



Final Roundtable Summary Report

“Policy Practice and Awareness of “Exotic Broiler and Sonali Farmers”

5 March 2023

Background

This roundtable was convened by the One Health Poultry Hub, Bangladesh (OHPH,B), in collaboration with the Global Health Program at Chatham House in London, UK and with the financial support of the UK Research Innovation. Bangladesh having the fastest increase in urbanization in Asia, has seen a rapid increase in the intensive poultry sector and this has been accompanied by the development of policies for poultry farming, slaughtering and trading. However, many stakeholders have little awareness of these policies. Of those who have some awareness, many are not following the policies. Non-compliance and mismatches between policies and what is feasible on the ground is causing inefficiencies and increasing risks of infectious disease. The objective of this Roundtable meeting was to explore how stakeholders might work collaboratively to improve farmer knowledge of and compliance with policies and how policies might be refined to make them more appropriate for the Bangladesh context.

The Roundtable was moderated by Professor Dr Paritosh Kumar Biswas of Chattogram Veterinary and Animal Sciences University at The Six Seasons Hotel, Dhaka. Participants agreed to conduct the Roundtable under the Chatham House Rule.

Key Themes	Participants comments and recommendations
<p>Familiarizing stakeholders with policies (farmers, dealers, private veterinarians and government veterinarians)</p>	<p>Participants suggested that, rather than refining or making any new policies, farmers should be made aware of existing policies. In addition, animal health practitioners and the feed dealers (who are actively working in the field) are also not fully aware of the relevant policies. A government initiative is required to raise policy awareness amongst key stakeholders. Firstly, veterinarians (both public and private) and the feed dealers should be taught about policies and they can in turn disseminate the information to the farmers.</p> <p>Another key issue raised related to whether farmers who know about the policies will they follow them. Difficulties completing the farm registration process may also contribute to farmers’ reluctance to engage with government and comply with policies.</p> <p>Participants felt that there is an important role for government officers who need to work in the field to raise farmers’ awareness about policies and the benefits of abiding by them.</p>

<p>Developing effective tools for policy awareness</p>	<p>Participants noted that relevant policies are in place but there is a lack of tools (such as standards and guidelines) to support policy implementation. The following tools were suggested:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy guideline books - poultry rearing guidelines should be prepared and distributed by DLS to the farmers through appropriate channels. The most important key points of each policy should be identified and highlighted for farmers; • Leaflet; • Poster
<p>Raising policy awareness</p>	<p>Participants stated that awareness raising needs to be done from the top level to the bottom level. Suggestions for improving policy awareness at the farmer level included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reaching the grassroots level farmers with the help of local politicians; • TV /media public service announcements; • Mobile apps; • Private sector veterinarians working in the field; • Establishing a special body, a joint venture between public and private sectors, to run the awareness programs and monitor the implementation of policies. <p>It was noted that when there is good communication between local and central levels, the central level can take quick actions on the information received. A pilot policy awareness raising project involving a few representative farms would help with the development of documents by taking the farmer perspective into account.</p>
<p>Offer special benefits to farmers who comply with rules</p>	<p>It was noted that farmers are more responsive when direct (rather than indirect) benefits are offered. This means that the reward approach is best. Those who follow the guideline should be given some instant benefits; e.g., free vaccines, free diagnostic tests, etc.</p> <p>Supporting model farmers to enable them and their peers to see the economic benefits of following the guidelines is another option to encourage farmers to abide by policies. A sole focus on punishment of farmers will not encourage them to follow the rules.</p> <p>Government could support the establishment of shops that sell the products of the model farmers enabling them to get a good price and encourage them to pursue safe farming. This approach could also involve local politicians.</p>
<p>Increased collaboration between private and govt. vets</p>	<p>A lack of effective collaboration between private and public sectors was mentioned. Private veterinarians tend to operate separately from government veterinarians and this is problematic. Standard operating procedures and guidelines for each relevant policy should be developed and distributed to the private sector. Private veterinarians could then assist with disseminating them to the farmers informing them that there are acts and practices that a poultry farmer needs to follow.</p>