



WORLD ORGANISATION FOR ANIMAL HEALTH
Protecting animals, preserving our future



Report
OIE Animal Welfare Global Forum
“Supporting implementation of OIE Standards”
Paris, France, 28-29 March 2018

1. Background:

In fulfilling its mandate to protect animal health and welfare, the OIE has been working to establish standards for animal welfare for different species at different levels of the production system, from genetic selection through the breeding, transport and slaughter of animals that will be used as food and for other purposes, while recognising the sometimes competing interests of food security and economic development.

To further the improvement of animal welfare worldwide, establish priorities, and identify and support all those involved in the process of implementing standards, the OIE during its 4th OIE Global Conference on Animal Welfare held in Guadalajara in 2016, with the collaboration of stakeholders, drafted a proposal for a Global Animal Welfare Strategy (GAWS), which was adopted by the OIE General Assembly of Delegates during the 86th OIE General Session in May 2017.

The OIE GAWS is based on the following four elements:

- Development of international animal welfare standards;
- Enhancing capacity building and education;
- Communication with governments, organisations, Veterinary Services, educational institutions and the public;
- Implementation of animal welfare standards and policies.

The GAWS notably considered as one of its main activities the establishment of a Forum to bring together members of the animal welfare research community, the global animal welfare movement and the global animal-source food sector to provide for transparent debate relevant to animal welfare topics such as: animal welfare policies, issues and activities at global level; sources of expertise, educational programmes related activities; guidance in supporting communication and advocacy activities; areas for the development of additional animal welfare standards; and how to influence and support the implementation of animal welfare standards.

2. Development of the Forum

The 1st OIE Animal Welfare Global Forum was held in Paris, from 28 to 29 March 2018. During the discussion the main challenges for academia, industry, NGOs and governments in the implementation of OIE animal welfare standards were presented. The final programme of the Forum is presented as Annex 1 to this report. The Presentations of the speakers of the Plenary Sessions are available at the OIE website at the following address: (<http://www.oie.int/en/animal-welfare/events/>)

3. Plenary Sessions

The Director General of the OIE, Dr Monique Eloit, chaired the first Session of the Forum and welcomed the participants, setting the scene and recalling the objectives of the meeting. Dr Matthew Stone presented the OIE Global Animal Welfare Strategy and the activities of the OIE Animal Welfare programme were presented by Dr Leopoldo Stuardo.

Professor David Fraser presented a keynote speech, in which he highlighted the following topics:

1. Animal welfare standards;
2. Strategic approaches for implementing animal welfare standards and practices;
3. Veterinary services and 'One Welfare';
4. The future of animal welfare science.

Presentations from invited speakers covered topics on the challenges for and the involvement of National Veterinary Services in the effective implementation of OIE animal welfare standards at the national level; the role of the OIE Animal Welfare Collaborating Centres; how to raise awareness of Member countries and stakeholders of the OIE animal welfare standards; the producers sector response to consumer demands relating to animal welfare; use of a measurement tool for implementation of effective animal welfare legislation; the role of the ISO TS 34700 to facilitate implementation of OIE animal welfare Standards; and Veterinary Services activities in monitoring, compliance and enforcement of animal welfare standards.

4. Breakout Groups Session

To facilitate the collection of the ideas discussed during the Forum, five working groups were formed balancing region and sector representativeness. For each Group, a discussion topic was proposed, covering important aspects for the implementation of OIE animal welfare standards from different perspectives.

Working Group 1 - Issues related to animal welfare policies, and activities at the global level focusing on identifying the main risks associated with, and opportunities linked to global networks that could support the implementation of the OIE Regional Animal Welfare Strategies and Platforms (RAWS&P).

The key points discussed were the need to **raise awareness and seek cooperation and complementarity between all stakeholders at national and regional levels**, developing networks using the OIE RAWS&P but also considering that implementation can be supported by different actors, such as producers from both large corporations and smallholders.

It was agreed that is important to **identify priorities** to seek the commitment of all concerned, as well as **reinforce the need for communication** and to link animal welfare standards to other priority topics for the international and national communities, such as food safety, public health, sustainability and economic development, to ensure an integrated approach. Specifically, more information and specific examples demonstrating the economic and productivity benefits of implementing animal welfare standards is needed. It was also highlighted that, where resources for the implementation of standards are scarce, integration between civil society and industry should be encouraged to adapt and align existing practices to OIE standards.

The group also mentioned that **the OIE could prepare standards and tools on monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of animal welfare standards** (e.g. monitoring animal production as an indicator of animal welfare), to share values and ethical principles based on good interaction between all relevant stakeholders to ensure policies are developed through good regulatory practice (i.e. consultation and inclusive engagement), and to identify constraints to development of active participation in the OIE Standard setting process.

Finally, the group agreed that **is important to acknowledge the common ethical values that all involved stakeholders share to help building networks that facilitate the implementation of animal welfare standards.**



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Working group 2 - Identifying sources of expertise, educational programmes and other animal welfare related activities to support Member Countries involvement in the development and implementation of OIE Standards.

The group outlined three main points. **The sources of expertise, knowledge and information, which must be clearly identified internationally, regionally and at a national level.** The group suggested using the knowledge and expertise from OIE Collaborating Centres, scientific societies, researchers, academia, NGOs, and experts from OIE ad hoc groups. Inter-organizational consultation and national legislation of different countries could also be considered sources of information and knowledge.

Concerning the identification mechanisms at national level, the group commented on the need of having focal points with different knowledge and skills supporting the OIE Delegates, recognising the diverse skills required for example in commenting on OIE Standards, and in teaching operators in a slaughterhouse.

On capacity building, the group agreed on the importance of **train the trainers, adapting the language** to the different audiences, **applying an appropriate vocabulary** between disciplines, countries and cultures, **creating web-based e-learning platforms** and, **creating practical courses** that use different forms of communication such as cartoons, pictograms etc. rather than traditional methods that uses mainly written tools and exams.

Regarding education, the group commented that there are important points to be addressed such as **to have Government, producers' and organisations' support to carry out education** under the active encouragement of the Competent Authority, to encourage the **creation of forums and stakeholder meetings**, to promote the use of technology (websites, equipment, apps etc.) and to identify appropriate ways to get **accurate animal welfare education into schools.**

Concerning the implementation of animal welfare standards in an educational context, the group considered it relevant to **seek and involve various sources of knowledge and expertise**, as there are many other actors that can contribute to this activity. They also consider that the greater the stakeholders' knowledge of the norms and concepts of animal welfare, the greater their commitment to support and effectively participate in their implementation. In their view, it is also important to make the stakeholders aware of the economic advantages of implementation efforts, to convince them that it is worth investing in animal welfare.

Finally, the group **encouraged the OIE to give more visibility to their activities and standards** and to clarify to all stakeholders the role of Delegates and Focal points and how to contact them.

Working Group 3 - Providing overall guidance in supporting communication and advocacy activities related to animal welfare with the objective of Identifying pathways and activities to improve communication and raise awareness of animal welfare standards.

On the area of how to improve communication, the group defined the importance of a **"Single overarching communications outcome (SOCO)"**, as follows; **"stakeholders sharing a common vision of the benefits of improving welfare based on existing science and activities, and taking actions to promote the positive contributions for the benefits of animals and society"**. To achieve this SOCO several aspects should be considered, such as the identification of state of the art communication on animal welfare in a country or region; the communication objectives; the stakeholders involved (food and industry supply chains, NGOs, academia etc.); how to get stakeholders involved in behaviour change; how to increase awareness of what has already been done; and how to give more visibility to the OIE work.



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The Group also agreed that the objectives of communication to support implementation and its advocacy of animal welfare standards are related to **creating awareness of science-based animal welfare standards and creating a chain of communication to reach the users.**

In terms of the messages and methods, directed at the personnel involved in the care and management of the animals, the Group identify key messages for example, **“caring for animal welfare will bring socio-economic benefits”, “animal welfare is critical to ensure good health and sustainable production or work” and “people have an ethical duty of care to animals in their ownership”.**

The Group noted that **Veterinary Services are key players in supporting and coordinating communications** efforts. The group understood that at the national level the National Veterinary Service is the body responsible for adopting OIE standards through national policies and regulations, which could be adapted to be used as practical guidelines to stakeholders involved in the animal production chain. Nevertheless, to seek stakeholder support for implementation of these guidelines, it is necessary to disseminate, promote and provide training at various levels of the production chain.

As examples of success stories on communication, the group mentioned the development of the Stray dog population control awareness campaign in the Balkans Region within the framework of the OIE Platform on Animal Welfare for Europe.

Working Group 4 – Identifying evidence on the need to review or establish a new animal welfare standard.

The Group considered that **the principles of the standards-setting process** (science-based, transparency, communication and adoption by consensus) **are appropriate and should be maintained** by the OIE. Nevertheless, the Group believes it is necessary to evaluate the applicability of existing standards and to evaluate the need to establish new standards against existing priorities and resources available.

The Group understands that **priorities should be determined in consultation with OIE Member Countries**, also taking into consideration the number of animals affected and the level of impact.

Specifically, the Group considered **that there is a need for more research activities to quantify best practices in some specific areas**, such as to determine the acceptable standards for slaughtering aquatic animals, and that there is a need for science identifying positive outcomes related to animal welfare.

The Group discussed **some priorities for further revision of animal welfare standards** that could be considered in the OIE work programme **such as transport of animals, stray dog population control, animal welfare and dairy cattle production systems, use of animals in research and education and the animal welfare principles, or development of new standards** such as animals on sporting activities and end of productive life issues (“retirement”).

Working Group 5 Influence and support the implementation of animal welfare standards, achieving balance between regulatory and non-regulatory approaches to drive implementation.

The Group agreed the **role of the RAWs&P in implementation of standards is to: provide guidance for the gradual improvement of animal welfare, while taking to account local circumstances (culture, production systems, etc.); set priorities; support the implementation of animal welfare standards through awareness raising, communication, education and training; identify roles and responsibilities; provide information on available funding, sources of information and expertise; standardise and harmonise terminology and definitions; and identify and address transboundary issues.** Further, the Group considered that the role of OIE Regional Commissions in the

implementation of animal welfare standards is to coordinate the development and monitor the implementation of the OIE regional strategies. While OIE Member Countries should develop, enforce and verify national animal welfare action plans; to draw inspiration from and/or inspire regional strategies and other countries in the region; to share experiences; and to provide feedback on the regional strategies.

The Group identified the main stakeholders responsible for influencing implementation and supporting OIE Delegates, Focal Points and Regional Commissions as animal welfare NGOs, academia, producers, consumers, citizens, retailers, governments, food movements, the media, intergovernmental organizations, financial institutions, decision makers and professional organizations. Further, the Group acknowledged that to make a compelling case to animal owners for animal welfare as a worthwhile investment, focus should be on: making animal welfare attractive to them, from the economic, cultural and scientific points of view; providing information and practical examples from peers (e.g. demonstrations, case studies, pilot projects, study visits); and providing toolkits.

5. Closing Session

After the feedback of the breakout groups discussion, Dr Mathew Stone summarised and highlighted the main points of the Forum, visualising the challenges of implementation of the OIE Animal Welfare Standards. He noted key themes emerging from the discussions as raising the consciousness and cognisance of the standards; ensuring the cultural context in which they are implemented is understood and accounted for; demonstrating the complementarity between animal welfare and economic and productivity outcomes; the need for strong collaboration and commitment from different actors to implement animal welfare standards; and above all, to continue to actively communicate, in order to understand the challenges facing animal owners associated with husbandry practices and implementation of animal welfare standards. Finally, he noted that the OIE will analyse all the different working group reports to define how they could be incorporated within the activities of the OIE animal welfare programme.

In her closing comments, the OIE Director General emphasised that all contributions and suggestions were most welcome. However, it should also be borne in mind that the OIE is an intergovernmental organization with its own internal rules, where Member Countries through the elected Specialist Commissions propose the work programme and agenda which is adopted during the General Assembly of delegates.

The Director-General closed the meeting thanking the participants for their contribution to the debate and recalled that as soon as the topic and date of the next Forum meeting is decided, the OIE will communicate it to its Members Countries and other stakeholders through its Bulletins and website.