

Session 2:

Early detection, notification and surveillance

Education and training needs to improve animal disease surveillance systems

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In order to promptly detect, diagnose and control animal diseases, surveillance systems rely on early reporting of cases. Efficient surveillance systems require a strong veterinary presence in the field able to recognise and investigate disease occurrence. In developed countries, fewer and fewer veterinary students consider a career in production animals; this trend is already having an impact on animal disease surveillance as there are fewer 'eyes and ears' in the field. In many developing countries, surveillance systems suffer from chronic under-budgeting resulting also in a diminished field presence.

Even though veterinary medicine has always dealt with animal populations, veterinary education has not always placed sufficient emphasis on population-based approaches. In many countries the center of attention of veterinary curricula has been on clinical aspects in companion animals. More recently, veterinary epidemiology courses have been included at the undergraduate level in some veterinary schools. However, there is still a need to enhance a broader understanding of population based approaches to improve surveillance systems.

This paper attempts to identify the skills required within different levels of surveillance systems, with the hope that those directly involved in veterinary education can bridge the gaps in undergraduate as well as post-graduate programmes.

