

From the Wings: The AVIS College Bulletin

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SADC PRINT: A Regional Strategy for CBPP Control (“Rolling Back CBPP”)

At the end of September, I had the great pleasure of representing AVIS College at the SADC CBPP Workshop in Dar es Salaam. Held under the umbrella of the SADC PRINT initiative, I was invited to make a presentation and lead a working group on risk communication. I also enjoyed the opportunity to participate in the workshop as a whole. I hope you enjoy reading this newsletter about the workshop written by Dr. Pascal Bonnet and myself.

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What is SADC?

SADC - the Secretariat of the Southern African Development Community - comprises 14 member states: Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Democratic Republic of Congo, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Mauritius, Madagascar

The PRINT People Network

As a whole, the Workshop was a wonderful example of how best practices in regional collaboration for disease prevention and control begin with the creation of effective personal and professional networks. Without such willing and motivated people networks, as it seems to me, the wider policy goals of regional integration are highly constrained or even impossible. So the PRINT programme leadership did very well to facilitate the networking process so skilfully.

Group Discussions: Building the PRINT Regional Team



<http://www.sadc.int/fanr/livestock/index.php>

Regional Integration

PRINT derives its name from “Promoting Regional Integration”. This goal indeed left its “print” all over the workshop. High impact animal diseases, as we have come to view them in AVIS, are no respecter of borders and regulations. When they occur, they have the power to disrupt the economic and societal life of a whole region. So, under the general direction of the SADC Livestock Technical Committee, PRINT is tasked with finding sustainable ways “to increase livestock productivity in the region”, as part of the wider goal of poverty alleviation. Only a coordinated regional approach has any chance of success.

The Agenda

Introducing the Workshop, Chairman Dr. Beedee Hulmann, Senior Program Manager, Livestock, Food Agriculture and Natural Resources, FANR, SADC, restated the four major constraints to a successful regional coordination of “roll back” efforts for high-impact diseases such as CBPP. These were identified at a previous Workshop, July 2000.



Major Constraints to “Roll Back”

1. Poor livestock management and nutritional practices
2. Institutional shortcomings in reproductive science departments and in collection and use of agricultural and production statistics
3. Lack of harmonized approaches and fragmented regional policy
4. Inadequately trained staff.

Over the following three days, led by Dr. Hulmann with PRINT Project Coordinator Dr. Welbourne Madzima, Dr. Pascal Bonnet, PRINT Chief Technical Adviser and Dr. Francois Thiaucourt as resource person of the CBPP World Reference Laboratory, [CIRAD](#), Montpellier, workshop participants were able to take a systematic look at these constraints and what could be done to address them. Dr. Hulmann identified a four-point approach to making a measurable and beneficial impact on the long-term goal:

Four Point PRINT Approach

1. creation of a dependable, readily accessible up-to-date evidence-base - statistics, databases and information management
2. disease control built on evidence-based risk assessment and best practices
3. market stimulus and producer support at domestic, regional and international levels
4. training and capacity-building, for all stakeholders.



Keys to Success: Group Training and Capacity Building

Regionality

It is axiomatic in effective risk communication that all stakeholders must be engaged from the outset in identifying and addressing the challenges brought by high-impact diseases. The process, and its governance, must be transparent. It is also becoming increasingly clear that while there are international standards and best practices in respect of how to work with stakeholders, the key principle to observe is what AVIS refers to as “regionality”. By regionality we mean that, however much global standards and best practices may apply, effective decisions are derived from and responsive to regional needs and priorities.

Risk Communications Group Conclusions

My risk communications working group (which seemed in session round the clock as I recall both late evening and “sunrise” meetings) identified these points for itself:

- a coherent, well-coordinated risk communication strategy reduces friction, tension, isolation, and misunderstandings
- it also weeds out problems of implementation and non-commitment
- it is good to have observers and people with a different point of view as a one-dimensional technocratic approach is not sustainable
- there is need for regular scheduled communications with all stakeholders and for “on-demand” means of communication according to local needs and circumstances
- tricks of the trade can make the difference between success and failure
- practice makes perfect.

But how can this approach be made sustainable? I believe it resolves itself into three key requirements for success, each of which was in evidence at the Workshop:

1. **Management**
2. **Motivation**
3. **Resources.**

1. Management: Effective stakeholder dialogue, the heart of risk communications, is not just an exchange of words and opinions: it is a managed, negotiated process, with a goal in view – the effective prevention, control or eradication of disease. To manage this process requires experienced, dedicated managers, and SADC countries, and PRINT itself, are fortunate to have these in abundance.

2. Motivation: Without stakeholder motivation, the power of management is at best limited, which is why motivation is probably as critical a success factor in CBPP control as effective surveillance, or zoning procedures or vaccination. If the desire to succeed, in both individual and collective self-interest, is absent, the enterprise will fail.

3. Resources: Resources start and end with people, however much materials, equipment, and money are also vital. PRINT has made a major contribution to shoring up the primary resource in the battle against CBPP, the SADC member state experts and their staffs. This approach leverages even scarce resources to the maximum return on investment. Networking activities developed by PRINT in forum about animal health, production, trade and marketing bring an integrated vision of the problems, it provides more than the addition of expertise but a synergy which vitalizes the reflection and offers new development not foreseen before.

Dialogue: Think Global – Act Regional

As I have subsequently reflected on all I learned from the Workshop, I am encouraged to think that the maxim “think global, act regional” can actually work.

Risk communications teaches us that the key to successful communication is the desire to communicate, to be in dialogue.



Think Global: Act Regional – PRINT at Work

Dialogue means we reach out willingly to another person or group, often with widely differing and, maybe, even hostile agendas. We make sure they have understood, and had the opportunity to respond to, what we want to say – and they do the same. And that is exactly what in our Workshop we all did. Go PRINT!

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