

Seminar on Good Governance for Veterinary Services
Gaborone, Botswana, 16-18 January 2008

Recommendation 1

Sound Governance for Veterinary Services

CONSIDERING

The impact of transboundary animal diseases on public health, the agricultural sector, trade and the livelihoods of small breeders worldwide,

The importance of strengthening Veterinary Services that comply with international standards, for ensuring efficient animal disease prevention and control, including those of wildlife.

The necessity to develop public-private partnerships in the prevention and control of animal diseases,

The need for countries to sustain their motivation in convincing Governments and donors to provide resources (financial and human) to Veterinary Services for the prevention and control of animal diseases,

The frequent emergence and re-emergence of serious international animal health crises,

The political support to be provided to initiatives, structures and mechanisms at international level such as the the Alive Platform, the Global Framework for the Progressive Control of Transboundary animal diseases (GF-TADs) and its Regional Steering Committee for Africa, and the Global Early Warning System (GLEWS) Platform managed by the FAO, OIE and the WHO,

The support to be provided by the international community in the prevention and control of animal diseases including zoonoses to African OIE Member Countries,

The EC/SADC Contribution Agreement to the OIE Sub-Regional Office on the Promotion of Regional Integration within the SADC countries Livestock Sector (PRINT Programme),

The necessity to upgrade veterinary diagnostic laboratories in the region,

The importance of regional networks as tools to improve surveillance, early detection and timely diagnosis, transparency of animal disease information, rapid response to outbreaks as well as the potential use of the network approach in providing data for studies related to socio-economic surveys applicable to livestock systems,

The importance of integrating in the global context the control of relevant animal health events as well as public health approaches and programmes regarding the control of zoonoses,

The role of livestock trade notably that carried out illegally and the importance of small livestock owners in the epidemiology of important transboundary animal diseases,

The importance of systems of compensation/providing incentives within the framework of compulsory sanitary stamping out of animals in order to optimise transparency in national zoo-sanitary situations,

The necessity to achieve the goal of the Global Rinderpest Eradication Programme (GREP) to declare the world free from rinderpest in the near future,

The importance of climate change and globalisation of trade and movement of people on the emergence, re-emergence and spread of diseases,

The emergence and re-emergence of certain animal diseases such as Rift Valley fever, highly pathogenic avian influenza and African swine fever and the negative impact of these diseases on animal production, human health as well as on regional and global trade of livestock and livestock products,

The importance of animal health on food safety, poverty reduction, food security and animal welfare,

That legislation governing animal health activities and welfare are not up to date in several countries,

That a programme aimed at supporting Veterinary Services and Laboratories has been launched in the sub-Region by OIE/SADC with the support of the European Commission and the PRINT Programme,

That a Regional Animal Health Centre for Southern Africa will soon be launched by the OIE and FAO,

THE SEMINAR ON GOOD GOVERNANCE

RECOMMENDS THAT:

1. National Veterinary Services (VS) be strengthened preferably after an evaluation made on a voluntary basis, using the OIE Tool for the performance of Veterinary Services (OIE- PVS Tool), in order to identify gaps and weaknesses related to international standards. The evaluation will be followed if necessary, by an improvement of the Veterinary Services with the support of Governments and donors. Identification of investment projects and training programmes will be made to ensure that VS are brought in conformity with OIE standards. The PVS evaluation will be made in full confidentiality until Government accept the release of the report;
2. For countries having urgent needs of Veterinarians or animal health technicians as identified by the evaluation, donors will be encouraged to provide urgently appropriate resources to fill the gaps identified by the PVS evaluation, e.g. by allowing recruitment of appropriate staff;
3. International organisations such as OIE and FAO as well as donors pursue and reinforce their support to programmes aimed at the prevention and control of major animal diseases;
4. Member Countries continue their commitment towards projects regarding the prevention and control of animal diseases and ensure that they are implemented according to agreed objectives and time frames set out;
5. The fundamental basis of disease surveillance be addressed on an holistic approach taking into account the social, economic and cultural context as well as the global changes taking place;
6. African swine fever, Rift Valley fever and highly pathogenic avian influenza and other priority epizootics be the basis of preparations of emergency plans in all Member Countries and that studies on preventive and control measures be intensified;

7. OIE Reference Laboratories, including those existing in Africa, engage in twinning arrangements with selected laboratories of the region under the aegis of the OIE, in order to provide and share expertise in the diagnosis and control of TADs;
8. Member Countries review the legislation and budgets with the support of donors if necessary in order to ensure a timely, fair and sustainable compensation to farmers complying with the legislation, who lose their animals as part of disease control measures resulting from stamping out policies;
9. The role of trade, especially that carried out illegally, on the epidemiology of diseases be better evaluated;
10. The public-private partnership develop further in order to create systems of animal health and food safety in which private veterinarians, livestock breeders, traders and other stakeholders are more closely involved;
11. Member Countries review progressively and monitor the upgrading of food processing plants especially those dealing with meat, milk and fish regarding the structure, hygiene and other practices including the application of Hazard Analysis for the Control of Critical Points (HAACCP). Consideration should also be given to the enforcement of integrated residue control plan regarding feeds, live animals, pesticides and pharmaceuticals as well as the rendering system for by-products in accordance with international standards. Countries having difficulties to implement these activities would ask institutional support through the OIE and FAO;
12. Member Countries are encouraged to participate in the Continental conference to be held in Dakar, Senegal in March 2008 to discuss the need to improve their legislation on registration, control over the distribution of veterinary pharmaceutical and biological products (including products derived from genetically modified organisms) and ensure their compliance, in particular regarding their physicochemical properties and their conformity;
13. Member Countries review the creation, the organisation and functions of Veterinary Statutory Bodies including the involvement of the private veterinary sector in compliance with OIE standards;
14. Member countries review the system of veterinary border control regarding importation and transit of animals and animal products including procedures and facilities as well as sampling for laboratory testing;
15. Member Countries pursue their commitment towards the Global Rinderpest Eradication Programme (GREP) in their efforts to seek the global free rinderpest status in accordance with the new OIE Pathway with the support of the OIE Regional and Sub-Regional Representations for Africa;
16. Member Countries implement all the activities in order to meet the objectives set out in the OIE/EC/SADC Programme as well as those to be decided in the framework of the OIE/FAO Regional Animal Health Center for Southern Africa;
17. Member Countries review and update all relevant sanitary legislations in compliance with OIE international standards and guidelines.

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Recommendation 2

Facilitation of regional and international trade of livestock and livestock products.

CONSIDERING

That in 1994, the founding countries of the World Trade Organization (WTO) gave the OIE a mandate to publish standards aimed at avoiding the introduction of pathogens via international trade in animals and animal products, while at the same time preventing countries from setting up unjustified sanitary barriers,

That the standards developed by the OIE and contained in the Terrestrial Animal Health Code deal with Chapters relating to both generic issues and specific animal diseases. Generic issues also deal with ethics in international trade and the quality of national Veterinary Services, a prerequisite for trust in the reliability of veterinary export certificates. Specific disease Chapters spell out the recommendations aimed at avoiding spread of transboundary animal diseases during export of live animals and products,

That the risk of disease spread during exports of animals and animal products such as meat, milk, hides and skins, wool, honey and products derived from aquatic animals differ according to the product in question and, in particular, according to the procedures used to inactivate any harmful pathogens it may be carrying,

That OIE standards are science-based and are developed by leading scientific experts and adopted and updated through an annual transparent and democratic approach by all OIE Members,

That the OIE already has a voluntary dispute settlement mechanism to resolve trade disputes on a scientific basis,

That OIE standards are being developed on the basis of a highly meticulous risk analysis but taking into account that zero risk does not exist. These more detailed standards will avoid the use of arbitrary risk analysis and favour a more systematic use of published science based OIE standards,

That some Chapters in the Code dealing with the innocuousness of certain products that have undergone processes to render them harmless regardless of the animal health status of the exporting country are sometimes incomplete or not in line with new processes adopted by the Agrifood industry,

The OIE is actively promoting the concepts of zoning and compartmentalisation in order to facilitate trade from countries where certain important animal diseases exist but which can be brought under control through strict biosecurity measures complying with OIE standards,

THE SEMINAR ON GOOD GOVERNANCE

RECOMMENDS THAT:

1. The OIE continues to develop standards based on meticulous risk analysis in order to enable especially importing countries to base their import conditions primarily on OIE standards and thus avoid carrying out expensive or arbitrary national risk analysis activities before authorising imports. In this respect, the OIE should as far as practically possible, make optimal use of expertise gathered in developing countries;
2. The OIE publish guidelines on the use of commodity approach based on existing standards contained in the OIE Terrestrial and Aquatic Animal Health Codes;
3. The OIE continuously develops standards on commodity based trade covering a wider range of products taking into account that new research programmes on the safety of certain animal products need to be undertaken to address unresolved issues of major importance to the development of world trade. Safety of matured meat coming from animals from FMD infected zones will be a priority;
4. The OIE Reference Laboratories be encouraged to carry out more research on the risk assessment of harmful pathogens in animal products to ensure food safety and to avoid the spread of pathogens; While the OIE will do its utmost to convince countries to base their import and export conditions on OIE standards and not on the mere existence of animal diseases or only on national risk analysis, Countries should also be warned not to base their import/export approach solely on the systematic inactivation of pathogens in products and thus relax on epidemio-surveillance and other activities relating to the prevention and control of animal diseases;
5. Countries be encouraged to develop and apply the concepts of zoning and compartmentalisation as a measure to promote trade of animals and animal products from zones and compartments complying with OIE guidelines and recommendations on husbandry and biosecurity practices under the close supervision of the Veterinary Services.
6. The OIE continues to act as mediator of trade dispute for countries wishing to undertake such dispute settlements on a voluntary basis;
7. The OIE continues to encourage developing and in-transition countries to strengthen their Veterinary Services using the OIE-PVS tool which is an important consideration for importing countries to trust the reliability of veterinary certificates accompanying consignments of animals and animal products;