Exercise Phoenix
Preparing to respond to agroterrorism

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Exercise Phoenix overview

- Exercise Phoenix (February 2023) was an international discussion exercise (TTX) comprising:
  - Three 4-day face-to-face regional exercises involving the veterinary services and law enforcement agencies of 12 countries:
    - held concurrently across three time zones
    - Delivered in three languages (English and French, and translated on-site into Arabic)
    - And 10 days later
  - A one-day discussion exercise for international organisations:
    - with three participating and six observer international organisations
    - Held in hybrid (face-to-face and virtual) format.
- Planned and delivered during a global pandemic.
Background

- FAO, INTERPOL and WOAH are partners in the project ‘Building sustainable global resilience against animal health emergencies caused by agro-terrorism and agro-crime’
- Project support by the Weapons Threat Reduction Program of Global Affairs Canada
- 4-year project supported a series of training workshops and exercises
  - Training workshops were conducted in two of three target regions (delivery impacted by COVID-19)
- Exercise Phoenix was the culmination of the project
Aim and objectives

Aim: to improve the preparedness and coordination of national and regional veterinary services, law enforcement agencies, and international organizations to work together in response to an agro-terrorism incident

Objectives:

• To raise awareness of, and confirm triggers of suspicion of, an agro-terrorism act at national and regional level.
• To discuss initial joint response to suspicion and the initial response measures put in place when detecting an agro-terrorism event.
• To practice collaboration and cooperation between Law Enforcement and Veterinary Services at the national and regional level.
• To discuss information sharing at national, regional and international level in response to this threat
• To explore the roles of selected national, regional, and international entities in dealing with an international agro-terrorism incident.
## Exercise planning and writing

### Exercise planning team

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<th>Organisation</th>
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<tr>
<td>EuFMD</td>
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<td>FAO Emergency Management Center</td>
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<td>Institute of Infectious Animal Diseases (IIAD) (Texas A&amp;M University)</td>
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<td>INTERPOL</td>
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<td>World Organisation for Animal Health</td>
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**Exercise Plan, Risk Register, Facilitator and Player Guides, Briefings and Situation Updates**

### Evaluation

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<th>Evaluation</th>
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<td>Independent lead evaluators appointed by WOAH</td>
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<td>Vet services &amp; law enforcement evaluators</td>
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### Scenario writing team

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<th>Veterinary Services injects</th>
<th>Law Enforcement injects</th>
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<td>EuFMD</td>
<td>Australian Federal Police</td>
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<td>FAO - EMC</td>
<td>Federal Bureau of Investigation (USA)</td>
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<td>IIAD, Texas, USA</td>
<td>INTERPOL</td>
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<td>National Veterinary Institute, Sweden (Chair)</td>
<td>Nigeria Police</td>
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<td>WOAH</td>
<td>Portugal Army</td>
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**Scenario and injects**

- Service départemental-métropolitain d'incendie et de secours France
Exercise scenario

- Intentional release of a biological agent affecting animal health and food security
  - Tailored to country/region
- Regional exercises focused on cooperation between law enforcement and veterinary services in joint investigation and response
- National vet services and law enforcement players received different information
Rehearsals and Exercise Conduct

• Rehearsal 1: Scenario writing team
• Rehearsal 2: Exercise control teams
  • using Facilitator Guide and simex software
• Exercise control and coordination:
  • Autonomous exercise control teams in each region
  • Common Facilitator Guide and other docs
  • Global exercise monitoring and coordination from Rome
• Evaluation
  • Against exercise objectives
Observations

• **Triggers**
  - Of suspicion for agrocrime
  - For action – joint investigation and response
  - **Definitions** of Agro-crime and agroterrorism not universally agreed (‘no law, no crime’)

• **Information exchange – triggers and constraints**
  - Between Law Enforcement – Veterinary Services
  - Countries – Regions
  - Countries and International organisations

• **Collaboration**
  - Understanding of roles, responsibilities helped build trust between agencies
Observations

- **Existing** crisis/emergency management **structures** are applicable to agro-terrorism
  - Need to develop operating plans/procedures specific to biological threats
  - Not all countries routinely include veterinary services in national emergency management arrangements
- Roles of **international organisations**
  - Existing relationships and mandates
  - Constraints to information-sharing
  - Coordination of agency response
Conclusions

- Exercise Phoenix achieved its aim and objectives
- Effect of pre-exercise preparation and training of participants
- Opportunities to improve preparation for responding to agrocrime and agroterrorism
- Value of multi-agency exercises

*Exercise Phoenix was supported by the Weapons Threat Reduction Program of Global Affairs Canada*
Thank you

Kathy Gibson

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