



International Alliance for Bi-
ological Standardization



World Organisation
for Animal Health
Founded as OIE

Vaccination and Surveillance for High Pathogenicity Avian Influenza in poultry: Current Situation and Perspectives

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Assuring science-based measures against HPAI – The risk management perspective

BACKGROUND – Risk managers should take their decisions based on evidence which can be provided by the results of surveillance programmes and risk assessments. Members of the World Trade Organisation and signatories of the Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Agreement have formally committed to this approach as a basis for free trade with animals and animal-derived products. Industry structures can, however, vary between sectors and regions and should be taken into account, leading to variable solutions.

ISSUES AND CHALLENGES – Besides the evidence provided by surveillance and risk assessments, policy makers cannot ignore other relevant factors. These include the economic impact of policy options, the risk awareness and acceptance of measures by stakeholders such as farmers or consumers, societal values or political contexts within which the authorities operate. This can result in considerable differences between risk management measures, even in neighbouring countries that find themselves at very similar levels of risk. Such situations were abundant during the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic. Measures can lead to trade disruption and consequential economic losses if considered partial or technically unjustified.

PROPOSED SOLUTIONS – To be compliant, risk management strategies should be based on international standards. In order to tailor these to individual country or sector situations, the standards should not be overly prescriptive. The design of surveillance programmes, for example, should focus on their technical performance and the related equivalence in confidence. Flexibility should be allowed regarding how implementation is achieved in practice.

CONCLUSIONS – Vaccination and surveillance for HPAI in poultry should aim to achieve internationally agreed performance criteria with the necessary flexibility in design to – ultimately – assure compliance by farmers and acceptance by consumers.

