

FAO Myanmar Newsletter

Message from FAO Representative

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the second issue of the FAO Myanmar Newsletter in 2018 featuring highlights of FAO's recent achievements towards national priorities and global commitment to eradicate hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition in our life time. This edition is now the sixth issue of our quarterly newsletter since it started in March 2017! Having in mind that Myanmar is subject to various challenges that can stress agricultural livelihoods and undermine national food and nutrition security, much of our recent work has focused on identifying the **nexus between climate change, natural disasters and poverty** and how this nexus can be best addressed for the benefit of the poorest communities. FAO Myanmar remains committed to enhance resilience of vulnerable communities through restoring, protecting and improving livelihood opportunities. In May 2018, a team of experts from FAO HQ, regional and country office, in collaboration with WFP and with the support of the Government of Myanmar, successfully conducted a mission **to assess the food security situation in Rakhine State**. As forests constitute the dominant ecosystem in Myanmar, with 44.2% of the country's land area, we have also continued actions to mitigate

the impact of climate change through the establishment of the National Forest Inventory System under the umbrella of the **UN-REDD Programme**. With the aim of addressing the underlying causes of malnutrition, we have been also supporting the development of the **Multi Sector National Plan of Action for Nutrition (MS-NPAN)** through "**Food and Nutrition Security Impact, Resilience, Sustainability and Transformation**" (**FIRST Programme**), funded by FAO and the European Union. Finally, recognizing the huge contribution of the livestock sector to food security and the overall wellbeing of smallholders, we have been supporting the development of policies and guidelines to implement a national programme recognizing the role of the **Community Animal Health Workers (CAHW)**. While, in the poultry sector we have also advanced in improving farm biosecurity in Yangon Poultry Production Zone (PPZ) through the **Emergency Centre for Transboundary Animal Diseases (ECTAD)**.

Enjoy reading our Newsletter!



Xiaojie Fan
FAO Representative in Myanmar

Community Animal Health Worker Policy Roll Out in Support of the Agriculture Development Strategy

The death of one or more animals through illness can be a devastating event for a smallholder household. That is why a quality animal health service that can deliver the right vaccines at the right time, and provide effective treatments on demand, are so important to the smallholder. In Myanmar, these services are mostly provided by the Community Animal Health Workers (CAHW), with the support of the Livestock, Breeding and Veterinary Department (LBVD). FAO, through the LIFT-funded project "**Improving Farmer Livelihoods in the Dry Zone through Improved Livestock Health, Productivity and Marketing**", has been working closely with the **Livestock, Breeding and Veterinary Department (LBVD)** and others stakeholders such as the Myanmar Veterinary Council, Myanmar Veterinary Association, and University of Veterinary Science, to develop



The Community Animal Health Workers (CAHW) in Chin State meet with project and the Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department (LBVD) staff as a part of the Community Animal Health Workers (CAHW) baseline study.

the policies and guidelines to implement a national program to recognise the role of the Community Animal Health Workers (CAHWs), and to develop training and accreditation programs to improve services to smallholders.

A significant step in this process was made at the end of June, when stakeholders got together to review the findings of a baseline study on CAHWs in thirty two townships throughout the country, to assess progress in training, and to discuss future plans. The major upshot of the meeting was to confirm that the project will pilot the training and accreditation of thirty Community Animal Health Workers (CAHWs) in the next six months or so, while developing a five year investment project to be implemented to roll out the CAHW program nationally. This approach is consistent with the recently launched the **Agricultural Development Strategy (ADS)**, which calls for MoALI departments, including the Livestock, Breeding and Veterinary Department (LBVD), to develop medium-term investment projects to contribute to **ADS** objectives. Smallholders throughout Myanmar will be the ultimate beneficiaries, helping to ensure they can safely invest in livestock.



Food Security Situation in Rakhine State

Rakhine State is ranked as the least developed State among States/Regions in Myanmar - it has the second highest poverty rate and per capita income is less than half of national average. Chronic poverty and high vulnerability to shocks, including recurrent natural and human induced crises, are widespread. Meanwhile, the escalation of violence after attacks by the Arakan Salvation Army (ARSA) on the Border Guard Police (BGP) bases in August 2017 and a major operation launched by the Myanmar Army to capture those involved, drastically affected livelihoods and food security in Northern Rakhine State (Maungdaw, Buthidaung and Rathidaung Townships) and led to mass exodus of Muslim communities into bordering Bangladesh, estimated to reach more than 800,000 people. Overall, the destruction of crop, livestock, productive assets, and markets resulted in increased costs of agricultural labour, further limited livelihood opportunities, and consequently severely impacted the livelihood of 450,000 people remaining in Northern Rakhine. Following request of the **Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation (MoALI)**, FAO led a field visit to Rakhine State from 29 April to 10 May 2018. The mission composed of a multidisciplinary group of experts from FAO HQ, regional and national offices, as well as the World Food Programme (WFP) aimed to assess the food security situation of remaining population. The preliminary results show that although the 2017 monsoon season output was expected to be average, farmers incurred heavy harvest and post-harvest losses. Most of households were unable to plant during winter season, while fishing activities were also substantially reduced.



Rice Field in Rakhine State.

Interviewed households reported heavy livestock losses in particular of draft animals. The overall area planted and production in the upcoming monsoon season is likely to be well below average due to reduced population, constrained access to fields, lack of casual labour and draft animals, and reduced access to agricultural inputs. Many markets were closed, and remaining functioning rural markets were operating with fewer supplies and higher prices. The mission observed more restricted diets than normal increasing the risk of nutritional status deterioration, particularly for pregnant, lactating women and young children. The information collected during the mission will be complemented with secondary data provided by the Government, key informants, other stakeholders which will feed into a final report. The findings will allow for further formulation of evidence-based plans and programmes to address immediate, as well as longer term food security needs of the most affected population.

Myanmar Multi Sector National Plan of Action for Nutrition (MS-NPAN)

The Government of Myanmar (GoM) is committed to eradicating hunger and all forms of malnutrition as evidenced by its engagement in **Sustainable Development Goal 2**. Under the leadership of the National Nutrition Centre (NNC), which is hosted by the Ministry of Health and Sports (MOHS), and in close partnership with the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement (MoSWRR), the Ministry of Education (MoE), the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, and Irrigation (MoALI), and FAO-EU programme “**Food and Nutrition Security Impact, Resilience, Sustainability and Transformation**” (FIRST), Myanmar supports the development of the **Multi Sector National Plan of Action for Nutrition (MS-NPAN)** to improve the nutrition situation and health conditions of the population at large, especially reduce stunting of children under 5 from an average of 29% today to 19% by 2025. To have the greatest impact, the focus of the **MS-NPAN** is on the most vulnerable groups during the first 1000-day period, thus targeting pregnant and lactating women and children under five. FIRST supports MoALI to design its contribution to the action plan. The focus is principally on promoting more diversified agricultural production systems by better exploring the rich agro-ecologic and socio-economic diversity of the country. As meeting nutrition goals requires inter-sector cooperation, the MS-NPAN is a such first multi-stakeholder response of Government of Myanmar to the problem malnutrition across



“A major challenge for MoALI is to better plan for an agricultural diversification approach, balancing a legacy of a rice centred policy with a vision of Myanmar becoming a major food basket in support of SDG2”, explained Mr Paul de Wit, FIRST Policy Advisor.

the country. Such approach could also significantly contribute to consolidate the peace process, with more delivery of public goods to peripheral States. Such diversification is required to make available more diversified and nutritious food baskets at the local level, as well as to generate increased and more stable income to access such baskets. This approach is well embedded in the **Agricultural Development Strategy (ADS)**, which was recently launched by MoALI. The finalization of the **Multi Sector National Plan of Action for Nutrition (MS-NPAN)** has been foreseen by end of July 2018.

The next steps include the costing of identified actions, capacity needs assessment for implementing institutions, including the Government, development partners, civil society and private sector.

“In order to achieve national target of food and nutrition security all ministries should work together”, said Mr Kyaw Swe Lin, Deputy Director General, the Department of Planning (DoP), MoALI.

Enhancing Resilient Livelihoods to Address the Climate Change, Disaster and Poverty Nexus in Myanmar

The FAO study “**Enhancing Resilient Livelihoods to Address the Climate Change, Disaster and Poverty Nexus in Asia**” is currently being finalized in Myanmar, Bangladesh and Viet Nam and aims to provide a good understanding on how the nexus between climate variability, climate change, disasters and poverty is being addressed in selected Asian countries. The Myanmar component of the study was conducted in Meiktila in the Central Dry Zone, and Patheingyi and Ngathay in the Ayeyarwaddy Delta, with support of Action Aid Myanmar. The study findings bring to light on how the nexus between disaster, climate change and poverty is framed in the existing policies and institutional framework in Myanmar and effectiveness of the nexus framing. The analysis of findings also address the nexus in practice in terms of particular interventions and best models at the implementation stage. Moreover, the study provides the recommendation for enhancing existing poverty alleviation, Disaster Risk Management and Climate Change Adaptation models to effectively strengthen resilient livelihoods. As such, the results will be imperative for further enhancement of FAO work on DRR/DRM, particularly for embedding identified successful models into national policy and institutional process.



Myanmar Delegation from the Extension Division, Department of Agriculture, MoALI, the Environmental Conservation Department, MoNREC, FAO and Action Aid at the Regional Synthesis Workshop.

A preliminary findings of studies from across the region were also recently discussed at a **Regional Synthesis Workshop**, held on 25-26 June in Bangkok. The meeting was attended by Government officials from three countries where studies have been conducted and other countries in the region, as well as UN agencies, development partners and academia. The Myanmar Government officials from the **Department of Agriculture, MoALI** and the **Environmental Conservation Department, MoNREC**, attended the workshop. With the participation of government officials from relevant ministries and study teams from the three countries, workshop discussions contributed to the finalization of the country reports and development of the regional synthesis report. A final report for Myanmar will be available in September 2018.

Improving Farm Biosecurity in Yangon Poultry Production Zone (PPZ)

FAO Myanmar is currently implementing the “**Evidence-Based Risk Management along the Livestock Production and Market Chain**” project, funded by the **Australian Government** through its **Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT)**. The project aims to reduce the spread of influenza and other zoonotic emerging infectious diseases (EID) in Myanmar, through active stakeholder participation including poultry farmers. As improving farm biosecurity is a crucial step in minimizing the risks of avian influenza and other infectious diseases, in April 2018 FAO met key project stakeholders, including the **Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department (LBVD)**, veterinarians and



“This is a novel concept in the Myanmar poultry sector. It can encourage farmers to apply a higher level of farm biosecurity and provide certain guarantees to the consumers who purchase eggs from these farms. We hope that this will lead to private sector engagement and address other issues, aside from the spread of avian influenza, such as misuse of antibiotics”, said Dr. David Hadrill, ECTAD Myanmar Team Leader.

members of **Yangon Poultry Production Zone (PPZ)**, to discuss ways to improve poultry farm biosecurity. During the meeting innovative approaches to improving farm biosecurity, such as the introduction of poultry farm accreditation systems, were discussed. Whilst most farmers in the Poultry Production Zone (PPZ) are aware that biosecurity is important, practical implementation is often neglected. As such the consultation meeting allowed participants to identify concrete next steps to address this problem among which were assessment of biosecurity standards in fifteen Yangon Poultry Production Zone (PPZ) farms, trainings and farm-specific biosecurity action plans, and a biosecurity grading system to enable better monitoring of biosecurity on each farm.

“Beat Plastic Pollution” in Myanmar

In light of the World Environment Day 2018, FAO Myanmar shared its own pledge to support global movement “**Beat Plastic Pollution**”. In spirit of WFD 2018, we have discussed measures to reduce, reuse, recycle plastic. Today we are using refillable water bottles, exchanged plastic cups with reusable mugs, bring own reusable food containers, carry the FAO Myanmar reusable shopping bags, and grow herbs in the hydroponic garden made of recycled materials next to the FAO Myanmar office.

“Beat Plastic Pollution. If you can’t reuse it, refuse it!”



Knowledge Exchange on the State of National Forest Inventory and Forest Reference (Emission) Level for REDD+

Myanmar is implementing the **National UN-REDD Programme** supported by three UN-agencies: **UNDP, FAO and UN-Environment**. FAO is taking a leading role in supporting the Government of Myanmar in the improvement and upgrading of the National Forest Monitoring System (NFMS) and the development of a Forest Reference (Emission) Level (FREL/FRL) as required by the **Warsaw Framework for REDD+**. The work of FAO in this area is based on a NFMS and a FREL Action Plans, both developed in 2015 and endorsed by the Government in 2016. Since then work has concentrated on support to the Forest Department in stepwise improving the Satellite based Land Monitoring System with cutting edge open source remote sensing tools developed and hosted by FAO (Open Foris suite of tools, SEPAL) and the planning of a National Forest Inventory (NFI), both essential parts of a functional NFMS. For developing and implementing the NFI, a new 5-year project supported by the **Finnish Government** (National Forest Inventory and National Forest Monitoring Information System) is about to start that will complement and strengthen the ongoing work in



NFI planning as well as its national scale implementation. Myanmar's FRL was submitted to the UNFCCC in January 2018 and is presently under a Technical Assessment process. A delegation of the **Royal Government of Bhutan** was visiting Myanmar in the context of a study tour and held a meeting with the Myanmar Forest Department. The meeting was carried out on 28 June in the context of the 5th MRV core unit meeting and served as a venue of discussion on Bhutan's and Myanmar's experience in the development of the NFI and the FREL, both also supported by FAO applying similar tools and approaches. The contacts with Bhutan were facilitated through the Regional Coordination for REDD+ of FAO in Bangkok and further exchange with Bhutan and other countries in the region will be held on a regional conference on REDD+ related monitoring planned for September in Dehra Dun, India.

Reflection from FAO Myanmar Team



"From 1999 to 2003 I worked with the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation and from 2006 to 2009 in the FAO Representation in Myanmar. Over the years, I have observed increasing good collaboration with the Government of Myanmar which contributed to the development of crop, livestock, fisheries and forestry sectors and increasing resilience against shocks across the country. I am personally glad to say that it is a great pleasure for me to work again with my colleagues in FAO and related Ministries contributing to the work towards food and nutrition security of my country." **Tint Khine, Assistant FAO Representative (Programme)**

Highlighted Events and Partnerships

» April 2018

Climate Smart Agriculture and Farmer Field School Training of Trainers, (GCP/MYA/017/GFF)
National Livestock Survey Feedback and Commercial Census Planning Workshop with LBVD, (UNJP/MYA/022/OPS)

» May 2018

Food Security Field Visit in Rakhine State (FAO and WFP)
Township-Level DRM Systems Analysis and Village PRA in Yangon, Ayeyarwady Region and Rakhine State, (GCP /MYA/021/LDF)

» June 2018

Study tour to Kerala Forest Research Institute and Institute of Wood science and Technology, (TCP/MYA/3607)
Knowledge Exchange on the State of National Forest Inventory (NFI) and Forest Reference (Emission) Level (FREL/FRL) for REDD+, UN-REDD
MS-NPAN dialogue to strengthen intra-ministerial coordination to further develop its contribution to MS-NPAN, FIRST Programme

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Upcoming Events

» July 2018

Launching ceremony of the Climate-Smart Agriculture (CSA) Centre in Yezin Agricultural University, (GCP/MYA/017/GFF)
MRV Technical Working Group Meeting, UN-REDD Programme
Land Use and Land Cover Mapping Advisory Task Force Meeting, (GCP/MYA/017/GFF)
Workshop on Validation of Academic Course and Training Curricula on CSA, (GCP/MYA/017/GFF)
University Veterinary Science Students Field Visit, (UNJP/MYA/022/OPS)

» August 2018

National CSA Technical Support Group Meeting, (GCP/MYA/017/GFF)
Regional awareness training on Legal and Regulatory Frameworks for SLM, SFM and CSA practices, (GCP/MYA/017/GFF)
Vulnerability Assessments at National level and Community Levels, (GCP /MYA/021/LDF)

» September 2018

Regional survey of Nansen vessel at the national waters of Myanmar, (GCP/GLO/690/NOR)
MRV Technical Working Group Meeting, UN-REDD Programme
National Workshop on Climate Smart Agriculture, (GCP/MYA/017/GFF)