

Preface

Good governance and the financing of effective Veterinary Services

Veterinary Services are at the heart of animal health systems tasked with preventing and controlling animal diseases. The World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), through its strategic standard-setting mission and the programmes implemented under its mandate for the benefit of the Veterinary Services of its Member Countries, is a major player in global cooperation and governance in the field of animal and public health.

Good veterinary governance is based on compliance with international standards for the quality of Veterinary Services, as defined by the OIE *Terrestrial Animal Health Code* and *Aquatic Animal Health Code*. The quality of Veterinary Services depends on a number of factors, including fundamental ethical, organisational, legislative, regulatory and technical principles. Good veterinary governance calls for services that are financed over the long term, accessible to all and delivered effectively, without waste or duplication, in a transparent manner, free from any fraud or corruption.

In a context of increasing economic globalisation, greater personal mobility and fast-growing trade in animals and animal products, it is vital to invest in all national animal health systems and to ensure that Veterinary Services comply with international standards – not only to protect countries threatened with the natural or deliberate introduction of infectious animal diseases or zoonoses, but also to protect public health, reduce poverty, contribute to food security and broaden opportunities to export animal products on an international scale.

The implementation of good governance of animal health systems is also founded on a close partnership between the public and private sectors (in particular livestock producers, through their representatives, and private veterinarians, as well as the Veterinary Authority) and falls under the responsibility of all governments.

One of the major challenges facing Veterinary Services is to assess all the costs associated with animal diseases, including those for public health, international trade and tourism, and to define the scale of investment required to enable Veterinary Services to comply with international standards. The allocation and long-term sustainability of Veterinary Service budgets depend largely on the reliability of these economic and financial analyses and on measurement of Veterinary Service performance.

Since 2006, the growing use by Member Countries of a common OIE methodology for evaluating the performance of Veterinary Services (OIE PVS Tool) and, more recently, PVS Gap Analysis missions, largely to determine the budget required to comply with international standards, is helping to raise awareness among the general public and the supervisory ministries. These tools, and the dialogue they establish between the different partners, are useful in defining the short- and medium-term investment plans needed to improve the quality of Veterinary Services.

There are a number of important prerequisites for the future evolution of the PVS Tool. The first is to define Veterinary Service performance indicators that are more specific

than the current conformity indicators. The second is to extend the PVS methodology by focusing on the issue of the 'demand for better governance' so as to garner public support for improving both the quality and quantity of services, and access to them, in order to confirm their Public Good status at national and global level. Finally, the recent decision of the World Health Organization (WHO) to develop a tool with similar aims to help their Member Countries to assess the capacity of public health services – and to quantify the costs of bringing them into compliance with the International Health Regulations (IHR) – will, in time, strengthen the links between public health services and Veterinary Services. This tool, together with existing OIE/WHO cooperation programmes in this field, will therefore extend the principles of good governance.

I wish to extend my warmest thanks to all the authors who have contributed to this edition of the *Review*, which deals with a subject of great importance for the OIE and all its Member Countries.

I would also like to express my sincere gratitude to the editor of this issue, Dr Laurent Msellati – Sector Manager of the Agriculture and Rural Development Team for the Latin America and Caribbean Region, based at the World Bank in Washington, DC – who gave of his time and expertise and spared no effort in helping to edit this *Review*, which will surely become a work of reference worldwide.

Bernard Vallat
Director General

