THE MODEL ANIMAL WELFARE ACT
Supporting Legislation to Implement OIE Animal Welfare Standards
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I. ABSTRACT
There is a growing body of science-based international standards on animal welfare which have been agreed by World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) member states. However, successful implementation of these standards cannot be achieved without codification of animal welfare into each country’s legal system, and the creation of appropriate structures and systems for the application and enforcement of animal welfare. The OIE recognises that legislation in many countries is outdated and inadequate. A recommendation from its Third Global Animal Welfare Conference encouraged member countries to create or update their national legal framework with provisions for national animal welfare programmes. To support this process, it has a Veterinary Legislation Support Programme under its Performance of Veterinary Services (PVS) pathway. Many countries now recognize the need to update their legislative systems, but require further guidance to do so. World Animal Net’s Model Animal Welfare Act (MAWA), produced, reviewed, and lauded by global experts in animal law fills this knowledge gap. The MAWA has been drafted using an extensive comparative law exercise, taking into account ‘best practice’. It contains comprehensive information on effective structures and systems, in addition to legislative provisions, and is intended to be used as a tool and guidance which can be adapted to suit various national situations and legislative systems. Among the many accolades received on the MAWA is the following from Dr. Vallet, former DG of the OIE: “We commend the commitment to animal welfare demonstrated by the extensive time and effort that must have been associated with such an undertaking and the resulting product will no doubt serve as a useful tool for the consideration of some countries undertaking to introduce or revise legislation.” The MAWA can assist those tasked with updating animal welfare provisions with the aim of effective implementation of the OIE’s Animal Welfare Standards.

II. INTRODUCTION
Successful implementation of the OIE’s animal welfare standards cannot be achieved without codification of animal welfare into each country’s legal system, and the creation of appropriate structures and systems for the application and enforcement of animal welfare. However, many countries require further guidance in order to update their legislative systems. World Animal Net’s (WAN’s) Model Animal Welfare Act (MAWA) provides this guidance. The MAWA was prepared using an extensive comparative law exercise which took into account:
- Progressive animal welfare laws from across the world;
- Legislative guidance; and
- Best practice animal welfare systems.
It was also subjected to a rigorous consultation with leading international experts to ensure that it would be useful to policy and lawmakers across the world seeking to introduce or enhance their animal welfare legislation.

III. CONTENTS OF THE MAWA

IV. CONCLUSION
Comprehensive animal welfare law is needed to provide the legislative framework, policy systems and structures necessary to ensure OIE standards are implemented. Basic, well-crafted provisions cannot meet this need.
World Animal Net’s MAWA can be used as a guide and information source to facilitate the process of improving or introducing legislation needed to implement the growing body of OIE animal welfare standards. The MAWA is your one-stop guide to effective legislation and enforcement.