



World Organisation
for Animal Health



What's RAWs?

The Regional Animal Welfare Strategy (RAWs) for the Asia-Pacific, developed by Members and Partners of the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH), has been fostering the advancement of animal welfare in the region alongside socioeconomic development since its endorsement in 2008. It focuses on establishing and implementing standards on animal transport, slaughter and culling, capacity building, education and raising awareness.

Note from the Chair

It was so lovely to see a number of you at the Regional Workshop in Tokyo in February! Tokyo provided a wonderful venue, and I am sure I speak for all participants when I thank everyone involved in organising the event for such an excellent opportunity to share best practice and our experiences in animal welfare. On the bottom right of this page you can see how to say 'animal welfare matters' in all the languages of the participants.

A particular highlight for me was the sessions where Members presented on the successes and challenges that they had in implementing animal welfare in their country/territory. This underscored that there are many shared issues where we can learn from each other and explore how solutions can be adapted to our own country/territory.

Enjoy reading and learning more about the activities of the workshop.

Best regards, Carolyn Guy

Here's to our dedication to animal welfare

Greetings to all in the region from the WOAH RAWs Advisory Group for the Asia-Pacific! We are pleased to announce that as part of our continued commitment to advancing animal welfare, the Regional Workshop for WOAH National Focal Points for Animal Welfare in the Asia-Pacific 2025 concluded successfully. It was an enriching event with constructive discussions on relevant issues and ample networking opportunities to bolster the implementation of WOAH animal welfare standards and strategy in the region. In this issue of the RAWs newsletter, we will share with you an overview of the highlighted issues discussed at the workshop. We hope you will find this newsletter insightful!



RAWS NEWSLETTER

APRIL-MAY 2025

ADVANCING ANIMAL WELFARE IN
THE ASIA-PACIFIC

IN THIS ISSUE

Regional Workshop for WOAH National Focal Points for Animal Welfare in the Asia-Pacific 2025

One Health, One Welfare

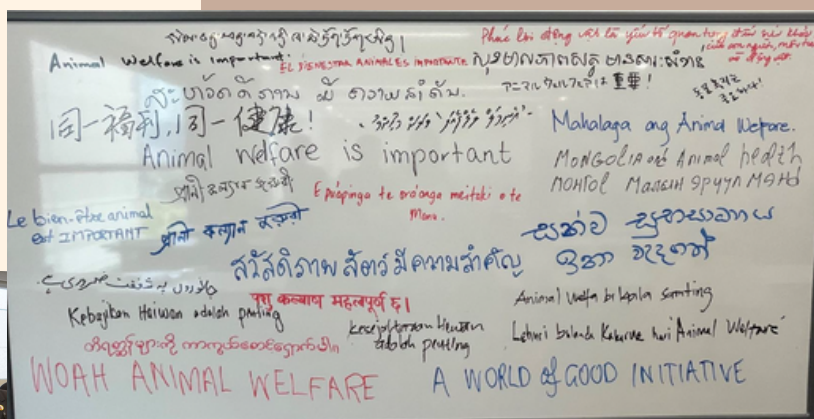
Animal welfare legislation

Culling for disease control

Dog population control

Implementation of WOAH Standards and guidelines on animal welfare

Networking and collaboration



REGIONAL WORKSHOP FOR WOAHP NATIONAL FOCAL POINTS FOR ANIMAL WELFARE IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC

The workshop was held in Tokyo on 21-23 January 2025. It provided a valuable opportunity which brought together participants from 27 WOAHP regional Members and the Pacific Heads of Veterinary and Animal Production Services (PHOVAPS), external experts from A World of Good Initiative, Catch Welfare Program, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry of Australia and the academia, representatives of the Pacific Community and International Coalition for Animal Welfare (ICFAW) (WOAHP's partner organisations), and observers from the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of Japan and the academia to work towards the common goal of enhancing animal welfare in the region. It covered the scientific, ethical, religious, social, economic and political dimensions of animal welfare. Participants reflected that they particularly enjoyed the sharing of experiences, achievements and challenges from different countries/territories, which would serve as useful references for developing strategies for managing relevant animal welfare issues in their own country/territory.



For more details, including the agenda and presentations of the workshop, please visit the event's website:

rr-asia.woah.org/en/events/regional-seminar-focal-points-for-animal-welfare

Next, let's take a look at some of the highlighted topics discussed at the workshop!

ONE HEALTH, ONE WELFARE

The "One Health, One Welfare" approach to animal welfare was elaborated by Dr. Rebecca Doyle, Deputy Director of the Animal Welfare Centre of the University of Edinburgh:

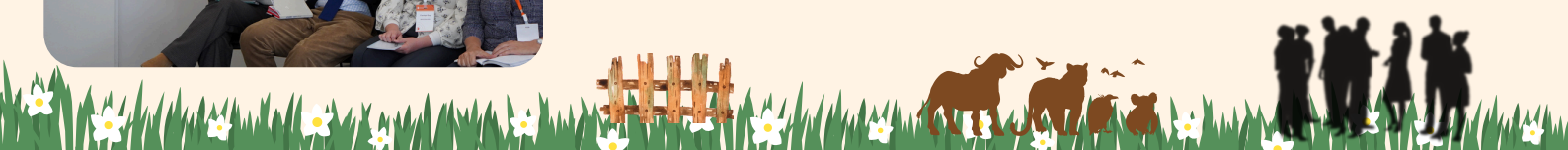
- Higher welfare status of farm animals is associated with inherently better animal health, improved resistance to infectious diseases and lower antimicrobial use
- It will in turn lead to better food production and security, reduced food safety risks and wastage, nutritious benefits for consumers and inclusive economic growth
- Environmental health can benefit from good animal health and welfare from the associated reduction in greenhouse gas emission. Sustainable land use practices in food animal farming such as silvopastoralism, agroecological and pasture-based systems, can promote good animal welfare and contribute to biodiversity
- Animal welfare is a cross-cutting issue, which needs to be included in all issues of sustainability



Practical examples in aquaculture and poultry production were illustrated by Dr. Lu Chen, China programme coordinator of Catch Welfare Program, and Dr. Ashleigh Bright, Food and Sustainability Researcher and Consultant, in aquaculture and poultry production, respectively. Concerns on animal welfare and environmental health are interrelated and should be addressed alongside each other.

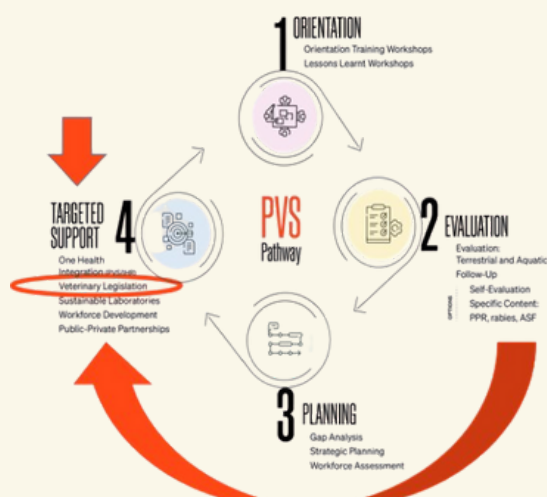


For instance, Dr. Lu Chen explained that in aquaculture, suboptimal fish welfare might possibly lead to fish diseases. In some cases, antimicrobials might be required for treatment, which might subsequently contribute to the problem of antimicrobial resistance not only in the animal sector but also the human and environmental health sectors.



ANIMAL WELFARE LEGISLATION

Animal welfare legislation is one of the major barriers in improving animal welfare, which echoes the results of the Performance of Veterinary Services Information System (PVS IS) analysis of weaknesses and recommendations in the WOAH Performance of Veterinary Services (PVS) Pathway evaluation of animal welfare in Asia-Pacific.



How can WOAH support?

- The Veterinary Legislation Support Programme (VLSP) under the PVS tool covers animal welfare in a country/territory. It aims to identify gaps and weaknesses in national veterinary legislation and to assist Members in revising or developing new legislation. For more information, please visit www.woah.org/en/what-we-offer/improving-veterinary-services/pvs-pathway/veterinary-legislation-support
- Although WOAH Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines are not pieces of legislation, they can be adopted in a country / territory's legislation according to local contexts

Outdated animal welfare legislation is the most common barrier. Dr. Katherine Clift, Inspector-General of Animal Welfare & Live Animal Exports of the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry of Australia, shared that in updating legislation, a thorough assessment needed to be conducted on the problems with the outdated one and the aims of the proposed ones. To better secure political support and expedite the process, prioritising specific pieces of legislation to be updated may be more acceptable to policymakers and less time-consuming. Animal welfare crises should be analysed as they occur and utilised as opportunities to build a case for change and to secure political support. The development of relevant codes may serve as an alternative to legislative amendments.



ANIMAL WELFARE IN EMERGENCIES

The animal health sector too is vulnerable to emergencies caused by transboundary animal diseases, emerging and re-emerging diseases, pandemics, natural and human-made hazards, climate change, or other crises. Key processes in the emergency management cycle for disease control include planning, coordination, managing disinformation and misinformation and preparedness. Integrating animal health and welfare considerations throughout the entire cycle is crucial to better prepare and improve an efficiency of the emergency response and recovery efforts.

WOAH Standards and Guidelines

Chapter 7.6. Killing of animals for disease control purposes
Chapter 7.13. Animal welfare and pig production system



WOAH-ICFAW joint project supporting the implementation of WOAH Standards on animal welfare in Southeast Asia

Dr. Lauren Hemsworth, from the Animal Welfare Science Centre of the University of Melbourne, introduced the project at the workshop. Technical assistance will be provided by the University of Melbourne in developing and delivering "Training the trainer" workshops and e-Modules. There will be two learning paths- one for central-level veterinary staff with a policy-maker role and another for provincial/district-level veterinary staff with an operating or implementing role.

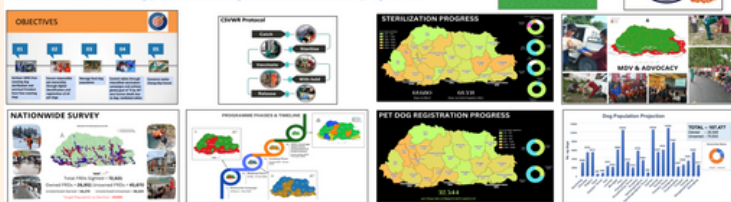


Progress has been made in improving animal welfare within your country/territory in recent years (i.e. 3-5 years)

- Official declaration of battery cage free poultry farming in Bhutan
- Developed Bhutan Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines (BAWSG) 2020
- 100% sterilisation of un-owned free-roaming dogs
- Mandatory registration and microchipping of pet dogs
- Annual Mass Dog Vaccination (MDV) in rabies high-risk areas



Nationwide accelerated dog population management & rabies control programme



DOG POPULATION MANAGEMENT

The animal welfare aspect of dog population management presents a significant challenge for most regional Members. Robust political support, strong public awareness and thorough planning of effective measures all play a pivotal role in the success of dog population control programmes.



How can WOA support?

PVS missions for managing dog population and rabies management are available for strengthening national Veterinary Services in these two areas. For more information, please visit:

rr-asia.woah.org/en/projects/performance-of-veterinary-services-pvs

IMPLEMENTATION OF WOA STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES ON ANIMAL WELFARE

WOAH is committed to providing its Members with diverse and tailored training opportunities to improve the implementation of WOA standards. A global platform for training the national veterinary services of its Members has been developed by WOA. It offers a variety of face-to-face and distant training activities ranging from learning needs assessment to evaluation. Support is also available from WOA's regional collaborating centres to address technical questions and fulfil training needs. For more information, please visit: rr-asia.woah.org/en/collaborating-centres



Dr. Kinley Dorji, Veterinary Superintendent of the National Veterinary Hospital of the Department of Livestock of Bhutan, shared his country's success story, which triumphs in achieving the neutering of **100% of the population of unowned free-roaming dogs**, elimination of feral dogs, and implementation of measures for the mandatory registration and microchipping of pet dogs and Annual Mass Dog Vaccination in high-risk rabies area. With the great interests expressed from other attendees at the workshop, Dr. Dorji will share more details of Bhutan's success story in the next issue of the RAWs newsletter.



Members may also participate in animal-welfare related activities organised by WOA's partners, such as those involving International Organization for Standardization (ISO) TC34, and their subcommittees such as the SC6 on meat, poultry, fish, eggs and their products.



NETWORKING AND COLLABORATION



We encourage regional Members facing similar challenges to maintain contact and continue sharing strategies. Some common animal welfare issues faced by different regional Members discussed during the workshop were balancing elephant protection with minimising human-elephant conflict in India, Sri Lanka and Thailand, managing unproductive cattle in Nepal and India, and the impact of religion on the perception of animal welfare in Sri Lanka and Bhutan.



A call for regional efforts

It was indeed wonderful to see participants, experts, observers and representatives of partner organisations network extensively with one another at the workshop! We look forward to hearing more success stories in advancing animal welfare in the region through fruitful collaboration opportunities built upon the networking and continuous information sharing amongst regional Members.



We would like to extend our special thanks to regional Members for offering their comments on draft WOA animal welfare guidelines and standards previously. We sincerely hope their efforts in actively participating in the animal welfare standard setting process will continue in the future!



RAWS ASIA-PACIFIC



NEXT ISSUE

Stay tuned for our next issue, as we bring you the inspirational story on dog population management in Bhutan provided by Dr. Kinley Dorji and exciting updates on the progress on animal welfare in China provided by Dr. Teng Xiangyan, as well as more exciting topics.

INFORMATION

For more information about the RAWS, our previous newsletters and other WOAHP animal welfare activities in the Asia-Pacific, please visit our regional website: rr-asia.woah.org/en/projects/animal-welfare



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