

RESOLUTION No. 26

Roles of public and private standards in animal health and animal welfare

CONSIDERING THAT

1. OIE Members adopted, at the 76th General Session in 2008, Resolution No. XXXII 'Implications of private standards in international trade of animals and animal products';
2. The World Trade Organization (WTO), under the Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS Agreement), formally recognises the OIE as the reference organisation for establishing international standards on animal diseases, including zoonoses;
3. In areas not covered by the SPS Agreement, the OIE international standards could be considered as a basis for national technical regulations under the WTO Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade;
4. The OIE Members and the international community at large recognise the OIE as the organisation responsible for setting standards for animal health (including zoonoses), animal production food safety and animal welfare, with the objective of providing a scientific basis for safe international trade in animals and animal products and improving animal health and welfare worldwide;
5. The OIE World Assembly of Delegates has adopted and continues to adopt international standards covering animal health, animal welfare and animal production food safety;
6. While private standards can be beneficial in promoting good practice and supporting producers to meet public standards, it is of major concern to OIE Members that some private standards for sanitary safety and animal welfare relating to animal products have the potential to conflict with OIE standards;
7. Private sanitary standards have the potential to create doubts or confusion on the part of consumers regarding the safety of foods that meet official standards;
8. The OIE has signed official Agreements and works in close collaboration with the international industry organisations such as International Federation of Agricultural Producers (IFAP), International Dairy Federation (IDF), International Meat Secretariat (IMS), International Egg Commission (IEC), International Poultry Council (IPC) and Safe Supply of Affordable Food Everywhere (SSAFE);
9. Formal linkages and channels of communication between private standard setting organisations and the OIE have so far been limited and could be strengthened.

THE ASSEMBLY

RECOMMENDS

1. That standards for sanitary safety, which are covered by the WTO SPS Agreement, and animal welfare standards should be addressed separately;

2. To reaffirm the standards published by the OIE in the field of animal health, including zoonoses, as the official guarantees for safe international trade in animals and animal products, while avoiding unjustified sanitary barriers to trade and promoting the prevention and control of animal diseases worldwide;
3. That for sanitary safety, because the mandate of the international standard setting organisations is clearly recognised under the WTO SPS Agreement, the role of private standards should be limited to supporting the implementation of official standards;
4. To promote the implementation of the OIE animal welfare standards as reference standards that apply globally;
5. That the Director General continue undertaking relevant activities to further strengthen the OIE's activities in standard setting for animal health, including zoonotic diseases, and animal welfare and speed up work on new animal welfare standards;
6. To continue to implement and reinforce capacity building programmes to help Members to implement the OIE standards;
7. That the Director General continue to provide advice on the steps that may be available to advocate that private animal health and animal welfare standards, where used, are consistent with and do not conflict with those of the OIE;
8. That the Director General maintain close cooperation on sanitary standards with relevant international organisations, notably the WTO and the FAO/WHO Codex Alimentarius Commission, to establish a transparent framework for dealing with private sanitary standards that affect international trade within the WTO;
9. That the Director General maintain and strengthen appropriate links and dialogue with relevant global private standard setting bodies and global private industry organisations with the aim to allow compatibility of private standards with OIE standards while ensuring communications with national governments and consumers;
10. To encourage global private standard setting bodies to promote the use of official standards as benchmarks against which private standards are referenced for international trade in animals and animal products;
11. To encourage global private standard setting bodies to strengthen or develop transparent mechanisms and to work towards increased harmonisation with public standards and transparency of private standards.

(Adopted by the World Assembly of Delegates of the OIE on 27 May 2010)