2015 review of the ‘West Eurasia FMD Roadmap’

Since 2008, fourteen countries have been engaged in a regional initiative on foot and mouth disease (FMD) called the ‘West Eurasia FMD Roadmap’, with the goal of eliminating clinical FMD by 2025. For the past two years this initiative has been implemented under the auspices of GF-TADs. The European Commission for the Control of Foot-and-Mouth Disease (EuFMD), which originally developed the initiative, remains strongly involved by providing expertise and technical support suitably adapted to the countries’ needs. Every year, countries measure the progress achieved using a now well established methodology that includes a self-evaluation based on a detailed checklist and then, at annual review meetings, a presentation of the national situation in plenary session and personalised meetings, country by country, with GF TADs FMD Working Group and EuFMD experts. The outcome of these analyses is then discussed and evaluated by the Regional Advisory Group, which assigns each country to a specific stage of the Progressive Control Pathway for Foot and Mouth Disease Control (PCP-FMD).

In line with the FAO/OIE Global Foot and Mouth Disease Strategy, these evaluations also take into account strengthening of the Veterinary Services and transparency of animal disease information. The reporting of animal diseases to the OIE is a precondition (and an obligation for countries) for the success of this initiative, and this work is supported by a regional laboratory network (WELNET) and an epidemiological surveillance network (EPINET).

The 6th Annual FMD Roadmap Meeting for the countries of West Eurasia was held in Almaty, Kazakhstan, from 28 to 30 April 2015. All the countries of the sub-region except Iraq were present; Russia also attended the meeting as an observer. Key points at this year’s meeting were as follows:

a) the world situation, which has seen a rise in the number of FMD outbreaks;

b) in Europe, the reappearance of cases in Kyrgyzstan;

c) the substantial control efforts made by Kazakhstan, which in May 2015 obtained the official status for the northern zone of the country as an FMD zone where vaccination is not practised and is currently preparing a dossier for submission to the OIE in the near future to apply for recognition of the southern zone of the country as an FMD free zone where vaccination is practised. Kazakhstan thus clearly demonstrates that, with strong political commitment coupled with strengthening of the Veterinary Services, a country can progress along the PCP-FMD following a fast track procedure.

1 GF-TADs: FAO/OIE General Framework for the Progressive Control of Transboundary Diseases

2 In accordance with the provisions of Article 1.1.3. of the Terrestrial Animal Health Code, countries are required to notify any FMD outbreak or presence of the infection: ‘The detection of the aetiological agent of an OIE listed disease in an animal should be reported, even in the absence of clinical signs.’
The results of the Regional Advisory Group 2015 shown in Figures 1 and 2 (maps for 2014 and 2015) indicate that most of the countries are progressing in accordance with the scheduled timetable and that the 2025 target is still attainable. It should be noted that Iraq (absent) and Syria will be evaluated by the Regional Advisory Group for the Middle East FMD Roadmap, which is due to hold its next meeting before the end of 2015. These two countries nevertheless remain members of the West Eurasia initiative.

Four countries – Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan – still need to show a greater commitment to FMD control. In particular, they should precisely evaluate their national FMD situation by implementing Stage 1 activities. This would enable the appropriate control measures to be rapidly implemented according to the risks identified (Stage 2). Given the current state of knowledge, not only are control measures unrealistic but these countries pose a potential risk to their neighbours. The GF-TADs Working Group and EuFMD experts will be providing these four countries with specific assistance in the weeks ahead.

Partner countries in the initiative that are still at PCP-FMD Stage 1 should make a commitment to undertake an in-depth evaluation of their FMD situation as quickly as possible, to be in a position to initiate the appropriate control measures in a coordinated and consistent manner with those of the more advanced neighbouring countries. No country should remain at Stage 1 for more than three years as this would risk compromising the results of the FMD Roadmap already achieved for the West Eurasia region. All countries should prepare a national control plan for recognition by the OIE World Assembly.

The 2015 recommendations follow on from those of 2014 and urge countries to maintain their efforts, not only in terms of FMD control but also to strengthen their Veterinary Services; countries that have not undergone a PVS Evaluation of their Veterinary Services for more than five years are strongly encouraged to request the OIE for a PVS follow-up mission. Within the next six months, three countries will need to submit a robust Strategic Plan that takes into account the results of Stage 1 to be able to be maintained in Stage 2. Under the heading of new activities, the countries recommended:

1. Harmonisation of vaccination campaigns between countries, wherever possible;
2. Implementation of a mechanism or system for monitoring livestock prices, so that trade movements can be anticipated and the appropriate preventive measures taken;
3. Establishment of a regional vaccine bank, which would present the advantage of proposing high quality vaccines complying with OIE biological standards and adapted to the strains detected in the region, and at a low cost and immediately available both for emergency situations and routine vaccinations. The regional vaccine banks already operational in Asia (OIE) or Europe could serve as a model. The recommendations also list the vaccines that should be used in 2015-2016, based on the strains currently circulating in the region.

Following the adoption in March 2015 of the Global Strategy for the Control and Eradication of PPR (peste des petits ruminants), which also provides for a sub-regional approach, it is envisaged that the FMD and the PPR roadmap meetings could in future be held jointly.

Kyrgyzstan offered to host the 7th Annual West Eurasia FMD Roadmap Meeting in 2016.