

## **CAHFSA leads coordination of the 26<sup>th</sup> Meeting of CARICOM Committee of Chief Veterinary Officers (CCCVO) Advancing Regional Coordination and Preparedness**

St. Eustatius, 26 & 27 March 2026

This year the 26<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the CARICOM Committee of Chief Veterinary Officers (CCCVO) was hosted in St. Eustatius, following the conclusion of the VII<sup>th</sup> CaribVET meeting from 23<sup>rd</sup>-24<sup>th</sup> March 2026. The CCCVO meeting brought together representation from 20 CARICOM Member States.

Dr. Lisa Musai, Chief Veterinary Officer (CVO), Trinidad and Tobago and Dr. Kimmond Cummings, Chief Veterinary Officer (CVO), Grenada were re-elected to serve the region as Chair and Vice Chair respectively for a 2-year term from 2026–2028.

CAHFSA, the lead coordinating agency with a mandate to report to the Council of Trade and Economic Development on matters related to animal health, was represented at the meeting by a three-member team:

- Dr. Gavin Peters, Chief Executive Officer
- Dr. Nneka Hull James, Animal Health Specialist
- Mrs. Rosaya Gunther-Kamit, Animal Health Programme Officer

This year's meeting discussions focused on key regional priorities, including updates on current and upcoming projects activities in collaboration with regional and international partners, to include the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the Caribbean Animal Health Network (CaribVET), World Organization for Animal Health (WOAH), University of the West Indies (UWI) and St. George's University.

The meeting also reviewed the work of the six CCCVO Subcommittees established under the CARICOM Trade Policy for Animal and Animal Products (TPAAP), which provides a harmonized framework for trade in live animals, meat, and animal products. Each subcommittee presented progress reports and next steps.

Key areas of focus during the CCCVO meeting included:

- Enhancing regional coordination and policy alignment
- Strengthening preparedness and response to animal health emergencies
- Advancing collaboration among CARICOM Member States and partners

Key recommendations from this meeting included the following:

- Surveillance and response systems for priority diseases (including High Pathogenicity Avian Influenza, Rabies, Leptospirosis, Salmonella and West Nile Virus) should be strengthened, alongside improved collaboration across animal health, public health and environmental sectors and enhanced risk communication.
- Trade-related decisions should be science-based and supported by risk analysis, including improvements in import controls and standards, increased use of tools such as compartmentalization, and the establishment of a regional mechanism for resolving trade-related disputes.
- Endorsement of the implementation of the CAHFSA-University of Minnesota Regional Risk Analysis Training Programme and recommended increased training in areas such as epidemiology, laboratory diagnostics and aquatic animal health, as well as strengthened collaboration with the University of the West Indies and other regional institutions as well as international partners.

The week's activities also featured:

- **IICA Animal Health Emergency Preparedness Capacity Building Session**  
This was delivered by the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) as a two-day workshop under the African Swine Fever project. CAHFSA expresses their gratitude to IICA for their continued support in knowledge-sharing and partnership.
- **Caribbean Poultry Association (CPA) Biosecurity Webinar**  
Hosted by the Caribbean Poultry Association, a webinar focused on training farmers in practical biosecurity guidelines and plenary discussion with the Chief Veterinary Officers and Subregional representative of WOAAH. This session included the launch of the CPA's second booklet, "Safe & Sound: A Biosecurity Guide for Small Poultry Flocks in the Caribbean". The webinar was performed as a hybrid session engaged over 300 online participants alongside over 60 in-person attendees.

Through these efforts, CAHFSA reaffirmed its commitment to supporting CARICOM Member states in building resilient, coordinated and effective veterinary services across the Caribbean and harmonizing sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) measures across CARICOM.