



REGIONAL ANIMAL WELFARE STRATEGY IN THE MIDDLE EAST

OIE Focal points Seminar

Amman Jordan 17-18 March 2014

Introduction:

In 17-18 March 2014, an OIE focal points seminar on animal welfare for the Middle East and North Africa countries, was organised under the patronage and attendance of HRH Princess Aliah Bint El Hussein and HRH Princess Imane Bint El Hussein, to discuss the progress made on the implementation of animal welfare standards, identify challenges and constraints, actualize the regional strategy and provides proposal for potential support resources.

13 countries participated in the seminar: Bahrain, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, KSA, Lebanon, Syria, UAE, Oman, Yemen, Egypt, Tunisia and Morocco.

Representatives from NGOs and supporting Foundation were also present.

As the priorities were identified at the OIE seminar for National Focal Points on Animal Welfare for Middle Eastern countries, held in Beirut Lebanon, 2-4 December 2012, the aims and objectives of the seminar were summarised as follow:

- a) ***To achieve sustainable improvement in animal welfare based on the development of regional and international research.***
- b) ***To develop sustainable mechanisms for the coordination and promotion of animal welfare programs in accordance with the regional priorities of the countries.***
- c) ***To establish alliances amongst key parties to facilitate the implementation of OIE standards.***

- 1- Experts from OIE and NGO's highlighted during the two days of the seminar on the necessity to adopt a national strategy to be harmonized regionally within a common plan and urge countries to insert the OIE standards on animal welfare in their national legislation , education and awareness programmes.

- 2- The actual existing OIE Standards on Animal Welfare and the forward of a continuous update and standard setting working program with broad consultation with industry and NGO's, were described during the seminar, and added to country reports and a forum on lessons learnt and the way forward.
 - 3- Case studies on animal welfare standards implementation in broiler chicken production system, and the necessity to standardize behaviour related to sport competitions taking the example of the International Equestrian Federation (FEI) code of conduct.
- The required goals and needed activities to be achieved in a regional strategy were identified as:
 - Goal 1: An enhanced regional approach and commitment to ensure high standards of animal welfare based on a legislative framework and standards consistent with the OIE Animal Welfare Guidelines.***
 - Goal 2: The provision of funding, coordination and evaluation to support improvements in animal handling systems.***
 - Goal 3: The provision of training and development in animal handling, requirements for facilities, product quality and disease management, in both Government and private industry.***
 - Goal 4: Sustainable improvements in animal welfare based on regional and international research and development.***
 - Goal 5: Effective communication, education and training to promote an improved understanding of animal welfare.***

As a conclusion of this seminar it was noted that:

- a- A notifiable improvement has been made in the compliance of national legislation of the majority of member countries with international standards especially those related to transport and handling, stray dogs control and humane killing for slaughter.
- b- Stakeholders, including farmers, industry, NGOs, academia, and the veterinary profession actively involved in the process.
- c- Demonstration of the social and commercial benefit of improving animal welfare in the region is well accepted.
- d- Effective and professional coordination and communication between countries in the region via sub regional committee and working groups is in progress.
- e- The RAWS implementation plan is endorsed by the OIE Regional Commission as well as the OIE World Assembly of Delegates.

The seminar was followed on the two next days by the presentations of the participants from Egypt and Jordan in the Improved Animal Welfare Program, and results have been actively considered.



H.R.H. Princess Aliah Bint El Hussein Presiding the Animal Welfare Focal Point Seminar Sessions



Dr Hassan Aidaros chairing the sessions of the Improved Animal Welfare program with the trainees from Egypt and Jordan