

**CONCLUSIONS OF THE WORLD VETERINARY CONGRESS
HELD IN TUNIS ON 27-28 SEPTEMBER 2002**

Submission by the Office international des Epizooties (OIE)

1. Conclusion regarding collaboration with the world veterinary profession:

Whereas:

- The veterinary profession in all its components is an essential partner for the Veterinary Services and international organisations involved in animal health and food safety, with which dialogue must be maintained and developed;
- The World Veterinary Congress provides a unique opportunity for exchanges in this field;
- An official agreement was concluded in 2002 between the World Veterinary Association and the OIE;

The seminar participants conclude on the need for:

- The OIE, with the support of the other organisations, which signed the Doha Declaration and other interested donors, to do everything in its power to facilitate the participation of representatives from developing countries in the next World Veterinary Congress in the United States in 2004 – and in particular a significant representation of national Delegates to the OIE;
- An action plan to be drawn up to gradually implement the agreement concluded between the OIE and the World Veterinary Association.

2. Conclusion regarding the participation of the Veterinary Services in international health negotiations and raising awareness amongst political decision-makers:

In view of:

- The undertaking made by the international organisations in Doha in 2001;
- The urgent need for the developing countries to comply with international health standards in order to access regional and international markets for animals and animal products;
- The need to bring the Veterinary Services of the World Trade Organization's member countries in line with OIE standards in order to access these markets;
- The positive impact that such compliance may have on improving food safety;
- The difficulties many developing countries encounter in mobilising political decision-makers on such issues;

- The introduction of funding mechanisms to help achieve such compliance (the Codex Alimentarius Trust Fund and the WTO's "Standards and Trade Global Facility");

The seminar participants conclude that there is a need:

- To facilitate the participation of Veterinary Service representatives from developing countries in the health negotiations taking place in the Codex Alimentarius, the OIE and the Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures, through targeted support from the international community for the national representatives of these Services, in particular by appointing the national Delegates to the OIE;
- To support the scientific community in these countries in order to provide competent negotiators when preparing new health standards in the Codex Alimentarius or the OIE;
- To consider it a public investment priority to bring about the compliance of the organisation of the Veterinary Services;
- For the competent regional or sub-regional organisations to hold meetings at the highest level (ministers), in order to raise awareness amongst political decision-makers concerning economic, public health, animal health and food safety issues.

3. Conclusion regarding the proceedings of the international organisations:

In view of:

- The growing burden of standards adopted by the OIE and Codex Alimentarius for international trade in animals and animal products;
- The fact that international standards should be used as a means for continual improvement, especially for developing countries, meaning that their specific situation and constraints must be taken into consideration;

The seminar participants conclude that there is a need for:

- The concerns of developing countries to be effectively taken into consideration when drawing up international standards and other texts;
- The practical aid arrangements for such countries to be based on an analysis of needs and expected impacts, in which the Veterinary Services must participate directly;
- The international organisations to ensure that there is no divergence or conflict between the definitions, concepts and prescriptions used and adopted in their representative bodies, especially between the OIE *International Animal Health Code* and Codex Alimentarius standards.

4. Recommendation regarding the organisation of the Veterinary Services of developing countries:

In view of the fact that:

- There is no universal model for organising a country's health system;
- The structures and organisation are the means to support a policy;

The seminar participants conclude that there is a need for:

- The country concerned to carry out an economic and functional analysis of its situation (problems and possible solutions) before deciding on any changes in its health organisation;
- A small structure of inter-ministerial coordination to be established in cases where responsibilities for animal health and food safety are shared between several ministries, in particular when preparing the positions to be defended by delegates to international bodies;
- Each OIE Member Country to appoint a single person responsible for veterinary public health;
- The responsibilities for controlling and monitoring the Veterinary Services to be extended to the entire production chain of animal foodstuffs, from stable to table, in particular to foster dialogue with all levels of the sector and to avoid conflicts of interest between consumers and producers;
- The creation of new structures, in particular institutional authorities responsible for risk assessment, to be decided only if the other national priorities have already been met.

5. Conclusion regarding training for Veterinary Service agents:

In view of:

- The requirements of the OIE *International Animal Health Code* concerning the competence of the agents of official Veterinary Services;
- The complexity and rapid changes in the professional environment of the Veterinary Services;

The seminar participants conclude that there is a need for:

- A policy to be drawn up, based on an analysis of the Veterinary Services' missions and associated responsibilities, for training veterinarians and other managers of the official Veterinary Services, as well as agents working under their responsibility, both within government departments and within a contractual framework; this should take into consideration initial as well as in-service training needs, not only in the field of technical knowledge, but also policies, standards, organisation and resource management.

6. Conclusion regarding the Veterinary Services' collaboration with private veterinarians:

In view of:

- The fact that some of the problems encountered by the developing countries in complying with the rules of the OIE *International Animal Health Code*, particularly with regard to certification, are linked to a shortage of veterinarians in rural areas;
- The development of policies for privatising the veterinary profession in these countries;
- The need for support from agents working under the control of the official veterinarians;

The seminar participants conclude that there is a need:

- In line with each country's specific conditions, to envisage delegating the Veterinary Services' activities to private veterinarians, within a contractual framework, in particular through a 'sanitary mandate' or any equivalent system;
- In order to achieve this, for all the appropriate provisions to be made to facilitate the establishment and maintenance of private veterinarians in rural areas, in particular through a policy for providing them with a satisfactory income;
- For a permanent health surveillance network complying with OIE standards, which relies in particular on contracted veterinarians, supported where necessary by non-veterinary auxiliaries, to be sustained by recognising the public service missions of such agents; this recommendation relies in particular on remunerating such veterinarians from public funds and allowing them to supplement their income by administering and selling authorized veterinary products.

7. Conclusion regarding the Veterinary Service partners:

In view of:

- The essential delegation function that the different private professional partners exercise for the Veterinary Services, especially where resources are limited;
- The possibility for expanding the number of activities by making such agents responsible for conducting some public service missions;
- The proven effectiveness of livestock health auxiliaries, particularly in certain isolated rural areas;

The seminar participants conclude that there is a need for:

- The role of health auxiliaries in the countries concerned to be recognised, defined and controlled and for such agents to be supervised by veterinarians, who themselves come under the authority of the official Veterinary Services when carrying out public service missions;
 - The Veterinary Services to encourage the organisation and recognition of the different players in the animal health and veterinary public health field, based on an analysis of their environment, in particular by:
 - Creating national organisations to represent private veterinarians and by drafting a Veterinary Code of Professional Conduct on a regional level;
 - Setting up livestock producers' organisations, as close as possible to the field, united under a national association; such livestock producers' associations participate in solving in particular the problem of sustaining projects involving health auxiliaries;
 - The public service missions entrusted to these different players to be carried out under the responsibility and control of the competent Veterinary Authority, in the form of a single chain of command and paid, at least in part, out of public funds;
 - The OIE to start work in preparation for the inclusion in the *International Animal Health Code* of provisions covering possible recourse to health auxiliaries.
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