CAPACITY BUILDING IN SUPPORT OF ANIMAL IDENTIFICATION FOR RECORDING AND TRACEABILITY: FAO'S MULTIPURPOSE AND GLOBAL APPROACH

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In recent years, the principal drivers for advancing traceability systems for animals and their products have been various animal and human health concerns. As a response, animal identification and traceability has been addressed by various international agreements and standards, such as the WTO's SPS, the OIE Animal Health Code and the *Codex Alimentarius* under the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme. Other organizations such as the International Committee for Animal Recording (ICAR) and the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) also play a relevant role.

Animal identification is not only an essential component of traceability and disease control, but it serves multiple other purposes in a country's livestock production system. The unique identification of an animal is the basis for pedigree and performance recording, artificial insemination schemes, subsidy payment schemes, good farm management, prevention of cattle rustling, trade certification and contributes to secure access to markets for higher quality and geographically identifiable products.

While fully recognizing the role of national competent authorities, the multi-purpose implications of animal identification systems need to be considered and discussed with all relevant stakeholders, to increase their acceptance and the distribution of the costs among all stakeholders.

Capacity building is often needed to enable the adequate application of international standards and other schemes and this is at the heart of FAO's mandate. Taking account of the multi-purpose nature of animal identification, FAO's capacity building activities rely on an integrated approach that involves all relevant partners and stakeholders. FAO provides support for relevant policy development, drafting of legislation and strategic planning, and technical assistance for the implementation of relevant Codex and OIE standards. FAO's collaboration with ICAR on animal recording for smallholders in developing countries dates back to the 1990s and decision-support guidelines for setting up sustainable animal identification and recording systems are currently being developed. FAO facilitates access to knowledge, information, training tools, and services which are relevant for animal identification for traceability and performance recording. Effective capacity building requires alliances among organizations, based on a shared understanding of the goals, acceptance of the complementary roles of the different players and coordinated efforts.

Key words: Animal identification – traceability – performance recording – capacity building – international standards (Codex, OIE).