

# Building resilience against agro-crime and agro-terrorism

**Bridging the expertise  
of the animal health  
and law enforcement  
sectors**



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**Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations**



**World Organisation  
for Animal Health**  
Founded as OIE

# Understanding the issue

The release of biological agents, including bacteria, toxins, viruses or fungi, poses a significant threat to society, whether it occurs by natural or accidental introductions or even as a deliberate criminal or terrorist act.

The pathogens responsible for diseases such as **anthrax, rinderpest or foot-and-mouth disease**, could be involved in these threats.

Animals have been targets of warfare, crime and terrorism throughout history. In today's increasingly interconnected world, the link between security and One Health is clearer and more important than ever before:



of emerging infectious diseases have an animal origin



of pathogens that can be used for bioterrorism are zoonotic



of existing human infectious diseases are zoonotic

The impacts of such events can be catastrophic and wide-ranging, affecting food and health security, animal health and welfare, public health, trade and national security.



# What types of animal-related crimes are we talking about?

**Agro-crime** can be broadly defined as any unlawful act or negligence concerning animals or animal products that violates legislation and has a detrimental effect on animal health, animal welfare, public health, food safety and security, food authenticity or national security.

**Agro-terrorism** is a subset of agro-crime and means the intentional release of biological agents or toxins for the purpose of harming or killing animals with the intent to intimidate or coerce a government or civilian population.

The difference between the two lies in their underlying motivation: where crime is for personal and/or financial gain, terrorism is to further political, social or ideological objectives.

## Agro-crime can take different shapes and forms



Falsified products that deliberately/fraudulently misrepresent their identity, composition, or source



Non-compliance with disease control measures, for example breaching biosecurity



Smuggling of animals and animal products bypassing national import and export regulations



Deliberate release of biological agents



Exploitation of wildlife



Theft of animals



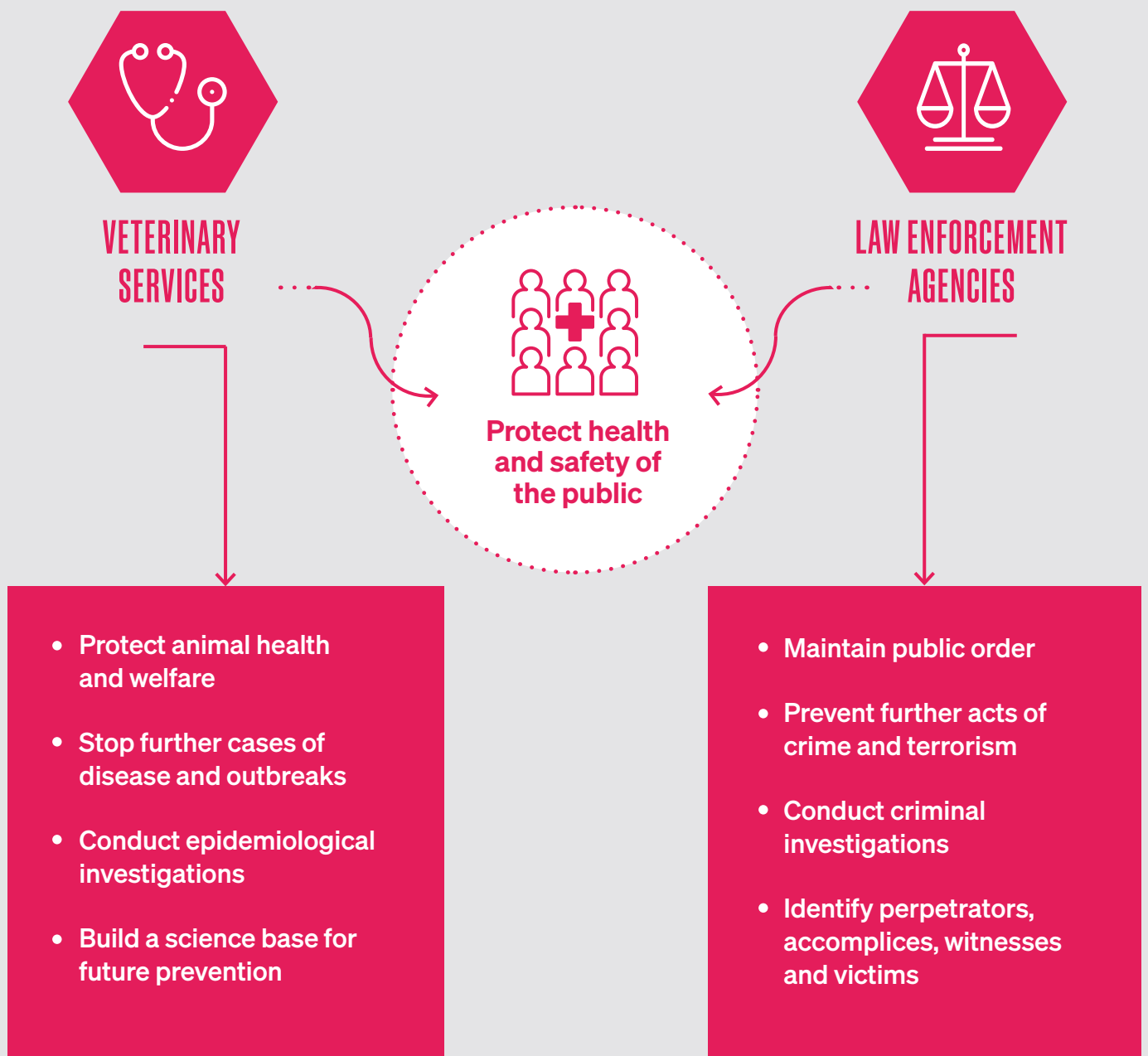
Food fraud

# The need for veterinary-law enforcement cooperation

One sector cannot manage a biological emergency alone.

Veterinary Services and Law Enforcement agencies must work together to jointly plan to prepare and respond to criminal and terrorist acts targeting animal health.

Cooperation between the two sectors is needed to characterise the threat, prevent the spread of disease, identify the perpetrators and ultimately protect the public.





## It can be difficult to determine the origins of these events, whether natural or linked to intentional activity.



### **Animal health professionals**

are best suited to detect unusual characteristics of an outbreak. If they have doubts or suspicions, they can alert Law Enforcement who will then investigate.



### **Law Enforcement Agencies**

collect intelligence about criminal activities. If they learn of an impending threat, they can provide an early warning to Veterinary Services who will then be able to quickly intervene to prevent or contain the disease outbreak.

Yet lack of trust, poor understanding of roles and responsibilities, different ways of working, absence of collaborative frameworks and inadequate resources may hinder the prevention of and response to a criminal or terrorist act.

To foster collaboration, it is vital for Veterinary Services and Law Enforcement Agencies to engage in a strategic dialogue. Joint activities such as threat assessments, involving Law Enforcement in the drafting of animal health contingency plans and participating in joint workshops and simulation exercises all drive multi-agency collaboration. Bolstering multi-agency capacity in “peacetime” will lead to enhanced cooperation and coordination in the event of a deliberate biological emergency and a swifter response. This cooperation can also be leveraged for any activity involving animals that requires mutual support.

# A project bringing together the animal health, agricultural and law enforcement sectors

Since October 2018, the World Organization for Animal Health, the Food and Agriculture Organization and INTERPOL have been joining forces through the international 'Building resilience against agro-crime and agro-terrorism' project, bringing their respective knowledge and expertise in the fields of animal health, agriculture, and criminal investigations to support their Members in planning for emergencies arising from acts of crime and terrorism.

The initiative aims to foster collaboration between Law Enforcement and Veterinary Services through international and regionally targeted activities focusing on North Africa, the Middle East and Southeast Asia. However, the outputs of this Project are relevant to all the Members of WOA, FAO and INTERPOL.

## The project at a glance



### Phases

**1.**

Assessment of the current situation

**2.**

Preparation of complementary training and exercising material

**3.**

Implementation of training and exercises in selected regions and at international level

**4.**

Dissemination of the project's outputs



### Objectives

Strengthening multi-sectoral capacity to respond to animal health emergencies by:

- fostering coordination at national, regional and international level
- building fit for purpose and sustainable capacity building solutions through training and exercises
- enhancing coordination between Veterinary Services and Law Enforcement authorities

# Expected outcomes

The issues of agro-crime and agro-terrorism can be best addressed with a holistic, multisectoral approach. The benefits of this approach are plentiful.

Cooperation between the two sectors is needed to characterise the threat, prevent spread of disease, identify the perpetrators and ultimately protect the public.



## For Veterinary Services and Law Enforcement:

- a combined expertise that will better address the root causes of the criminal behaviour to allow for their prevention
- raised awareness on agro-crime and agro-terrorism
- a mutual understanding between the two communities and a better capacity to interact with each other
- crossovers between epidemiological, forensic and enforcement operations



## For countries:

- strengthened capacities
- fostered relationships between experts working in emergency management
- enhanced cooperation and information-sharing at the international level
- preparedness for any animal health and welfare or One Health emergency



## For society:

- protection from biological threats (including those resulting from crime and terrorism) at a global level
- direct or indirect contribution to the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, including those relating to food security, animal and human health, and stability of people's livelihoods

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INTERPOL



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