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## CASE STUDY

# Agencies Enhance Their Coordination

### Ministries work together to fight zoonotic diseases



*Dr. Serik Kozhekenov, Chief State Veterinary Officer of Zaissan District of East Kazakhstan Province. Photo: Winrock*

*“Now that we have completed the district response plan, our government partners realized the importance of this work to enhance the response capacity of our district.”*

*- Dr. Serik Kozhekenov, Chief State Veterinary Officer of Zaissan District of East Kazakhstan Province.*

**CHALLENGE:** After a series of the outbreaks of the highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) H5N1 in its six provinces in 2005, Kazakhstan developed a national Avian Influenza Preparedness Plan that outlined the measures to ensure prompt response should the disease breakout again. The responsibility for coordination of such response preparedness among the different agencies on the local – district – level was delegated to the Agriculture Ministry and its Veterinary Service. Not only this process was new to the ministry, but also required a close cooperation with province and district level governments, the Sanitary Epidemiology Control Services of Ministry of Health, and the province-level affiliations of the Emergency Situations Ministry. Despite its concerted efforts, the Ministry and its Veterinary Service struggled to fulfill its mandate.

**INITIATIVE:** To fill this sorely felt gap, the USAID STOP AI project partnered with the Committee of State Inspection Control on Agriculture Sector of the Ministry of Agriculture to help develop local-level HPAI H5N1 response plans. To facilitate the process, the Agricultural Ministry and the USAID project designed a national competition for the district-level Emergency Response Task Forces on developing response plans for possible HPAI H5N1 outbreaks. Eight districts across Kazakhstan: Kostanai, East Kazakhstan, South Kazakhstan and West Kazakhstan – were invited to compete in the pilot effort.

STOP AI staff visited each of the participating districts to train and consult their Emergency Response Task Forces as the districts were preparing their plans for the competition. “This was the first time when the local administration, the human health and veterinary services, emergency control services, and other relevant agencies worked as one team to develop our district level response plan. We saw how helpful and important it is to jointly develop one common plan for all our agencies,” said Dr. Serik Kozhekenov, chief veterinary officer of Zaisan Rayon, West Kazakhstan Province.

**RESULT:** In the late spring of 2010, the district teams gathered in the country’s capital Astana to present their plans to the National Inter-agency Review Commission. After much deliberation, the commission identified three best plans based on practicality and adaptability criteria developed by the USAID project. These winning plans will be used by the Veterinary Services of the Ministry of Agriculture of Kazakhstan to guide other districts to develop their own outbreak response plans, so that agencies across the country have a clear idea on how to fight similar outbreaks.