



3 April 2007

Dear Colleague

Australia has received APEC support for a workshop on "Sharing experiences with the management of the avian influenza H5N1 threat" in Bangkok, Thailand, on 18-20 June 2007.

The main objective of the workshop is to provide for the sharing of experiences in preparing for, and responding to H5N1 avian influenza in the agriculture sector.

The purpose of this letter is to notify APEC Member Economies of the workshop and to seek your advice on whether representatives from your economy will be able to participate in the workshop. I have also written directly to Chief Veterinary Officers.

Attendance at the workshop will enable economies to discuss the benefits and disadvantages of different approaches in combating avian influenza, and to consider the applicability of these different approaches to their own individual circumstances. It is expected participants will have expertise in fields such as animal health policy, veterinary public health, communications and emergency management.

The outbreaks of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) that began in south-east Asia in mid 2003 and which have now spread to Europe, Central Asia, the Middle East, India and Africa, are the largest and most severe on record. The H5N1 sub-type has been detected in birds in a number of APEC economies, while other APEC economies have undertaken steps to ensure they are as prepared as possible.

An Avian Influenza Action Plan was adopted at the APEC Ministerial Meeting on Avian and Influenza Pandemics on 4-6 May 2006. This workshop is directly relevant to two of the key areas identified in the Action Plan: 1) Multi-sectoral cooperation and coordination on avian and pandemic influenza; and 2) Mitigating negative effects of avian influenza on agriculture and trade.

#### Workshop methodology

The workshop will provide APEC economies a unique opportunity to identify and discuss the key factors of the various approaches of member economies and consider the relevance of these factors to their own situations. There is considerable experience within APEC economies in dealing with HPAI H5N1 that can be usefully shared. Although the approaches used and the risk factors are not all identical, there will be a range of outcomes that other economies and international agencies can assess and use in reviewing their action plans.

There will also be an opportunity to examine the linkages between animal and human health strategies in the management of HPAI outbreaks.

The workshop 'approach will be to discuss member economy experiences based upon the six success factors identified by the office of the United Nations System Influenza Coordinator (UNSCIC) as the keys to national avian and human influenza control efforts. The factors are:

- Consistent high-level political engagement and direction;
- Procedures and systems for rapidly scaling up implementation of priority actions;
- Strong information dissemination and social mobilization;
- Mechanisms to sustain vulnerable livelihoods and relieve distress;
- Strategic alliances across all levels of government that engage the private and voluntary sectors; and
- Management systems that engage all stakeholders, encourage synergy, analyse progress, review results and shift program emphasis when necessary.

#### Proposed format

Our plan is to hold the workshop over a three day period, with two days (maximum) allocated to presentations by invited speakers and selected APEC member economy participants, and discussions involving all the participants. On the third day we are keen to have a field trip where Thailand as the host economy can demonstrate some of its current arrangements for dealing with avian influenza.

In accordance with APEC Guidelines, participants (maximum of two per economy) from travel-eligible economies may receive APEC funding to support their attendance at the workshop.

I will get in touch with you (or your nominated contact person) again when a preliminary program for the workshop is available. The initial contact person within this Department is Mr David Bateman (email [david.bateman@daff.gov.au](mailto:david.bateman@daff.gov.au)).

Yours sincerely



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