OIE-WAHIS: A New Era for Animal Health Data

At a time when the world is facing an unprecedented pandemic, the importance of animal disease surveillance has become evident. To support countries maintaining global transparency and reporting of matters of animal and public health, the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) launches the leading most technologically advanced reference platform for animal disease and veterinary capacities reporting – the World Animal Health Information System (OIE-WAHIS).

Paris 18 March 2021 -- Since its creation in 1924, the OIE is the mandated international organisation collecting data on, observing and analysing animal diseases throughout the world. Through its current World Animal Health Information System (WAHIS), the Organisation ensures the prompt dissemination of information on potentially devastating outbreaks and facilitates decision making in terms of international trade of animals and animal products by collecting, verifying and publishing official animal health information, following a standardised process, thus providing high quality, reliable data.

Safeguarding animal and public health, global security and international trade

Today more than ever, the international community recognises the importance of maintaining a global perspective and foresight on animal health and its inextricable connection with public health. Animal disease surveillance allows early detection of potentially impactful animal and human health threats and thus, the prompt implementation of appropriate control measures by the competent national authorities. This can only be achieved by enabling timely access to reliable information about the global state of animal diseases. With official information provided by OIE Members, OIE-WAHIS becomes a key component of the global fight against animal and human diseases.

"The sustained spread of COVID-19, as well as current animal epidemics like African swine fever or Avian influenza remind us the value of timely disease notification and information sharing. OIE-WAHIS will enable easier reporting and open-access to data," said Dr Monique Eloit, OIE Director General.

As animal diseases continue to spread around the world, they also become a burden to the global economy and even threaten to disrupt food supply chains. Experts estimate that around 20% of production losses worldwide can be attributed to animal diseases. Maintaining animal health – through tracking of disease outbreaks and followed by appropriate action – is essential for protecting food security and livelihoods. In addition, by expanding the usage, OIE-WAHIS will increase even more transparency about diseases. It will therefore foster safe and fair cross-border trade of animals and animal products as well as evidence and risk-based decision making on animal and public health policies. With faster and more detailed notification about the geographic localisation of outbreaks and subsequently their control, trade restrictions will be better targeted.

Providing open access to data

As information systems become more powerful, we can analyse data and get new insights into disease dynamics. We are now able to monitor and control diseases more effectively than ever before. The OIE marks the beginning of a new era in animal data systems, bringing this innovation also to the veterinary and scientific world.

OIE-WAHIS will make information about animal health more easily available and usable to everyone who needs it – government agencies, trade partners, international organisations, industry, researchers, academics, journalists and society in general – free of charge, becoming the reference platform. The new platform will make it easy for countries to collect and report information – and upload data from their own databases. Its user-friendly interface will also allow for data to be viewed, analysed and extracted in different formats. OIE-WAHIS is a first cornerstone in the digital transformation of the OIE. It enables an easy and standardised way to connect with other information systems around the world, making data analysis even more powerful.

On a global scale, the spread of animal diseases poses a threat to public health, food security, economic and rural development. By enabling better understanding on animal disease trends, OIE–WAHIS will provide the opportunity to implement timely measures to curb the spread of diseases, as well as their devastating consequences.

[Access OIE-WAHIS here!](#)