Cockfighting, a tradition inherited from Early Spanish settlers, widespread in the Caribbean
- Roosters ownership: cockfighting, illegal or tolerated according to the countries/territories.
- Traditional leisure, gambling activity, highly lucrative in some islands.
- Crooks: prized possessions, selected for their aggressiveness, physically trained for fights & transported over islands (trade, competition, board, etc.). Cockfights organized in arenas/illegal venues with specific rules.

**Fighting cock (FC), a puzzling animal industry for official Veterinary Services**
- Perceived as associated with underground activities  Communication on bio-security measures, surveillance & control by VS, complicated, even impossible where FC is illegal.
- FC, a risk for animal & human health, & poultry production
- FC are handled & looked after as pets and bred in farms possibly with other poultry or in backyards with contacts roaming chickens  potential sources of pathogens for poultry & humans.
- Caribbean poultry industry: the most rapidly growing subsector in agriculture which is developing in several smaller island states. From backyard (most countries) to industrial production, some self-sustaining countries in meat production.
- Highly pathogenic AI* is exotic for the Caribbean. FC are often cited as potential Risk Factor for HPAI (for poultry infection in Asia) but no evidence. Prevention, communication & surveillance: essential to prevent risks, and should target poultry owners/farmers & FC stakeholders!

A regional study on FC, preliminary step to tailored surveillance & communication
- Pilot study in Martinique (Vet. Service/Ministry of Culture 2008 - 2010): qualitative risk analysis of NDV/HPAI introduction in Poultry sector by FC & communication campaign to FC stakeholders to promote tradition & improve sanitary conditions by raising awareness on diseases risk, bio-security practices, identification & vaccination.
- Regional study (USDA, ICA, CaribVET, 2011 – 2013): to better describe the FC industry regionally, understand the role of VS in the FC industry in their countries/territories and to raise awareness to FC stakeholders: sellers, buyers, owners, trainers, etc. The latter is not addressed in this post.

**OBJECTIVES - 1/ Better comprehend knowledge of Official Veterinary Services from the Caribbean in their countries/territories 2/ Provide a description of the fighting cock industry in the region**

**MATERIALS & METHODS**

1/ Data collection from Veterinary Services: Questionnaire
- Designed by the Avian Diseases WG* of CaribVET (mid 2010): 46 questions on - Cockfighting activities - Cockfighting venues - FC breeding - Movements of FC - Sanitary actions of VS - To be filled by the person “most likely to provide valuable information on cockfighting practices & FC breeding in the country”.
- Pre-tested with 1 CVO & circulated by E-mail to CVO members of CaribVET (Jan. 2011).
- Deadline for answer: April 2012.

2/ Data collection from the FC stakeholders: Ethnographic Study
- Conducted by a ethnologist, expert on FC, in a sample of countries, chosen according to: - Questionnaire completion - Ethnologist’s network & visits programmed for her own research - Agreement from Partner CVO - Information collected: general & specific knowledge. On FC - Ethnographic methodology based on participant observation. Experience of ethnologist on FC & her network ensured mutual trust, facilitated her integration & results reliability.

**RESULTS**

**SURVEY RESPONSE**

- VS of 26 countries sent and the questionnaire - 21 countries reported cockfighting activity, 5 reported no activity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Number of countries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class A</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class B</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class C</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class D</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Questions on the knowledge of the FC industry are filled in homogeneously

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contact with owners &amp; VS</th>
<th>Frequency of answers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No contact</td>
<td>No data available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal status of FC ownership &amp; activities in the Caribbean (as provided by CVOs)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>No. countries that reported FC activity &amp; breeding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>No. countries that reported FC activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>No. countries that reported FC breeding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>No. countries that reported FC to official authorities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>No. countries that reported FC to official authorities for surveillance and control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>No. countries that reported FC to official authorities for surveillance &amp; control</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Small & strong network of FC actors in the Caribbean: good circulation of information between owners, breeders.
- 4 countries visited: contrasts with the CVOs questionnaires (incomprehension between VS & FC industry actors)

**DISCUSSION**

- Study enhanced need to improve authorities’ awareness on this industry for improved surveillance & control and to develop tailored communication means on biosecurity & diseases risk.
- Results of VS questionnaires were completed by invaluable information provided by the ethnographic study, where the expert on FC could interpret the information provided at national levels & enabled us to have a better representation of the FC industry in the Caribbean.
- Further investigation would be needed in some islands where information is lacking from both VS and ethnographic side.
- The ethnographic study evidenced that Caribbean FC stakeholders are closely connected together through an informal network, being studied by the Ethnologist as part her research study.

**PERSPECTIVES**

- Communication within CaribVET on FC to contribute to raise Caribbean VS awareness
- This study was conducted along with the development of communication materials tailored for 4 countries (diverse set of languages, as well as risk situations concerning FC on basic bird health & management: to be shared for adoption in the countries and implemented, where FC is legal by VS. CONCLUSION
- Results may be used as a basis for further studies on FC in the region or in countries sharing similar characteristics (risk assessment, contacts between FC and commercial poultry, …)

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**
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