

MoU renewed to strengthen zoonotic disease work in Timor-Leste

Dili, 15 September 2023

A new Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Menzies School of Health Research (Menzies) and the Timor-Leste Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Forestry (MALFF) has been signed this week, continuing the collaborative partnership.

MALFF Secretary of State for Livestock HE Jose Viera de Araujo and Menzies' Chief Operating Officer, Chris Pearce, signed the MoU at Menzies' Timor-Leste Office in Dili on Tuesday 12 September 2023.

The renewed agreement aims to further strengthen antimicrobial resistance (AMR) and antimicrobial use (AMU) surveillance in the animal health sector. It will also promote a One Health approach for controlling brucellosis and other zoonotic diseases in Timor-Leste.

The MoU outlines the ongoing capacity building support MALFF and Menzies will continue to provide to the Timor-Leste Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory (VDL). Menzies will also work with the National Directorate of Veterinary (NDV) in Timor-Leste to help strengthen their skills in epidemiology and AMR surveillance.

The partnership between Menzies and MALFF since 2019 has resulted in several achievements. These include:

- carrying out AMR surveillance on chickens in all municipalities in Timor-Leste,
- capacity development within the VDL,
- developing a digital platform for recording AMU data and implementing this in municipalities, and
- supporting the NDV to improve AMR data quality for submission to the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH).

There are currently 3 One Health projects underway through the partnership:

- The [Fleming Fund Country Grant to Timor-Leste](#) (since 2019)
- [Brucellosis Reduction Using Co-design Elements in Timor-Leste](#) (BRUCE-TL) Project (since 2022) and
- Bacteria Enteropathy and Nutrition (BEN) Study (commencing September 2023).

These ongoing projects are also made possible through the Fleming Fund Country Grant to Timor-Leste, funded by UK Aid and managed by Mott MacDonald Group, the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) and the Australian National University.

Find out more about Menzies' Timor-Leste projects on our website:

https://www.menzies.edu.au/page/Research/Global_and_Tropical_Health/Timor-Leste/

Quotes attributable to Timor-Leste Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Forestry (MALFF), Secretary of State of Livestock, HE Jose Viera de Araujo:

“The Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Forestry and Menzies School of Health Research is proud of the dynamic and fruitful collaboration that has flourished over recent years. This robust alliance has yielded significant achievements, reflecting a shared

commitment to capacity building and the advancement of key initiatives to combat antimicrobial resistance, brucellosis and other zoonotic diseases.”

Quotes attributable to Menzies School of Health Research - Senior Research Fellow and Animal Health Lead, [Dr Shawn Ting](#):

“MALFF and Menzies have established a robust and positive collaboration over the last few years. For example, the VDL which initially lacked capacity for conducting antimicrobial susceptibility testing at the start of our collaboration is now producing reliable AMR data that is pivotal for informing policy decisions.

“MALFF is also actively contributing antimicrobial use data to the World Organisation for Animal Health at the highest-tier reporting option. Future collaboration will seek to advance animal and public health outcomes in Timor-Leste.”

ENDS

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Menzies School of Health Research:

Menzies School of Health Research (Menzies) is one of Australia’s leading medical research institutes dedicated to improving the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, and a leader in global and tropical research into life-threatening illnesses. Menzies continues to translate research into effective partnerships and programs in communities across Australia and the Asia-Pacific region.