



# **Better Training for Safer Food BTSF**

**Risk communication management in practice**

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# Risk Analysis

Main components in Risk Analysis:

- Hazard identification
- Risk assessment
- Risk management
- **Risk communication**

# Risk communication

EU Commission ( DG Sanco/FVO)

EU Parliament

Nat. Government

Nat. Crisis Team



RISK MANAGEMENT

EFSA

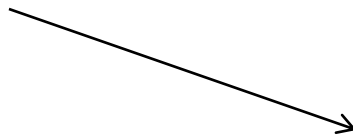
ECDC

Nat. Government

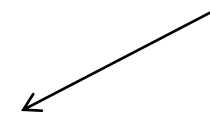
Nat. Risk Experts



RISK ASSESSMENT



**RISK Communication**



# External Communication

AIM: to provide appropriate, clear and accurate information to the key audience

A proactive communication approach can:

- 1) reduce pressure on press office
- 2) acting in advance of future situation
- 3) be forward looking

Alternative: wait-and-see option (will usually result in need for damage control..)

# External communication

Key audiences:

- Persons directly involved in the outbreak like farmers
- Other farmers in rest of country (not perceived at risk)
- The public in the general

# External communication

## Communication channels:

- Press releases
- Mail shots
- Stakeholder group meetings
- Stakeholder e-mail updates
- Text messaging service
- Public events
- Social medias

# Social media

- News is 24h available and spread very rapidly
- The press use social media like Twitter for collecting latest news
- Government use social media like Twitter for collecting information to prevent disorder in case of emerging animal disease outbreak

# Internal communication

## *Key audiences:*

- *Minister*
- *Chief Veterinary Officer*
- *Head office*
- *Local office / Regional Crisis Center RCC*
- *National Reference/ Diagnostic Laboratory*
- *Press office*



# Internal communication

## **COMMUNICATION - MINISTER** *Disease suspicion/confirmation*

### **The Minister shall be informed about:**

- *The legislation covering disease control*
- *The current disease situation*
- *The budget for disease control*
- *Communication within the Government, International organizations, stakeholders, trade partners and the media*

# Internal communication

## **Internal communication** - top level Daily Communication meeting

- Agenda: strategy, messages, media handling
- Communication section of the Central Crisis center and the ministers press officer
- Daily forum for identifying and agreeing on key points in communication of the situation

# Internal communication

## Internal communication - local level

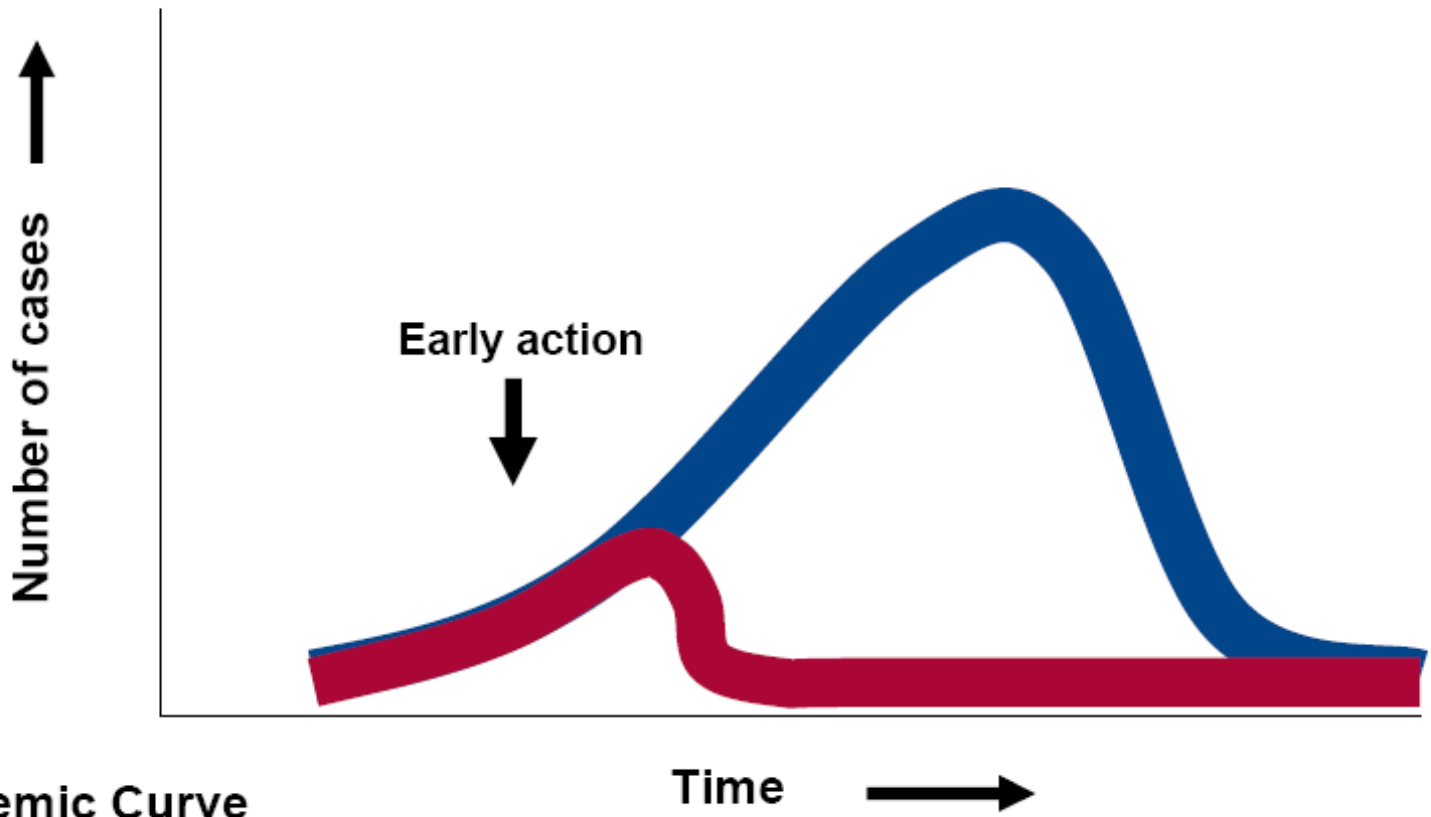
- *Liaison officers*
- *Daily conferences by video/ teleconference*
- *Common daily description of the situation*
- Communication between local and central level via direct hotline

# Risk communication management

How to deal with the media:

## *Remind yourself:*

- Journalists are just trying to do their work
- They need an interesting story to tell the public
- They can be allies and tell your side of the story



The Epidemic Curve



## Trust

The key principle of any communication is to communicate in ways that build, maintain or restore trust between the public and outbreak managers. Without this trust, the public will not believe, or act on, the information that is communicated by authorities during an outbreak.

People are usually concerned about responders':

**Motives:** Are the responders acting primarily to protect my health and the health of my family?

**Care:** Are my personal, social, economical concerns being addressed?

**Honesty:** Are the responders holding back or downplaying information?

**Competence:** Are the responders capable of controlling the outbreak?

# Announcing early

- Proactive communication of a real or potential risk is crucial in alerting those affected and minimizing the threat.
- Announcing early - even with incomplete information - prevents rumours and misinformation.

## Announcing early

- The longer officials with hold information, the more frightening the information will seem when it is eventually revealed, especially if it is revealed by an outside source.
- Late announcement will erode trust in the ability of public health authorities to manage the outbreak.



# Transparency

Maintaining the public's trust requires transparency, including timely and complete information of a real or potential risk and its management. As new developments occur they should be communicated proactively.

Transparency should characterize the relationship between risk managers, public and partners as it promotes improved information gathering, risk assessment and decision-making processes associated with outbreak control.

## Listening – communication surveillance

Understanding the public's risk perceptions, views and concerns is critical to effective communication and the broader emergency management function it supports.

***Without knowing how people understand and perceive a given risk and what their existing beliefs and practices are, decisions and required behaviour changes necessary to protect health may not occur and societal or economic disruption may be more severe.***

## Communication surveillance helps to:

- Reformulate messages to correct misconceptions
- Address rumours before they spiral out of control
- Promote a proactive, not reactive, approaches to communication
- Internally, conveying communications surveillance to senior management helps internal audiences understand the effect their words and actions are having on the public

## Planning

Public communication during an outbreak represents an enormous challenge for any public health authority and therefore demands sound planning, in advance, to adhere to the principles described above.

Planning is an important principle, but more importantly, it must translate into action.

<b>Role</b>	<b>Profile</b>	<b>Main communication tasks</b>	<b>Training and support</b>
<b><i>Chief spokesperson</i></b>	<b>Minister/Agriculture/Chief Veterinary Officer*</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•“Public face”</li> <li>•Answering media enquiries</li> <li>•Clearing releases/ messages/ statements*</li> <li>•Meetings with concerned stakeholders/ categories</li> </ul>	<b>Media training</b> <b>IPC training</b> <b>Talking points for press conferences and stakeholders meetings</b>
<b><i>Deputy spokesperson</i></b>	<b>Deputy CVO/Director of Animal Health</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Support to the CVO’s tasks</li> </ul>	<b>same as above</b>
<b><i>Regional spokesperson</i></b>	<b>Head of Regional/District Administration (Governor, Préfet) Regional Director of VS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•“Public face” at regional local level</li> <li>•Answering media enquiries</li> <li>•Meetings with concerned stakeholders/categories</li> </ul>	<b>same as above</b>
<b><i>Chief communication officer</i></b>	<b>Ideally, communication coordinator at VS Technical background preferred</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•In charge of the development and implementation of com strategy and plan</li> <li>•Interagency coordination</li> <li>•Media handling</li> <li>•Community relations</li> <li>•COM briefings and training</li> </ul>	<b>Media training</b> <b>IPC</b> <b>Talking points for press conferences and stakeholders meetings</b> <b>Strategic communication training</b>

<b>Role</b>	<b>Profile</b>	<b>Main communication tasks</b>	<b>Training and support</b>
<b><i>Chief communication officer</i></b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Supporting CVO in stakeholders meetings</li> <li>•In charge of/ supports IPC at grassroots level</li> <li>•Managing the communication budget</li> <li>•Ensuring productions distribution and broadcasting</li> </ul>	
<b><i>Communication officers</i></b>	<b>Training/extension officers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Media handling at local level</li> <li>•Community relations</li> <li>•In charge of/ supports IPC at grassroots level with concerned stakeholders and communities</li> </ul>	<b>Media training</b> <b>IPC</b> <b>Talking points for press conferences and stakeholders meetings</b>
<b><i>RRT Team leaders</i></b>	<b>Field veterinarians/frontline workers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•On site IPC with concerned stakeholders and communities</li> </ul>	<b>IPC training</b> <b>Communication material</b>
<b><i>Law enforcement agents</i></b>	<b>Police and security forces in charge of movement control</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Providing information to public</li> </ul>	<b>Briefing</b> <b>Communication material</b>

## The communication plan: key elements

- Key objectives
- Target audiences
- Key messages per target audience
- Analysis of main influencers/relays/media per target group
- Choice of most appropriate channels for communication
- Media plan, including policy, main events and list of authorized spokespersons
- Planned activities with timeline
- Planned productions/publications with proposed distribution
- Monitoring and feedback mechanisms

## Suspicion phase: main messages (1)

- Investigations and laboratory testing are under way to verify the presence of the virus in our country, following unusual death of animals
- Laboratory testing abroad is required by current international animal health provisions
- We are expecting results in 1-2 weeks maximum



## Suspicion phase: main messages (2)

- The fact that concerned farmer(s) have reported it allows us to implement all measures to reduce/avoid the risk. We thank them for this.
- The following precautionary measures have been taken in the area XXX (avoid indicating the farm's name or owner)

## Suspicion phase: main messages (3)

- Following are the main disease symptoms (LIST):  
report any unusual death/ sickness to (hotline/VS/other specify)
- Prompt reporting will allow quick containment of the disease.
- Consumption is safe, provided that the meat is thoroughly cooked (give examples from the local cuisine) and the usual precautions are taken during preparation (LIST THEM)

## Suspicion phase: main messages (4)

- If the presence of the disease is confirmed, following are the planned measures to control and eradicate the disease (LIST)
- (IF APPLICABLE ) Compensation will be paid to farmers, amounts will be communicated in due time
- Further information will be shared as it becomes available

## Confirmation: main messages (1)

- The (name) International reference laboratory has confirmed that the samples sent on (date) are positive (better quantify: XX out of XXX)
- (if applicable) A State of Emergency has been declared by XXX
- The area concerned is XXX. No cases from other areas are being reported at the moment
- The following area(s) is/are declared Infected Zone(s)

## Confirmation: main messages (2)

- The following area(s) is/are declared Surveillance Zone(s)
- In the Infected Zone(s), the following measures will be taken (LIST THEM)
- In the Surveillance Zone(s), the following measures will be enforced (LIST THEM)
- Outside those area, no other measure will be taken
- Compensation will be paid to the following categories at the following rates



## Confirmation: main messages (3)

- These measures are essential for the rapid containment of the disease. It is everybody's duty to collaborate and comply with them
- Operations will be carried out as of (date) by (number) of Rapid Response Team that are deploying /have deployed/will deploy to the area
- Following are the main disease symptoms (LIST): report any unusual death/ sickness to (hotline/VS/other specify)
- Production is to be considered safe in all the other areas of the country

## Confirmation: main messages (4)

- Consumption is safe, provided that the meat is thoroughly cooked (give examples from the local cuisine) and the usual precautions are taken during preparation (LIST THEM)\*
- In the non infected areas, increased surveillance is absolutely essential: report any unusual death/sickness to (hotline/VS/other specify)
- We will share any additional information as it become available. Further information can be obtained at (hotline/website/telephone lines)

*\*to be adapted depending on the disease*

# Containment: main messages (1)

- Why stamping out is necessary
- Which categories of farms/markets will be affected and why
- Government has a provision for compensation for animal and animal products when culling and destruction is carried out in the infected zone (communicate compensation rates).
- How stamping out process will take place in the infected zone and importance of cooperation from the public before and during the culling operation



## Containment: main messages (2)

- Procedures followed and material/equipment used during stamping out operations
- (IF APPLICABLE) modalities of emergency vaccination campaigns
- Separate sick and healthy animals
- Following are the main disease symptoms (LIST): report any unusual death/ sickness to (hotline/VS/other specify)
- Seek immediate medical advice in case you feel sick (IF APPLICABLE)
- Do not sell or eat sick or dead animals

## Containment: main messages (3)

- Dispose dead animals and other wastes safely into a pit or burn
- Waste disposal, cleaning and disinfection of slaughtering area
- Avoid illegal movement of poultry and poultry products from the infected zone
- Information on ban enforcement and punishments for trespassers
- Consumption is safe, provided that the meat is thoroughly cooked (give examples from the local cuisine) and the usual precautions are taken during preparation (LIST THEM)\*

## Containment: main messages (4)

- In the non infected areas, increased surveillance is absolutely essential: report any unusual death/sickness to (hotline/VS/other specify)
- We will share any additional information as it become available. Further information can be obtained at (hotline/website/telephone lines)
- Roles and responsibilities of RRT
- Staff welfare and insurance policy for those involved in the culling operation.
- Ensure all public places are closed and movement is banned to and from the infected zone.

# Recovery: main messages (1)

- Results of eradication and containment
- How the disease entered the country
- The disease is under control in the affected districts of XXX At the moment, there are no report of other outbreaks in any other part of the countries
- The response has started on XXX and ended on XXX
- XXX animals have been culled, XXX farms quarantined, XXX products destroyed

## Recovery: main messages (2)

- Farmers have been compensated to the rate of XXX per animal/product
- We wish to commend the collaboration of all concerned persons and communities and their commitment to rapidly overcome this situation, and in particular the farmer that first reported the death/sickness of his animals
- Movement ban will be lifted on XXX
- Quarantine will be lifted on XXX

## Recovery: main messages (3)

- Farms will be allowed to restock as of XXX
- The problem is not over, and there is a risk of a new occurrence of the disease
- Following are the main disease symptoms (LIST):  
report any unusual death/ sickness to (hotline/VS/other specify)
- Biosecurity need to be reinforced at farms and markets level

## Recovery: main messages (4)

- Illegal trade is a permanent threat to the health and welfare of our community. It must be fought at grassroots level
- It is everybody's responsibility to keep the disease outside our country
- Consumption is safe. To prevent all kind of infection It is always a good practice to observe the following precautions: that the meat is thoroughly cooked (give examples from the local cuisine) and the usual precautions are taken during preparation (LIST THEM)\*

\*to be adapted depending on the disease

# Risk communication management

## *Do:*

- Give facts and numbers and research results (journalists love those)
- Tell what you have observed/seen
- Tell the truth (or as much as you can)
- Tell what the policy is
- Be honest about your own feelings as long as it is functional: tell you don't like culling but that you think it has to be done because of.....(usually public health)
- End a conversation firmly by saying you have work to do.



# Risk communication management

## *Don't :*

- Tell lies
- Give names of persons or companies
- Give out addresses
- Ventilate your personal opinions
- Out your personal emotions (or get angry)
- Doubt your own organization openly
- Be openly negative about the chosen policy
- Get talkative because you like the (female) journalist
- Hide behind the law
- Run away or hide behind a shed



# **Risk communication management: how to deal with farmers?**

# Stakeholders / Farmers

**Farmers directly involved** (IP 's and farmers in restriction zones)

- Main topics – to order restrictions..
- Direct communication
- Registration in databases/ farms identification
- Direct telephone numbers
- Fast hotlines
- Websites registrations

# Stakeholders / Farmers

## Farmers "at risk" (farmers with susceptible animals)

- Main topics – to raise the alertness and to minimize the risk of spreading the disease
- Hotlines
- Websites
- Farmer magazines
- Youtube, facebook, twitter

# In discussion with the farmer

- Don't get emotional
- Express sympathy but not pity
- Express respect, be polite and neutral
- Make your point and hold

## And further:

- Make clear what is allowed and what is forbidden
- Make clear what you want to do
- Be reliable
- Explain what you are doing
- Speak in first person form
- Let the farmer check where is possible

# Take care of yourself

- Work safely
- Use Personal protections devices
- Follow the protocol rules
- Keep in mind rest- and labourschemes
- Listen to instructions of colleagues
- Indicate clearly when you cannot continue
- Make use of psychosocial support of your own organization

# Risk communication plan

- Contains a guide to the communication to be provided by the competent veterinary authorities
- Contains a living working document and should be up-dated periodically
- Contains a training component
- Explains how to convey the right messages from the right communicator, to the right audience, through the right channel at the right time.



# Summary

- An Risk/Outbreak communication plan should be an integrated part of the Contingency Plan
- Risk/Outbreak communication plan should cover Internal, External and International Communications
- Make use of appropriate media and channels
- Ensure that key audiences are known and targeted
- Provide appropriate, clear, accurate and consistent information confined to the truth



**Thanks for your attention**