

Animal identification and traceability

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Identification and traceability are tools for working in animal health and public health. The World Organisation for Animal health (OIE) have adopted a set of standards in order to use these tools appropriately in different areas of animal health and public health. Animal identification and traceability are used in key activities such as: the management of disease outbreaks and food safety incidents; vaccination programmes; herd/flock husbandry; zoning/compartmentalisation; surveillance; early response and notification systems; animal movement controls; inspection; certification; fair practices in trade; use of veterinary drugs, feed and pesticides; and cost and benefit studies.

The OIE has also defined and adopted general principles on identification and traceability. Animal traceability and the traceability of products of animal origin, which should be under the responsibility of the Veterinary Authority, must be linked so that there is traceability throughout the animal production and food chain.

Whatever the specific objectives of the chosen system of animal identification and traceability, there is a series of common basic factors to consider before implementation, e.g. the legal framework, procedures, the Competent Authority, identification of establishments/owners, animal identification and animal movements.

The World Assembly of OIE Delegates (the annual meeting of national representatives of the OIE's 174 Member Countries and Territories) have adopted general principles and recommendations on the design and implementation of identification and traceability systems (see Chapters 4.1 and 4.2 of the *Terrestrial Animal Health Code* (the *Terrestrial Code*)).

The OIE Standards are fully applicable in the field, are compatible with the varying economic and technical capacities of OIE Members and are non-discriminatory.



Animal identification and traceability (cont.)

In the development of standards it has also been necessary to define terminology to prevent ambiguity of meaning.

The texts in the *Terrestrial Code* are the key international references for the development and implementation of animal identification and traceability systems. Members of the OIE and Codex are encouraged to implement systems that comply with these standards as a basis for protecting animal and public health and facilitating international trade.

Keywords

Compatible – Complementarity – Coordination – Non-discriminatory.