ROLE OF VETERINARY STATUTORY BODIES

Herbert P. Schneider
AGRIVET International, P O Box 178, Windhoek, Namibia

Good Veterinary Governance (GVG) – which entails that Veterinary Services (VS) around the world need to operate on scientifically-based principles and be technically independent and immune from political pressures from all sources – is of critical importance. The core elements of GVG are intimately linked to the universal acceptance of a veterinary profession (and not an occupation). As animal health, animal welfare, food safety and public health are strongly linked and interdependent upon each other, the availability and use of a wide range of veterinary medicines and biologicals is an important aspect of professional veterinary service delivery.

Thus the veterinarian is a key role-player as king-pin in all aspects of responsible and prudent use of veterinary medicinal products (VMPs) in animals.

Veterinary services are considered to be a Global Public Good and with antimicrobial resistance being a clear ‘One Health’ issue, it is crucially important that the responsible and prudent use of antimicrobials in animals is the focus of priority attention and professional support of the veterinary profession in general and the veterinarian in particular.

The right of a veterinarian to render veterinary services is directly linked to being held accountable for his/her professional behavior and actions. The OIE’s Terrestrial Animal Health Code definitions for ‘veterinarian’, ‘veterinary para-professional’ and ‘veterinary statutory body’ (VSB) are detailed and respective roles, functions and responsibilities in respect of responsible and prudent use of antimicrobials highlighted.

Specific reference is made to Codes of Good Veterinary Practice (GVP) such as ‘Codes of Professional Conduct’ or ‘Guidelines for Veterinary Ethics’ and the need for Continuous Professional Development (CPD) programmes offered by VSBs for veterinarians. The crucial role VSBs play in the responsible and prudent use of antimicrobials is summarised.