

FAO, IIAD launch new African veterinarian training programme

The UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the Institute for Infectious Animal Diseases (IIAD), part of Texas A&M AgriLife Research, have launched a new veterinarian training programme from which 14 African countries will benefit.



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Countries involved in the In-Service Applied Veterinary Epidemiology initiative in Africa programme include Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Liberia, Mali, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Tanzania and Uganda.

The trainings will be held over the next 12 months and will operate within an approach involving public, animal and wildlife health, as well as for pathogens that cross institutional mandates and geographic boundaries.

Approximately 60 trainees will graduate from the trainings in 2018, the first of which will be held in October in Uganda. An additional 120 trainees are expected to graduate from the subsequent trainings in 2019.

FAO's Emergency Centre for Transboundary Animal Diseases (ECTAD) and IIAD will lead the development and implementation of the curriculum, in collaboration with the Texas A&M University College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences (CVM) and working closely with public health, and local partners.

Good model for future sustainability

"This in-service training for veterinary epidemiologists is a good model for future sustainability as once we have built in the momentum together, it can be led and expanded by local and continental veterinary institutions," said Juan Lubroth, chief veterinary officer, FAO. "What is important here is that it is based on practical, applied, issues relevant to the country, where one 'learns by doing'".

"We are pleased to take such an important supporting role in frontline defense of diseases that could impact both animals and humans internationally," said Dr Melissa Berquist, IIAD director.

The project also will develop a network of trainers and mentors from Africa. Frontline veterinary field epidemiologists are responsible for conducting effective and timely surveillance and outbreak response for endemic and emerging infectious diseases, as well as transboundary animal diseases.

The frontline In-Service Applied Veterinary Epidemiology initiative in Africa follows a similar initiative started 10 years ago in Asia, which now has established training centers in Thailand, China, and Indonesia.

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