



Japan and FAO in new agreement to fight Avian Influenza and Fall Armyworm

05 April 2018, Harare - The Government of Japan has contributed US\$ 500 000 to fight the highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) and fall armyworm (FAW) in the Republic of Zimbabwe. The project, being rolled out this month, will be implemented by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and working closely with the Government of Zimbabwe. Its objective is to strengthen the capacity of farmers and Government to rapidly respond to these two transboundary threats.

In February 2018, FAO issued a Special Alert warning about poor crop prospects in the region this agricultural season which may be further exacerbated by FAW. Preliminary reports indicate that in Zimbabwe, close to 15 000 hectares have so far been affected by this pest this season (as of March 2018).



Damage caused by fall armyworm
FAO/Edward Ogolla

In May 2017, Zimbabwe experienced an outbreak of avian influenza (the H5N8 strain). It occurred in a farm of one of the largest commercial poultry producers in the country, and resulted in 2 million birds being culled to control the disease. Poultry is an important part of people's diet and accounts for around one third of total meat consumption.

Agriculture provides employment and income for around 70 percent of the population. With farmers in the country still struggling to cope with the effects of successive droughts in recent years, an uncontrolled outbreak of FAW or HPAI would only compound the effects on food security and people's livelihoods.

Given the severity and urgency of these threats, the Government of Japan allocated funding for this project through its Supplementary Budget. The project will be implemented in several districts in Manicaland, Mashonaland East and Mashonaland West provinces.

Concerning FAW, the project will include the capacity building and integrated pest management of 500 government extension officers from the national, provincial, and district levels. It is expected that an estimated 500 000 smallholder farmers will be reached. The project will also assist affected smallholder farmers in restoring their productive capacities.



Trader selling chickens at market in Harare
FAO/Satyajit Sarkar

For HPAI, an active surveillance system will be established, which will allow a rapid response to any future outbreaks so that they are detected and contained. In addition, 500 000 smallholder farmers will benefit from training on HPAI.

It is therefore expected that this project will greatly contribute to the ability of Zimbabwean smallholder farmers to cope with the threats of FAW and HPAI, thus ensuring their livelihoods and food security.

Contacts:

Leonard Makombe, FAO-Zimbabwe Communications: Email: Leonard.Makombe@fao.org,
Tel: +263779711777

Oliver Wales-Smith, Embassy of Japan: Email: oliver.joshua.wales-smith@hz.mofa.go.jp,
Tel: +2634250025/6/7