



## in focus

### Improving bio-security in Lao PDR

An innovative pilot project has been launched in Lao PDR, under the USAID funded AI programme, to help backyard farmers to improve their biosecurity and that of their village as a whole. FAO and the Academy for Educational Development (AED) are initially working in four villages in Vientiane and Champassak provinces to identify and implement feasible bio-security measures to prevent poultry diseases from entering the village, and/or to mitigate disease impact, if an outbreak does occur.

The project uses Participatory Action Research (PAR) to involve the community – including village authorities, village veterinary workers (VVs), poultry raisers and other volunteers – and assess the local situation, exchange ideas about poultry disease, identify problems and determine feasible interventions for prevention and response.

The first PAR took place in Ban Phosy, Naxaythong District of Vientiane, conducted by AED Behaviour Change Communication Manager, Berengere de Negri. A village assessment and baseline survey had already been undertaken, followed by focus groups with VVs and volunteer farmers. Community participants discussed their understanding and knowledge of poultry disease, treatment and vaccination and defined the possibilities and constraints they face in raising poultry, together with measures that can be implemented village-wide to protect their poultry and families. On the final day, the community presented the results of the focus groups and the village chief proposed some actions that could be followed by the volunteers to prevent the risk of AI, followed by further discussion. It was gratifying that during participatory activities, community members showed a strong motivation to implement bio-security measures, thus providing a strong basis for future project development.

VVs will visit the volunteer backyard poultry raisers every week to collect information on their poultry, such as movement of poultry in and out of the village, sale of poultry, disease in poultry, actions taken in response to sick poultry and the presence of wild birds (which will also make the VV more visible and help to strengthen their position in the village), while a full-time researcher will visit the VVs and the village authorities to review the implementation of prevention measures.



Participants map out their village vaccination and defined the possibilities and constraints they face in raising poultry, together with measures that can be implemented village-wide to protect their poultry and families.

#### Project aims:

- Implementation of feasible bio-security measures, such as quarantine of new birds and sick birds, separation of species, (at community and individual levels)
- Behaviour change and risk perception, such as not eating sick/dead birds, separating birds from living areas, etc.
- A measurable decrease of common poultry diseases
- An increase in vaccination for common poultry disease

The full newsletter is at [http://www.fao.org/avianflu/en/ectad\\_rap.html](http://www.fao.org/avianflu/en/ectad_rap.html)