



Veterinarians have a major role to play in matters of animal health and public health. Their mission includes animal health surveillance, and the early detection and rapid response to animal diseases. The national Veterinary Services, which lie at the heart of the global public good represented by animal health systems, cannot fulfil this mission without the appropriate legislation and the necessary means to enforce it. This is the basis of good veterinary governance.

A global public good

Given their truly pivotal role in animal disease prevention and control, the animal health systems operated by the Veterinary Services constitute a global public good. Given that a majority of the population in many developing countries is still dependent on agriculture, that more than one billion people in rural areas depend at least partly on animals as their means of livelihood and that 75 per cent of human epidemics are caused by diseases of animal origin, the Veterinary Service's mission has never been so clear-cut. The national Veterinary Services must be able to act and react within an effective, structured national legislative framework, and be provided with the appropriate financial and human resources to enforce it.

The establishment of good governance of animal health systems, based on a close partnership between the public sector and the private sector (especially animal producers and independent veterinarians), falls within the responsibility of all governments.

Failure by a single country can place the whole world in jeopardy.

Appropriate national animal health systems must be able to ensure:

- Early detection of diseases, transparency and immediate outbreak declarations (notifications);
- A rapid response to animal disease outbreaks, including any necessary vaccinations if appropriate;
- The application of biosecurity and biocontainment measures;
- Strategies to provide farmers with compensation.

Global Public Good

Countries are depending from one another and an inadequate action by one nation can jeopardize all the others. Global animal disease eradication (including zoonoses and animal diseases with major economical and food security impact) can benefit to every country and no one can be prevented from this benefit. Benefits of animal diseases eradication, including zoonoses, are conferred both on the present and future generations. The central issue for health-related global public goods is how best to ensure that the collective action necessary for health is taken at the global level. (Sandler T. *Regional Public Goods and International Organisations. 2005*)

One world one health (OWOH)

A better understanding of the causes of the emergence and spread of infectious diseases of animal origin has been recommended within the context of the "One World One Health" Strategy, developed by the four international technical agencies involved (FAO/OIE/WHO/UNICEF).

The Strategy relates to the prevention and control of emerging infectious diseases at the animal/human interface: those with the potential to cause epidemics and pandemics, but also those animal diseases having an impact on food security and poverty, since that is also a public health problem.

This strategic change of direction is based on:

- More preventive action by targeting the sources of infectious diseases and the factors that trigger them, and especially the various interfaces between animal/human and ecosystems (including wildlife).
- Better addressing the concerns of the poorest populations by focusing on the economies of developing countries, on the problems related to existing rather than potential diseases and on a wider range of locally important diseases.
- Strengthening emergency response capabilities at the national, regional and global level for the prevention and control of animal disease outbreaks before they develop into crises on a regional or global scale.
- Creating stronger public health and animal health systems, in accordance with the World Health Organization International Health Regulations (IHR - 2005) and the international standards of the OIE, by encouraging long-term actions and investments.

The general aim will be to strengthen global capacity for prevention, early detection and rapid response with regard to emerging infectious diseases and to control them at source so as to prevent them spreading or becoming established endemically in certain areas, and to reduce the risks to public health.



Taking action “in peace time”

It is now clearly established that the cost of disease prevention “in peace time” is less than the cost of implementing control and eradication plans once animal disease outbreaks have occurred.

The OIE is undertaking an economic study on the cost of national animal disease and zoonosis prevention systems, in accordance with OIE international standards on the quality of Veterinary Services, enabling early detection and a rapid response for emerging and re-emerging diseases.

The priorities for capacity building are the following:

- To establish surveillance strategies for diseases based on identified risks using OIE international standards relating to the surveillance of diseases at source.
- To strengthen international capacity to “scan the horizon”, and epidemiological and sanitary intelligence, to help countries respond rapidly and eradicate outbreaks of infectious diseases.
- To improve the disease control capabilities of national public health and animal health systems (including wildlife surveillance and food safety controls) based on good governance and in accordance with the International Health Regulations (IHR - 2005) of the World Health Organization (human health) and OIE international standards, especially in the field of disease notification and surveillance.
- To improve existing communication strategies to help achieve the objectives.

How to achieve this goal?

The OIE has created a “Tool for the Evaluation of Performance of Veterinary Services” (PVS) designed to evaluate national Veterinary Services’ compliance with OIE standards of quality democratically adopted by 174 Members.

This tool is the OIE’s main lever for providing practical help to enable the Veterinary Services of all countries to converge, achieve compliance with OIE standards and put in place good governance of their structure and their operating procedures.

Strengthening of veterinary legislation: OIE guidelines

Veterinary legislation is an essential component of good veterinary governance. In many developing countries, veterinary legislation is **very old and poorly adapted** to current and future challenges.

At the request of its **Members**, the OIE is currently developing **guidelines** on the essential components that any veterinary legislation must include. Any Member that has participated in an OIE **PVS evaluation** can request a follow-up mission designed to provide advice and assistance with **modernising its national veterinary legislation**.

Five missions aimed at revising veterinary legislation at the request of Member Countries have already taken place or are currently being prepared.

ACTIONS PROPOSED BY THE OIE:

- Initial evaluation of the Performance of Veterinary Services (OIE PVS Tool);
- Analysis of non-compliance with international standards (OIE PVS Gap Analysis) and help with identifying priorities and preparing investment programmes (with the support of partners and funding agencies);
- Assistance with modernising veterinary legislation;
- Laboratory twinning projects;
- Monitoring of progress and the situation following the PVS evaluation.

Links

Veterinary Services: http://www.oie.int/eng/OIE/organisation/en_vet_serv.htm?e1d2

Governance: http://www.oie.int/download/Good_Governance07/Good_vet_governance.pdf

OIE RECOMMENDATIONS ISSUED TO VETERINARY SERVICES:

- Appropriate legislation, satisfactorily applied;
- Network throughout the entire territory for all animal diseases (based on a key “tripod” for effective surveillance, composed of official veterinarians, private veterinarians and animal producers);
- Early detection, rapid response;
- Biosecurity and biocontainment measures;
- Financial compensation mechanisms in the event of sanitary measures affecting livestock producers;
- Vaccination, if necessary.

PVS: http://www.oie.int/eng/oie/organisation/en_vet_eval_tool.htm?e1d2

In the *Terrestrial Animal Health Code* (2009): Chapter 3.1: http://www.oie.int/eng/normes/mcode/en_chapitre_1.3.1.htm