

AQUATIC ANIMAL DISEASE REPORTING – ENSURING TRANSPARENCY

- **Karim Ben Jebara**

Head, OIE Animal Health Information Department

WAHIS, an internet-based computer system, enables OIE Members to process data on animal diseases and inform the international community of relevant epidemiological events and developments for over 100 animal diseases, including 26 aquatic animal diseases (AADs). The information generated is available through the World Animal Health Information Database Interface (WAHID).

For diseases reported present during a given six-month period, countries can provide quantitative data on number of outbreaks, mortality and morbidity rates, and/or number of affected animals. For diseases that are present and notifiable within a country, the OIE recommends that the country provide quantitative data by month and by first administrative division, which is the most detailed quantitative data that the system can process. Before the launch of the OIE notification system in 2005, information on AADs was only collected annually. The forthcoming new version of WAHIS will separate the six-monthly report for AADs from terrestrial animal diseases. In 2009, 114 countries reported AADs and even more are expected to do so as a result of these improvements.

The OIE's tracking procedure for non-official animal disease information has also improved transparency with an average of two additional immediate notifications of AADs being received each year. In 2010, six countries agreed to correct their historical data on AADs thanks to this tracking activity.

Since 2004, the OIE has developed the WAHIS Regional Core strategy, to help OIE Members meet their regional requirements and their obligations to notify diseases to the OIE, while avoiding duplication. For aquatic animal diseases, the Network of Aquaculture Centres in Asia-Pacific (NACA), the OIE Regional Representation for Asia and the Pacific and the OIE Headquarters have embarked on developing a Regional Core to enable OIE/NACA Members to provide and share more information than that required by the OIE for OIE listed diseases, especially data on AADs of regional importance. This will further improve transparency, knowledge and efficiency of data collection on AADs in the region and improve knowledge of the aquatic animal health situation worldwide.

Keywords: Transparency – aquatic animal health information – notification – WAHIS – WAHID

