World Organisation for Animal Health

Regional Animal Welfare Workplan for the Americas

2027 – 2030

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Introduction

The Regional Representations of the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) play a key role in translating global priorities into regional action. They facilitate communication with Members and stakeholders, support the work of the Regional Commissions, and deliver targeted activities to strengthen the development and implementation of WOAH animal health and welfare standards.

Background

Animal welfare is a strategic priority for the Americas, a region characterised by highly diverse animal production systems ranging from small-scale family farming to intensive production. Growing consumer awareness and expectations regarding the welfare of farm animals, together with evolving market demands, are creating strong momentum to advance this agenda. Despite this, the 2022 WOAH Observatory report revealed that only 12 of 336 animal welfare-related regulations from 6 of the 33 Members in the Americas are registered in FAOLEX, highlighting significant opportunities to strengthen governance and standards implementation across the region.

The first Regional Animal Welfare Strategy for the Americas was adopted in 2012. The strategy saw limited implementation, with 12 of 26 activities implemented or partially implemented. This was largely due to an unclear governance structure and priorities, absence of an action plan, lack of funding support, and varying levels of political commitment among Members to advancing animal welfare. In response to this limited implementation, the WOAH Regional Commission for the Americas agreed to establish a regional coordination group on animal welfare in 2025. This group is responsible for overseeing the development, monitoring and implementation of a regional animal welfare workplan for the Americas.

Workplan development

In November 2025, a workshop was held in Montevideo, Uruguay, to bring together members of the newly formed regional coordination group and WOAH national focal points for animal welfare from across the Americas. Attendees identified regional animal welfare priorities, the desired regional impact and priority species.

The regional coordination group on animal welfare met again in Buenos Aires in June 2026 for a guided workshop on the development of the new workplan. The group reviewed the regional priorities and discussed the corresponding WOAH welfare chapters, key stakeholders and activities. This information was then used to develop the regional workplan.

Workplan overview – A strategic approach

The Americas 2027-2030 welfare workplan is closely aligned with WOAH's revised Global Animal Welfare Strategy[1] and adopts a targeted, evidence-informed approach to maximise regional impact.

Activities proposed within the region are focused on three priority *Terrestrial Code* chapters, identified by the coordination group, and will be sequenced over the three-year implementation period in accordance with their current status (recently adopted, under revision, awaiting revision).

Priority chapters:

The workplan prioritises activities related to:

- Chapter 7.5 – Animal Welfare during Slaughter (updated in 2026)
- Chapter 7.2 – Animal Welfare during Transport (under revision since 2023)
- Chapter 7.12 – Working Equids (adopted in 2017; identified by the coordination group as a priority for potential revision)
- Chapters 7.9 / 7.10 / 7.11 - Animal welfare and beef cattle production systems (updated in 2013) / Animal welfare and broiler chicken production systems (updated in 2016) / Animal welfare and dairy cattle production systems (updated in 2017)

The group also suggested to address some gaps identified in the priority standards, for example, for working animals. The needs for this will be assessed through research under enabler 5.

[1] WOAH's Global Animal Welfare Strategy is in the final stages of revision – the document will be open for consultation in summer 2026 and launched at the WOAH's 94th General Session in 2027.

Implementation

The workplan will be implemented through four enablers from the Global Animal Welfare Strategy: 1) Standards, Governance and Consultation, 2) Capacity Building and Training, 3) Communication and Partnerships, 4) Regional Animal Welfare Strategies and Platforms, and 5) Evidence, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning. Activities under these enablers have been sequenced over the three-year period to promote and support implementation of priority chapters, while maintaining flexibility to deliver overarching activities in 2027 and respond to emerging welfare issues identified by Members, new evidence or evolving regional priorities.

Regional activities for each chapter will follow a similar implementation cycle

1. Enabler 1 – Engaging with delegates and focal points on relevant chapter, encouraging regional comments, providing updates on chapter's impact on region etc.
2. Enablers 2 and 3 – Roll out of comms drives and capacity building and training activities
3. Enabler 5 – Building an evidence base on implementation rates, welfare issues relating to the chapter etc. This information will be used to identify appropriate audiences for capacity building and comms activities and measure impact on implementation rates and welfare issues. Measuring KPIs of activities, implementation rates etc.

Annex 1

Americas Animal Welfare Workplan – 2027- 2030

Activities

	2027	2028	2029	Notes
Overarching				
Enabler 1 (Standards and Governance)	3. Introduce mechanism/platform to engage with regional welfare focal points and Delegates on standard setting (discuss priority topics for region, provide updates on chapter revisions and encourage commenting) 5. Use platform to discuss group recommendations on standards development and review including reflecting on existing gaps.			
Enabler 2 (Capacity building and training)	4. Training webinar on Collaborating Centres (purpose, specialisms in region, how to engage etc)			
Enabler 3 (Comms and partnerships)	2. Source funding partners for in-person training on Chapter 7.5, 7.2 and 7.12			
Enabler 5 (EMEL)	1. Creation of regional evidence base for welfare issues which will inform the creation of the next workplan and any emerging welfare issues in the region 6.Assessment for need of chapter on working animals			
Terrestrial Code: Chapter 7.5				
Enabler 1 (Standards and Governance)	2. Engage with delegates and focal points using platform to introduce updated Chapter 7.5			
Enabler2 (Capacity building and training)	4. Webinar on updated Chapter 7.5 5. Training workshop with IMS (in person)			
Enabler 3 (Comms and partnerships)	3. Comms drive on updated Chapter 7.5 - updates and impact for region			
Enabler 5 (EMEL)	1. Develop baseline database for implementation rates Use this to monitor impact and to see who needs to be targeted for capacity building. 6. Measure KPIs of enabler activities for Chapter 7.5			7. Implementation rates review in 2032
Terrestrial Code: Chapter 7.2				
Enabler 1 (Standards and Governance)	1. Use focal point/delegate platform to ensure regional cooperation in commenting process on Chapter 7.2	2. Engage with delegates and focal points using platform to introduce updated Chapter 7.2		
Enabler2 (Capacity building and training)		4. Webinar on updated Chapter 7.2 5. Training workshop (in person)		
Enabler 3 (Comms and partnerships)		3. Comms drive on updated Chapter 7.2 - updates and impact for region		7. Implementation rates review in 2033

		1.Develop baseline data on implementation rates for Chapter 7.2. Use this to monitor impact and to see who needs to be targeted for capacity building 6. Measure KPIs of activities of enabler activities for Chapter 7.2		
Enabler 5 (EMEL) **Terrestrial Code: Chapter 7.12**			1. Measure KPIs of activities for Chapter 7.2	
		2. Engage with focal points and delegates using platform based on evidence with recommendations to update chapter or not 3. (Pending revision) engage with focal points on commenting process – provide updates and encourage regional comments throughout revision	4. (Pending revision) engage with focal points and delegates using platform on commenting process – provide updates and encourage regional comments throughout revision	
Enabler 1 (Standards and Governance)			6. (Pending revision and adoption) webinar on updated Chapter 7.12 7. (Pending revision and adoption) training workshop with ICWE	
Enabler2 (Capacity building and training)				
Enabler 3 (Comms and partnerships)			5. (Pending revision and adoption) Comms drive on updated Chapter 7.12 - updates and impact for region	
	1. Develop regional evidence base for Chapter 7.12 (implementation rates, evidence gaps, recommendations which are missing for equids)		8. (Pending revision and adoption) measure KPIs of activities of enabler activities for Chapter 7.12	9. Implementation rates in 2034
Enabler 5 (EMEL) **Terrestrial Code: Chapters7.9 / 7.10 / 7.11**				
			2. Share research outcomes and recommendations with focal points and delegates using platform	
Enabler 1 (Standards and Governance)			4. Webinar on updated Chapters 7.9, 7.10 and 7.11	
Enabler2 (Capacity building and training)			5. Training workshop on chapter with lowest implementation rates	
Enabler 3 (Comms and partnerships)			3.Comms drives on Chapters 7.9, 7.10 and 7.11	
Enabler 5 (EMEL)		1. Conduct research on implementation rates in poultry production systems		