Notification by Members to the OIE, WAHIS and WAHID

Veterinary Authority Vs Competent Authority: Challenges

OIE regional training seminar for focal points aquatic animals

Dr Albertina Shilongo
OIE Delegate for Namibia
Directorate of Veterinary Services
Namibia
imports@dvs.org.na

Background

DEFINITION: Competent Authority: Terrestrial Code
• means the Veterinary Authority or other Governmental Authority of an OIE Member having the responsibility and competence for ensuring or supervising the implementation of animal health and welfare measures, international veterinary certification and other standards and recommendations in the Terrestrial Code in the whole territory.

Background

DEFINITION: Veterinary Authority: Terrestrial Code
• means the Governmental Authority of an OIE Member, comprising veterinarians, other professionals and para-professionals, having the responsibility and competence for ensuring or supervising the implementation of animal health and welfare measures, international veterinary certification and other standards and recommendations in the Terrestrial Code in the whole territory.

Background

DEFINITION: Veterinary Authority: Aquatic Code
• means the Governmental Authority of an OIE Member, comprising veterinarians, other professionals and para-professionals, having the responsibility and competence for ensuring or supervising the implementation of aquatic animal health and welfare measures, international aquatic animal health certification and other standards and recommendations in the Aquatic Code in the whole territory.

Notification: Terrestrial code

means the procedure by which:
• the Veterinary Authority informs the Central Bureau,
• the Central Bureau informs Veterinary Authority of OIE members,
• of the occurrence of an outbreak of disease or infection, according to the provisions of Chapter 1.1 of the Terrestrial Code.
Notification: Aquatic Code

means the procedure by which:

- the Veterinary Authority informs the Central Bureau,
- the Central Bureau informs Veterinary Authorities of OIE Members
- of the confirmation of a disease outbreak, according to the provisions of Section 1. of the Aquatic Code.

Challenges for reporting: VA Capacity

- Obligations for reporting to the OIE rests with the Veterinary Authority BUT:
  - Veterinary schools in many countries do not provide for example adequate training in aquatic and wild life diseases (including farmed game: e.g. ostriches, crocodiles)
  - Most Veterinary Services employ veterinarians who are usually only specialized in domestic animal health issues
  - Capacity to train or recruit specialists trained in many different fields is not possible due to resource limitations

Challenges for Reporting: VA Capacity

- Therefore VA may not have the necessary competence-e.g. fish, wildlife diseases, bees, mollusks, entomology, ornithology and other biological sciences
- However VA are required to report to OIE on behalf of other CA
- How does one “competently” report on a subject matter one is not too familiar with?

Challenges for reporting: Different Sources of Data

- Information reported to OIE comes from different organisations and ministries or agencies within the government: e.g. other ministries responsible for
  - Fisheries: reporting fish diseases
  - Environment, conservation: wildlife diseases
  - Health: zoonotic diseases, food safety
  - local authorities: in charge of local abattoirs, zoonoses
- VA may not have the power/authority to ensure that reports are channeled to it from the different sources.
- Has to rely on good will of colleagues- if there is!
- Linkages between VA and all these organizations may be weak or none existent

Suggested solutions to the challenges

- OIE to widen involvement of other CA and giving them full participation in its activities
- Veterinary Authorities to foster good working rapport and linkages with other CA in respective countries
- Legislators? VA to be given legal mandate to ensure compliance by CA for reporting purposes
- Vet Schools to widen training for vets to cover e.g. fish, bees, etc
- Vet Services to have strong continuing education to widen veterinarians skills

Suggested solutions to the challenges

- Vet Services to consider employing specialists in different areas where feasible
- An assessment how much information from each of the CA does reach the VA for reporting purposes to the OIE may need to be done:
  - Identify the gaps and find ways of tackling them
- Clear guidelines on reporting within countries to be formulated and agreed among stakeholders
Conclusion

• Reporting to the OIE is important to facilitate safe trade in animals and animals products
• However, how sure are we that all the information required for reporting is reaching the OIE?
• If not, what can be done to ensure this happens?

• Thank You Very Much!!!
• Muchisima Gracias!!!
• Tangi Unene!!!