

## **Workshop Summary**

### **WOAH Regional Workshop on Animal movement and Border control in Asia and the Pacific**

**1-3 July 2025, Chiba, Japan**

#### **Rationale**

A regional workshop on animal movement and border control in Asia and the Pacific was conducted by the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) to enhance regional capacity in managing animal movement and border control, and to prevent the spread of Transboundary Animal Diseases (TADs) by focusing on understanding existing systems and frameworks within WOAH Members in Asia and the Pacific.

The workshop gathered 51 participants representing 26 countries/territories and the Pacific Heads of Veterinary and Production Services (PHOVAPS), with the addition of two experts, to examine organisational, legal, resource, and technological infrastructure, as well as the enforcement responsibilities and challenges faced by border control officers in implementing essential measures such as inspections, biosecurity, quarantine, and emergency response. Each country/territory was represented by key persons working on animal movement and border control in the animal health sector and the representatives actively engaged with subject matter experts in discussions, analysis of current practices, and exploration of international standards.

The workshop sought to foster better regional cooperation and communication among Members, enabling the implementation of key strategies to combat TADs.

#### **Meeting notes**

##### **International Trade Risk and Transparency**

1. The current situation with respect to international trade in animals and animal products poses a risk for further dissemination of TADs, with potential significant impacts on animal and human health.
2. Many countries/territories have gaps in national legislation and because of those gaps they have difficulties in strengthening their border biosecurity. These include the lack of authority to impose sanctions and penalties on illegal animal movement and limited cooperation with other government agencies. They also noted that some of the legislative acts are outdated in regard to modern trade practices.
3. When importing countries choose a level of protection requiring measures more stringent than the standards of WOAH, these should be based on an import risk analysis. However, challenges exist for Members to access the processes conducted

(risk analysis, etc) as there is no common platform for sharing such information among members.

4. Communication among Members to confirm the authenticity of information is not always efficient and there are often delays in responses. Key contacts within Veterinary Authorities/Competent Authorities are often difficult to identify, or interaction with them may be hampered by government-to-government protocols.

#### **Standardisation of operational procedures**

5. There is an opportunity to develop detailed Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and guidelines for the inspection of all types of commodities which would standardise the performance at the border inspection posts.
6. Many participants highlighted the need for establishing an efficient mechanism to check the authenticity of certificates.

#### **Capacity and Resource Limitations**

7. There is a lack of trained human resources (veterinarians and veterinary paraprofessionals) at the policy making level to perform risk assessments and at the border inspection posts to perform inspections.
8. Physical resources, which includes infrastructure and technical equipment, and IT support are not always adequate to perform inspections and quarantine measures effectively and consistently.
9. There is low level of awareness among stakeholders (especially travelers) on quarantine and animal movement regulations, which increases risks of spreading diseases.
10. Performance of Veterinary Services (PVS) evaluation is useful for comprehensive identification of areas that need improvement.

#### **Informal/Unregulated/Illegal movement of Animals and Animal Products**

11. Informal/Unregulated/Illegal cross-border movement of animals and animal products is recognised as having high impact on the spread of transboundary animal diseases, posing critical risks to both animal and human health.
12. Porous borders are identified as a major challenge, highlighting the inherent difficulties in maintaining effective and secure border controls.
13. Collaboration among concerned agencies is important in the development of integrated regional or bilateral systems/platforms for information sharing and joint actions. Building such cooperative frameworks can compensate for human and resource constraints.

### **Information Systems and Data Sharing**

14. Where information systems exist, they are not always integrated to allow for sharing of information, especially between different government agencies.
15. WAHIS is a potentially useful tool for Members to assess trading partner's animal health status, but its utility is often devalued by accessibility/speed issues as well as significant gaps in data.
16. Importing country's sanitary requirements are not always available, or they are only available in the official language of the importing country on government websites.

### **Priority Actions**

17. Priority actions were identified by Members under the following three thematic areas (refer to Annex): Implementing Border Inspection and Animal Quarantine, Promoting Safe Trade and Cross-border and Cross-sector Collaboration for the International Movement of Animals and Animal Products.

### **Recommendations to WOAHA Members**

1. Develop harmonised SOPs for border inspection and animal quarantine, aligned with WOAHA Terrestrial and Aquatic Codes.
2. Define national-level SOPs and Border Inspection Post requirements, including human resources, infrastructure, and technical equipment, based on the type of consignment.
3. Develop and implement training programmes for Border Inspection Post staff on inspection techniques, disease recognition, animal handling, use of rapid diagnostic tests, and biosecurity practices.
4. Create and maintain cross-border data sharing systems, including risk analysis access, document authenticity verification, and disease information exchange.
5. Conduct capacity building on import risk analysis, risk assessment, risk management, and determination of Appropriate Level of Protection (ALOP).
6. Review and update legislation to control animal movement, penalise illegal trade, and align frameworks with modern trade practices and WOAHA standards.
7. Consider requesting a PVS evaluation to identify and prioritise areas for national system improvement: and implement recommendations following the mission.
8. Utilise the WOAHA eLearning platform to support capacity building and institutional strengthening at both national and subnational levels.
9. Organise regular cross-border coordination meetings among neighboring countries/territories to institutionalise bilateral/multilateral cooperation.
10. Facilitate joint capacity building activities among countries/territories and sectors to

strengthen technical cooperation and information sharing.

11. Improve collaboration and conduct joint operations involving key agencies within each Member, such as Veterinary Services, Customs, Immigration, Police, Military, and Forestry, to address cross-border risks.

### **Recommendations for WOA**

1. Support capacity building of policy makers, veterinarians and veterinary paraprofessionals in enhancing technical border control and quarantine skills through the PVS Pathway, e-learning and other platforms.
2. Facilitate data sharing between WOA Members to support safe and transparent trade.
3. Develop or facilitate sharing of information, education and communication materials to promote science-based and risk-based trade measures.
4. Facilitate regular cross-border coordination meetings to strengthen institutional mechanisms for bilateral and multilateral cooperation.
5. Explore additional opportunities to expand on the outcomes of this workshop, considering sub-regional variations/differences.

(Annex)

**Priority actions identified by Members**

**Implementation of border inspection and animal quarantine**

1. Harmonisation of border inspection and animal quarantine SOPs.
2. Drafting of national SOPs and Contingency Plans for border inspection and animal quarantine according to Terrestrial and Aquatic Animal Health Codes.
3. Capability building activities on the border control and quarantine procedures.

**Promoting Safe Trade**

1. Creation of data sharing mechanism between countries/territories which can feature conduct of risk analysis, risk assessments, verification of document authenticity and sharing information on disease threats.
2. Capability building activities on import risk analysis, risk assessment and risk management and ALOP.
3. Development/update of legislation on structure and legal framework to control animal movement and regulation of illegal trade and impose penalties in compliance to WOAHS standards, and to adapt to existing value chains and to current trade practices.

**Cross-border and cross-sector collaboration for international movement of animals and animal products**

1. Organise regular cross-border coordination meetings between neighboring Members to strengthen institutional mechanisms for bilateral and multilateral cooperation.
2. Conduct joint capacity building activities to enhance information sharing and technical cooperation.
3. Implement joint operations among key agencies within countries such as Veterinary Services, Police, Customs, Immigration, Military, Forestry, etc to address cross border risks.