is handled, prepared, and consumed safely*</td>
<td>Self-report and observation samples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burn and/or bury dead birds safely</td>
<td>Food security assured (so no need to eat sick birds)&lt;br&gt;Disposal facilities and fuel</td>
<td>% of people who report safely* disposing sick/dead birds&lt;br&gt;% of visited sites where there is physical evidence of safe disposal practice</td>
<td>Self-report and observation samples</td>
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**XX = parameter that needs to be determined locally**

* ‘safely’ and ‘appropriately’ needs local definition

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The objectives and indicators will provide the basis for communication strategies to be developed at community level, through a participatory process. The objectives and indicators are not prescriptive, but provide a starting point to help country activities. (Many countries have already developed communication strategies, and should only use these recommendations to the extent that they are helpful.) The community consultation process needs to include discussions of actions for pandemic preparedness and how a community would cope with containment of a newly emergent pandemic virus.