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OIE provides African countries with 18,000,000 doses of AI vaccines for poultry protection against H5N1

During the last three months, the OIE provided African countries with a total of 18,000,000 doses of AI vaccines protecting adult poultry against H5N1 Avian influenza strain, in conformity with its quality standards on vaccines. Vaccine was delivered to Egypt (14 million doses), Mali (1 million), Mauritania (2 million) and Senegal (1 million).

The Interafrican Bureau for Animal Resources of the African Union (AU-IBAR) was responsible for the agreement of the delivery procedure, including eligibility criteria – like the countries availability and efficiency of the cold chain - and national vaccination programmes. The vaccine supplier was selected by the OIE through an international call for tender based on the quality of the product, the price and quickness of the shipments.

This vaccine delivery comes as a result of the OIE partnership with AU/IBAR and the financial support of the European Commission. The OIE established a virtual vaccine bank for African countries to rapidly assist infected countries who would have to vaccinate poultry populations at risk and also countries not yet infected wishing to count with a strategic stock to protect themselves.

The virtual bank is based not only on physical stocks of vaccines but also on commitments from the provider to deliver vaccines when needed. This avoids vaccine loss due to lapsing expiry dates.

The OIE now intends to maintain this virtual AI Vaccine Bank and to extend it to other regions of the world. The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) has already confirmed a significant financial participation to this global project for three years (2007-2009). Other similar contributions would allow active support to vaccination programmes in countries or regions facing situations where the permanent circulation of the virus make vaccination policies an essential tool in the control of the disease.

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