**INTRODUCTION**

Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratories: essential component of efficient Veterinary Services
- Need reliable data to support decision: control, eradication, surveillance

**CaribVET, the Caribbean Animal Health Network**
- Collaborative Network: Veterinary Services (CVOs), research institutes, universities & regional / international organizations
- Objectives: to improve regional animal and public health

**Laboratory, Quality Assurance and Diagnostic Working Group (WG)**
- Cross-cutting WG: created in 2007, formalized in 2011
- Global objective: to contribute to the improvement of veterinary diagnostic capacities and to the development of principles of laboratory quality assurance & laboratory management in the Caribbean

**Terms of Reference of the CaribVET Laboratory Working Group**

- Composition of the Laboratory working group
  - 1 chair (C. Lazarus, FAO) and 15 members
  - Expertise in diagnostic, laboratory activities and willingness to develop laboratory capacities in the region
  - Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratories (Jamaica, Trinidad, Barbados, Haiti, CENSAG, CIFAD, and organizations (FAO, USDA, CARICOM, UWI, OIE, CROSG)

- Specific objectives
  - Develop regional network of laboratories. Promote and strengthen linkages between laboratories in the region and with Reference Laboratories
  - Identify training needs & opportunities for laboratory staff
  - Develop & regularly update database of veterinary laboratory expertise and capabilities & capacities in the region
  - Promote the implementation of quality assurance systems & laboratory management programmes
  - Promote the harmonizing of diagnostic protocols within the region
  - Assist in organizing inter-laboratory assays

**ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED / ACHIEVEMENTS**

- Preliminary assessment of the status of the laboratories: from those needing significant upgrade in diagnostic methods and accreditation in terms of equipment, procedures, management and bio-security.

**Evaluation of Diagnostic Laboratories**
- 34 CARICOM diagnostic labs (10 countries in 2009)

**Quality Assurance**
- Training workshop - introduction to ISO 17025 standards
- Collaboration with FAO TCP H1N1 Project - 2012

**List of training opportunities & options**
- With several organizations: OIE, USDA, CARICOM, CIFAD, CENSAG

**Database of Laboratory diagnostic capacities & Capabilities**
- Pilot Project of Regional Database of Laboratories for the Americas (CaribVET/OIE)

**IATA Regulation & Certification**
- Organization of workshops, provision of licences
- Reference Training Manuals, samples boxes

**FUNDING Sources**
- Interreg IV Carabises, CIFAD, FAO, USDA

**COLLABORATIONS**
- TCP FAO H1N1 Project
- EDES Project
- OIE (LoU)

**Shipment of Suspicious Diagnostic Samples**
- "biological substance category 6.2" (IATA 602)
- Simulation exercises, samples shipment

**Organization of Inter-Laboratory Assays**
- Assessment of diagnostic capacities of laboratories for CSF testing. Partner: Institute of Virology (Hannover)
- To be extended to other priority diseases

**Building Capacities in Molecular Diagnostic**
- Training workshops organized
- Swine Influenza A H1N1, Heartwater, Apal brazios, West Nile virus, Avian Influenza, Salmonellosis...
- Work conducted with the Swine Diseases and the Avian Influenza WGs since 2005

**CONCLUSIONS**

- Work plan for 2012-2013 validated by the SC of CaribVET
- Synergistic collaborations with partner organizations of CaribVET
- Strong collaboration with other CaribVET WGs & with the Coordination Unit
- relevancy, follow-up & coordination of the activities.

**PERSPECTIVES**

- Finalization of the Database of laboratories for the Americas
- Extend Inter-laboratory Assays to Caribbean priority diseases
- Assess the impact of training received and appropriate plan trainings
- Development of the Laboratory section of the CaribVET website