

Information on CaribVET Lab Working Group

1. Mandate and objectives of the CaribVET Lab WG.

- a. The lab Working Group is one of the 7 working groups of the Caribbean Veterinary Network (CaribVET) as outlined in the CaribVET Charter of 2012
- b. Main objectives: to contribute to the improvement of veterinary diagnostic capacities in the Caribbean and to the development of the principles of laboratory quality assurance and laboratory management.
- c. The Group was mandated by the CaribVET Steering Committee to undertake specific tasks and activities including, but not limited to, the following:
 - Develop and continuously update the **database of veterinary laboratory** expertise in the region
 - Participate in completing and regularly updating the **registry and listing of the laboratory diagnostic capabilities and capacities in the region**
 - Continuously identify **training needs and training opportunities** for laboratory staff and assist in identifying resources for lab staff to undertake the training
 - Undertake **assessment of the impact of training on the competencies** of laboratories and their staff
 - Promote and strengthen **linkages between laboratories** in the region and internationally
 - Provide guidance for the development of a **regional network of laboratories** and promote the exchange of data, protocols, materials and human resources
 - Assist in promoting the implementation of **quality assurance systems and laboratory management programmes** in the veterinary diagnostic laboratories in the Caribbean
 - Promote the **harmonizing of diagnostic protocols** within the region
 - Assist in organizing **inter-laboratory assays** as a tool to build competency of laboratory staff.

2. Main achievements of the lab WG

- a. **Hands on laboratory training** for national veterinary diagnostic laboratory technologists were organized on Leptospirosis, Rabies, Salmonellosis, H1N1, Avian Influenza, ... diagnostics
- b. Organisation of **Inter-laboratory Comparison tests**: Avian influenza (8 Caribbean labs), Classical Swine Fever involving 3 to 5 Caribbean labs regularly between 2008 and 2016. Objective: evaluate the ability of the technicians to accurately conduct serological assays for AI or CSF as well as to access the effectiveness of the training that they received prior to the ILCT
- c. **Tools / guidelines** :
 - C. Lazarus, C. Oura, D. Elcocks, M. Wintorph, S. Mogg, CL Perera Gonzalez, J. Seetahal, J. Pradel, N. Vachiere, E. Albina. Laboratory Surveillance for Avian Influenza – Recommendations for Caribbean Veterinary Diagnostic laboratories. 31 Oct. 2016. 12 p.
 - Cedric Lazarus, Christopher Oura, Tricia Fraser, Wintorph Marsden, Maria Teresa Frias Lepoureau, Emmanuel Albina, Jennifer Pradel and David Elcock. Interlaboratory Proficiency Testing for Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratories. What is it, why is it important, and who should participate? 16 Jan. 2018, 8p7
 - To be prepared: Quality Management principles
- d. **Quality Assurance trainings** – organization of several regional workshops to train quality managers. ISO 17025 norm and biosafety principles, and included theoretical aspects, practical exercises and hands-on. Participants learn how to write procedures and quality documents based on examples from the training center (CIRAD, Guadeloupe) and from partner documents. Demonstration of handling suspicious samples for diagnostic analysis and preparation of shipment following IATA rules and biosafety measures are made. The quality standard that we generally follow in Veterinary labs is UKAS ISO-17025. There are only a small number of veterinary labs in the region that have some of their tests accredited to ISO-17025 standards, some are working towards this standard and some are still a long way off
- e. **IATA training and certification** is organized every 2 years in average since 2010, for about 100 persons of 26 Caribbean countries. Objective: Strengthen veterinary services of the Caribbean and Improve disease emergency response. Funded by USDA-APHIS, handed to the CaribVET Lab WG.
- f. **Simulation exercises** for sample shipments used to be organized on a regular basis with CIRAD, FAO, USA. They were organized 3 times. Everything is monitored – packaging, documentation, quality of the samples, delays, ... each country has a score and are given feedback of the result of their participation on all criteria examined.
- g. **Validation of rapid diagnostic tests** of Gensig technology (UWI, CIRAD) for detection of priority viral pathogens including HPAI but also Newcastle Disease virus, West Nile virus, FMD and CSFV and organization of a regional training workshop using this technology for 7 laboratory technicians from Suriname, Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago (Trinidad and Tobago, June 7-9).
- h. Some **specific diagnostic training** programmes can be organized

- i. **Series of national workshops** on animal disease recognition and response were organized in 5 Caribbean countries in 2015-2016 with the One Health One Caribbean One Love project. They are to be continued with other sources of fundings, and following national disease prioritization updates & revision.
- j. **Participation in OIE meetings related to laboratories:** Laboratory focal point meetings, OISE biosafety and Biosecurity meetings...
- k. **Database of laboratories:** CIRAD in collaboration with the CaribVET lab WG and the OIE has developed a database of Caribbean laboratories that evolved to become the database of the official vet diagnostic labs for the pilot OIE laboratory network of the Americas... The objective of the tool was to have labs (from OIE and non OIE countries from the Caribbean) enter all their information to have an inventory of the labs, contact information, level of containment, diagnostic techniques performed and diseases, vaccine testing, production and bank, production of reagents & antigens, accreditation/certification. A search engine was developed to seek information by country, diseases or technique. The database now is managed by the OIE.