INK BETWEEN TRACEABILITY SYSTEMS AND ANIMAL HEALTH MANAGEMENT

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The objective of this paper is to demonstrate the vital linkages between the animal health information management system and animal traceability. This information system is not only used in establishing the zoo-sanitary status of the country but also for the prophylactic approach and to manage any crisis situation. All the farms and the bovine animals are identified through physical identification and documentary evidence with the details contained in a national database. This database allows the authorised operator to edit documents, develop analytical plans and transmit the information electronically to laboratories (including bar-codes for identification). The laboratory results can then be sent through electronic data interchange (EDI) without any fear of error. Through the national database, the national authority can correlate the laboratory results with the particular animal and this can help to trace all the farms where the animal was kept, as well as the animals with which it came into contact. In an emergency situation, this allows the national authority to identify a perimeter relevant to the index farm. The adjacent farms of interest can be mapped and documented to facilitate rapid response in terms of organising veterinary inspections and implementing administrative and biosecurity measures. In addition, by collecting mortality data, it is possible to institute a permanent surveillance system using epidemiological curves. After an initial period of establishment, this information system has been shown to be a robust and powerful tool that can readily support additional activities. The information system is user-friendly, it reduces the need to recapture data, facilitates work and is a secure means of transmitting laboratory data through bar coded information. Use of this information system greatly facilitates the implementation of systems for cattle identification and product traceability consistent with OIE standards.

Key Words: Information system – Identification – Computerized data exchange – Operational epidemiology – OIE standards.