

Regional animal welfare strategies and platforms – lessons learned from the first regional animal welfare strategy for Asia, the Far East and Oceania.

Kate Littin¹ & Quaza Nizamuddin bin Hassan Nizam²

¹ Ministry for Primary Industries, Pastoral House, 25 The Terrace, Wellington, New Zealand.
Email: kate.littin@mpi.govt.nz

² Department of Veterinary Services, Malaysia

The first OIE regional animal welfare strategy was developed by the Asia, Far East and Oceania (AFEO) region in 2012. Since then, the OIE has supported the development of three further regional animal welfare strategies and platforms through its Regional Representations – the strategies for the Americas, and the Middle East, and the Regional Animal Welfare Platform for Europe, with Africa’s regional strategy under development. These provide an agreed framework and guidance to support actions to implement OIE animal welfare standards and advance animal welfare around the world. Since 2012, we have learned many lessons from our own experiences in AFEO and from other regions. These lessons can help guide future progress for regional welfare platforms and promote One Welfare globally. One lesson is shown by the vision described for the Regional Animal Welfare Strategy for AFEO: “A region where the welfare of animals is respected, promoted and incrementally advanced, simultaneously with the pursuit of progress and socioeconomic development.” It is important that regional strategies are locally relevant, using local language, dealing with issues that are important to the region and working in with local people to support local development alongside animal welfare. A second lesson is that it is useful to identify activities that are happening in the region and build on them. It is not always necessary to start something totally new. Third, the groups responsible for leading or coordinating regional strategies need to involve the competent authority, Delegates, animal welfare focal points, and relevant collaborating centres, and are best to include representatives of animal welfare NGOs, the veterinary profession, and animal industry or sector groups. There need to be good links with the government bodies that are responsible for animal welfare, agriculture and veterinary services, if the competent authority does not have responsibility for all of these functions itself. A fourth key point is that the collaborating centre plays an important role in developing and promoting OIE standards and supporting animal welfare activities, and should have a role in the regional strategy. By using these lessons, we can ensure that we grow our efforts and support One Welfare, globally.

Keywords: animal welfare – competent authority - OIE - One Health - One Welfare - veterinary services.