

THE IMPORTANCE OF STRENGTHENING THE PRIVATE VETERINARY SECTOR AND THE VETERINARY STATUTORY BODY (VSB)

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Veterinary Services (VS), with the pivotal role in animal health, specifically in the prevention, control and eradication of animal diseases, as well as having a crucial function in public health, food safety and zoonoses control are considered to be a Global Public Good. Compliance with international standards for Veterinary Services, as those contained in the OIE Code, and the evaluation for the Performance of Veterinary Services (PVS) using the OIE PVS Tool, are increasingly public demands at national, regional and international level on all bodies charged with veterinary service delivery. In addition it has been realized in recent years, that there is an urgent need to forge closer relationships and establish linkages between the official and private veterinary sectors in order to effectively and rapidly respond to animal disease and zoonoses outbreaks. The ever-increasing risk of the occurrence of transboundary animal diseases and zoonoses, combined with the realization that, due to decreasing budgets for veterinary services and the reduction in the staffing of official veterinary services, the involvement of the private veterinary sector greatly enhances the capacity for animal disease surveillance, prevention and control, and health certification. The role of private veterinarians in these activities necessitates attention to independence and objectivity. This involvement of the private veterinary sector, as well as an increased role for veterinary paraprofessionals in surveillance, early disease detection and monitoring and rapid response actions, calls for capacity building at all levels, to meet the demands posed. In order to address the demands for quality of veterinarians in the private sector, veterinary professional organisations have taken the lead in formulating protocols and guidelines for quality management systems, based on a Code of Good Veterinary Practice. Appropriate and enabling veterinary legislation is an essential element in addressing needs and achieving goals within the framework of Good Veterinary Governance and the regulation of the veterinary profession as a whole. The OIE Code defines responsibilities and functions of veterinarians and veterinary paraprofessionals, with specific reference to the establishment, authority and functions of a veterinary statutory body empowered by enabling legislation.

This presentation highlights relevant definitions in the OIE Code and OIE Guidelines on Veterinary Legislation, as well as the legal requirements for the establishment of a Veterinary Statutory Body to enable Veterinary Services to meet the OIE quality standards.

Keywords: Private veterinary sector – Veterinary Statutory Body – OIE – Veterinary legislation.
