Recommendation No. 2

The application of the Geographic Information Systems in the surveillance of animal diseases

CONSIDERING THAT

The Geographic Information System (GIS) helps in understanding and explaining disease dynamics including spreading patterns and can also be used as a warning tool against disease or for predicting the evolution of a recently introduced disease. Such remote sensing increases the speed of response against disease emergencies,

Although the application of the GIS in the veterinary field has been developed over the last decade and specialised software has become more affordable and "user-friendly", very few countries of the Middle East have applied such technologies,

All Veterinary Services in the Middle East have hardware and access to internet. Some use other form of digital information in their tasks but very few have computer-based mapping technologies with respect to animal health activities,

The majority of countries in the Middle East would like to build in house GIS capacity. Some even wish to establish a GIS capability within the epidemiological unit of the Veterinary Services to provide mapping services to other livestock activities in their countries on an on-call basis.

Even those countries of the Middle East that have GIS technology, are not making optimal use of their investments mainly because of lack of trained staff. GIS work in these countries is generally entrusted to focal points responsible for the notification to the OIE World Animal Health Information System (WAHIS).

THE OIE REGIONAL COMMISSION FOR THE MIDDLE EAST

RECOMMENDS THAT

1. Member Countries should consider as a first step to improve animal surveillance networks in their territories and provide appropriate training to members of such networks,

2. Member Countries should work towards improving data quality collection, storage and analyses while developing the use of GIS tools for spatial analysis related to animal health activities,

3. OIE:
   a) provide necessary support to Veterinary Services for the application of GIS to animal health activities,
b) organise in collaboration with its Collaborating Centres on epidemiology and additional geospatial expertise, regional training courses on the application of GIS technology for Veterinary Services particularly for OIE - WAHIS focal points,

c) prepare and publish guidelines in the use of GIS in animal health.

(Adopted by the OIE Regional Commission for the Middle East on 1 November 2007 and endorsed by the International Committee of the OIE on 29 May 2008)