

CaribVET strengthens resilience of veterinary services in the Caribbean in Disaster Risk Reduction and Management.

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The Caribbean is a region constantly threatened by disasters, particularly hurricanes and tropical storms (Sandy 2012, Erika 2015, Matthew 2016), earthquakes (Haiti 2010), floods due to heavy rains and prolonged droughts, as well as transboundary diseases such as Classical Swine Fever, Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza, porcine encephalomyelitis with Teschovirus (Haiti 2009), Porcine Epidemic Diarrhoea, among others. These threats are aggravated by environmental vulnerability, justifying the need to invest in resilience for disaster reduction.

In emergency situations and disasters, national veterinary services (VS) are responsible for safeguarding animal health, animal welfare and animal production to preserve public health and food security. The increase of resilience from the community level needs the efforts to preserve the stock breeding animals as food source and other uses, as was highlighted in World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction held in Sendai, Japan, 2015. The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015 – 2030 outlines investing in disaster reduction for resilience as one of its four priority areas. Therefore, the VS need to be prepared and trained in risk reduction and management principles to reduce negative impacts. They should include these activities in their national programmes for the Disaster Reduction Cycle at the local and national level to contribute toward sustainable development of their countries.

Since 2007, the Epidemiology and surveillance working group (Epigroup) of the Caribbean Animal Health Network (CaribVET) have included the importance of risk and vulnerability analysis for coping with disaster situations such as epidemic animal diseases and for its usefulness for other threats, including natural disasters. CaribVET has been mandated by its Steering Committee, since the 2010 earthquake that devastated Haiti, to promote and implement veterinary disaster risk reduction and management (DRRM) programmes and activities. This mandate led to the establishment of the Disaster Response Sub-committee of the Epigroup and an "Emergency" WhatsApp group - a tool for key CaribVET emergency personnel to communicate with members affected by disasters, before, during and after emergencies. Additionally, through CaribVET's Cuban members, its interests are voiced at the meetings of the OIE Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (DRRM) Ad Hoc Group as Censa (Cuba) is the OIE Collaborating Centre for Disaster Reduction in Animal Health and has a training programme in DRRM developed by its Training Centre for Disaster Risk Reduction in Animal and Plant Health (CEDESAP).

Moreover, CaribVET recently established high-level ties with the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA). Ongoing collaborations with its sister network (Caribbean Plant Health Director Forum (CPHD)), should help the Caribbean agricultural sector to strengthen the intersectoral and pluri-disciplinary collaboration in early warning and in the exchange of experiences among entities engaged in DRRM. CaribVET is currently raising funds to organise preparedness activities in DRRM: train-the-trainer programmes, capacity building activities, training on DRRM to build capacities of the agricultural sector and increase awareness and risk perception.

CaribVET's interests in disaster risk reduction and management were recently incorporated in the **Global Health Security Agenda (GHS) Caribbean Roadmap** during a workshop held in Miami (USA) week of 14th November 2016. It represents a milestone in CaribVET's continued efforts to safeguard the animal and veterinary public health of the Caribbean region in emergency preparedness and response.

What is CaribVET?

The Caribbean Animal Health Network (CaribVET) is a collaborative network involving more than 45 partners: veterinary services and laboratories of 33 Caribbean countries/territories, international and regional organisations (CARICOM Secretariat, OIE, FAO, USDA, PAHO, IICA, CAHFSA), research institutes (Cirad, Censa), universities (UWI, University of Guyana, Ross University, St. Georges University) and the private sector (CPA, OIPORC) as well as other experts from Europe and the USA. CaribVET was established to strengthen surveillance and control of animal diseases, but has expanded its activities according to regional priority needs and global situations.

Capacity building, a key component of the network

One of the main objective of CaribVET is to impart and reinforce the technical skills in the region. Several key competences have been identified as priority needs in the region by the network: Geographic information systems, risk-mapping and risk based surveillance, early alert and quick response, disaster risk reduction and management, biosecurity on farms, diagnostic of priority diseases (HPAI, Rabies, leptospirosis, H1N1, classical Swine Fever, Salmonellosis), quality management and bio-security. In order to effectively develop the capacities in the region, training workshop, train-the-trainer programmes, interlaboratory comparison tests or simulation exercises are implemented in the region and funded thanks to collaborative projects.

Beneficiaries of the network

They are various and numerous in the Caribbean: epidemiologists and laboratory technologists from the veterinary services, livestock farmers, animal health stakeholders in the Caribbean, private veterinarians, students...

Press Release: [CaribVET establishes high-level ties with Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency \(CDEMA\)](#)
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