

Final Report

Training Seminar on:

“OIE Standards and procedures to facilitate international movement of (competition) horses. Recognition and Maintenance of African horse sickness (AHS) official free status, self-declaration of Equine Disease Free Zone (EDFZ) and the High Health high performance (HHP) framework”.

The Regional Training Seminar on OIE Standards and procedures to facilitate international movement of (competition) horses, and the recognition and Maintenance of African horse sickness (AHS) official free status, self-declaration of Equine Disease Free Zone (EDFZ) and the High Health high performance (HHP) framework was held at the Radisson Blu Hotel from 13th to 15th of June in Beirut, Lebanon. It was attended by 28 participants, 20 participants from Veterinary Services of 10 countries (Cyprus, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman, Qatar Syria, Tunisia, Turkey). Most of the participants from the Veterinary Services were involved in the preparation of documents for application for recognition of AHS.

There were also 7 participants from Equestrian Federations and 1 observer from the Laboratory LIBANVET. The Equestrian Federations of five countries (Jordan, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Syria, United Arab Emirates) attended the workshop to explore potential new opportunities for coordination of facilitation of movement of horses, establishing EDFZ and collaborating in AHS-related activities with the participant countries.

Several presentations were provided for the OIE standards and procedures for official recognition of animal health status, as well as for the procedure for the application for the publication of a self-declarations of EDFZ and the HHP framework. Participants were given the opportunity to deepen their knowledge on these subjects with practical activities carried out through questionnaires on line and case study exercises, under the supervision of OIE staff and experts.

Furthermore, four Member countries shared PowerPoint presentations with the rest of the attendees, with regards to their own experience on the application for an AHS free status and maintenance, as well as for the establishment of EDFZ. During the exchange of experiences and information, most of the participants from the Veterinary Services of Member Countries showed a high level of knowledge in the respective OIE standards, and were aware of the TAHC and how it's implemented for the official recognition of disease free status.

The seminar was focused on the relevant points for the elaboration of an AHS freedom recognition dossier and for the establishment of an EDFZ following OIE guidelines. It was emphasized the necessary integration of the work among the technical staff and Equestrian Federations to collect and organize all the necessary information.

Comments:

The pre-workshop work to develop on line quizzes and case study exercises proved to be very useful and pragmatic since the participants used their smartphones to answer the quizzes and the needs assessment. Member Countries from Middle East and North Africa recognized the importance of obtaining the OIE official recognition of disease free status, and several countries applied on the past to achieve it. Nevertheless, several applications did not reach positive outcomes after assessment, mainly because Members failed to provide evidence of important information to complement the dossier.

The participants showed a manifest interest during the development of the practical activities (case study for the assessment of an AHS dossier) and the active exchange of experiences regarding requirements to achieve AHS freedom recognition.

During this Seminar, the outcomes of the Workshop in support of temporary international movement of competition horses held in Morocco the 24 of April 2019 were discussed. Dr Ghazi committed to constitute a core group to work on the implementation of the activities defined during the roadmap developed during Morocco's workshop.

Participants agreed on the topics to facilitate movements of competition horses from the countries of the group 7 of the International Equestrian Federation (FEI), namely countries from North Africa and Middle East. Most participants (70%) agreed that one of the main concerns was the harmonization of certificates and protocols for temporary importation of competition horses between the countries within the region. Additional topics of interest were the development of Public Partner Collaboration agreements, the sanitary status of countries of the region (including the improvement of notifications to the OIE), and the enhancement of the Veterinary Services Capabilities, as well as the requirements for AHS freedom recognition and for establishing an EDFZ.

Furthermore, participants from North African countries already recognized free from AHS, expressed their concern on the fact that European Union do not follow the recommendations of the OIE for the importation from officially recognized AHS free countries and requires extra tests that cause trading issues and impediment of HHP horse movements. The participants questioned how they could convince their authorities to spend time and economic resources to apply for the recognition of AHS disease free status, since currently this does not improve their trading and asked the OIE to provide help on this matter. The OIE committed to liaised with EU to avoid unnecessary barriers on trade of competition horses.

FEI national representatives of Syria proposed to organize a follow up committee with Dr Ghazi of the OIE RR to define a roadmap and activities to be implemented in the region (FEI group 7). The OIE encouraged the OIE Member Countries, through their Delegates, to share their experience on achieving the OIE free status recognition for AHS and offered to publish the documents on the OIE RR website.

The Veterinary Authorities of Syria and Lebanon stated that they are working on the dossiers of EDFZ to submit to the OIE for publication.

Subjects of discussion:

The Veterinary Authorities of Member Countries and the representatives of the Equestrian Federations from the region. It was discussed the importance of working together following the OIE recommendations and guidelines towards the facilitation of movements of competition horses and the enhancement of HHP health status recognition.

Follow-up:

To support member countries to submit comprehensive supportive documents when submitting their official status for AHS dossiers, for the reconfirmation process and for the establishment of an EDFZ. To support developing the roadmaps on the region to facilitate movements of competition horses.

Enclosed documents:

List of participants, Final Agenda. Roadmap coordination for Veterinary Authorities. Other workshop presentation and documents available upon request.





