TERRESTRIAL ANIMAL HEALTH STANDARDS COMMISSION

FEBRUARY 2011 REPORT

CHAPTER 3.4.

COMMUNICATION

Article 3.4.1.

General considerations

In general communication entails the exchange of information between various individual, institutional and public audiences for purposes of informing, guiding and motivating action. The application of the science and technique of communication involves modulating messages according to situations, objectives and target audiences.

The recognition of communication as a discipline of the *Veterinary Services* and its incorporation within it is critical for their operations. The integration of veterinary and communication expertises is essential for effective communication.

Communication should be an integral part of all the activities of the *Veterinary Services* including animal health (surveillance, early detection and rapid response, prevention and control), animal welfare and veterinary public health (food safety, zoonoses) and veterinary medicine.

Objectives of this chapter on communication for the *Veterinary Services* are to provide guidance for the development of a communication system, strategic and operational communication plans and elements to assess their quality.

Article 3.4.2.

Principles of communication

1. *Veterinary Services* should have the authority and capability to communicate on matters within their mandate.

2. Veterinary and communication expertises should be combined.

3. Communication should be targeted and follow the fundamental criteria of transparency, consistency, timeliness, balance, accuracy, honesty and empathy and respect the fundamental principles of quality of *Veterinary Services* (article 3.1.2.).

4. Communication should be a continuous process.

5. *Veterinary Services* should be responsible for planning, implementing, monitoring, evaluating and revising their strategic and operational communication plans.

Article 3.4.3.

Definitions

Communication

means the discipline of informing, ~~influencing~~ guiding and motivating individual, institutional and public audiences, ~~preferably~~ ideally on the basis of interactive exchanges, about any issue ~~falling under the mandate of the OIE and~~ under the competence of the *Veterinary Services*.

Crisis

means a ~~time~~ situation of great ~~danger~~ threat, difficulty or uncertainty when ~~problems related to any~~ issues ~~falling~~ under ~~the mandate of the OIE and~~ the competence of the *Veterinary Services* require immediate action.

Crisis Communication

means the process of ~~providing~~ communicating information of potentially incomplete nature within time constraints in the event of a *crisis*. ~~that allows an individual, affected and/or interested parties, an entire community or the general public to make best possible decisions and be informed of and/or accept policy decisions and rationale behind policy decisions during a crisis.~~

Outbreak communication

means the process of communicating in the event of an *outbreak*. Outbreak communication includes *notification*.

Article 3.4.4.

Communication system

In addition to the Principles for Communication the following ~~critical~~ elements should be used in conjunction with Chapter 3.1., when planning, implementing and assessing a communication system:

~~**Critical elements**~~

~~1. Authority and organizational structure~~

~~a) Legislation providing authority to *Veterinary Services* under the responsibility of the CVO to communicate on matters within their mandate~~

~~b) Identified and accessible official contact points for communication~~

~~c)~~1. Organisational chart indicating a direct link between the communication personnel and ~~to~~ the *Veterinary Authority*, ~~CVO~~ through the chain of command (e.g. dedicated communication unit, communication officer)

2. Human resources

a) Identified and accessible official communication focal point

~~a~~b) Job descriptions of communication personnel identifying roles and responsibilities

~~b~~c) Sufficient number of qualified personnel with knowledge, skills, attitude and abilities relevant to communication

~~c~~d) Continuous training and education on communication provided to communication personnel

3. Financial and ~~material~~ physical resources

a) Clearly identified budget for communication that provides adequate funding

b) Provision and/or access to appropriate material resources in order to carry out roles and responsibilities: suitable premise/accommodation that is adequately equipped with sufficient office and technical equipment, including information technology and access to the Internet

4. Management of the communication system

a) Roles and responsibilities of the communication unit

i) Report to the ~~CVO~~ *Veterinary Authority*

ii) Engage~~d~~ in decision-making process

iii) Be ~~R~~responsible for the planning, implementation and evaluation of the strategic and operational plans for communication and relevant standard operating procedures

iv) Function as contact point on communication issues for the *Veterinary Services*

v) Provide guidance and expertise on communication issues to the *Veterinary Services*

vi) Provide and coordinate continuous education on communication for the *Veterinary Services*

b) Strategic plan for communication

A well-designed strategic plan for communication should support the *Veterinary Services* strategic plan and have management support and commitment. The strategic plan for communication should address all high level organization-wide communication objectives. The plan should be a long-term plan.

A strategic plan for communication should be monitored, periodically reviewed and should identify measurable performance objectives and techniques to assess.

The strategic plan for communication should consider the different types of communication: routine communication, risk communication, outbreak communication and crisis communication, to allow individuals, affected and/or interested parties, an entire community or the general public to make best possible decisions and be informed of and/or accept policy decisions and their rationale.

The key outcomes in effectively implementing a strategic plan for communication are increased knowledge and awareness of issues by the public and stakeholders, higher understanding of the role of the Veterinary Services, higher visibility of and improved trust and credibility in the Veterinary Services. These will enhance understanding and/or acceptance of policy decisions and subsequent change of perception, attitude and/or behaviour.

c) Operational plans for communication

Operational plans for communication should be based on the assessment of specific issues and should identify specific objectives and target audiences such as staff, partners, stakeholders, media and the general public.

Each operational plan for communication should consist of a well-planned series of activities using different techniques, tools, messages and channels to achieve intended objectives and utilizing available resources within a specific timeframe.