

SEPTEMBER 2009

## PROPOSED CHAPTER ON COMMUNICATION

### General considerations

#### *Introduction*

There is a need to institutionalize communication as a discipline within Veterinary Services in order for them to achieve effective internal and external communication. Communication underpins everything that Veterinary Services do including prevention, surveillance, animal welfare, disease response, public health and food safety. The integration/combination of veterinary and communication expertise is essential for effective communication.

#### *Principles*

- Communication is a continuous process
- Veterinary Services should be mandated and have the authority to communicate
- Veterinary Services are responsible to plan, implement, monitor, evaluate and revise communication
- Importance of joint technical veterinary expertise and professional communication skills when intending to disseminate scientific information
- Suitable criteria for communication
  - Transparency
  - Consistency
  - Timeliness
  - Balance
  - Accuracy
  - Honesty
  - Targeted

### Definitions

#### ***Communication***

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

#### ***Crisis***

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

#### ***Crisis Communication***

means the process of providing information of potentially incomplete nature within time constraints 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*.

## Required elements

- Proper organizational structure within VS
  - VS should be mandated and have the authority to communicate
  - Dedicated communication unit
  - Official contact points
  - Clearly defined chain of command (governance)
- Human resources
  - Qualified personnel
  - Training
  - Adequate number (back-up)
  - Job descriptions
- Financial and material resources
  - Budget
  - Equipment
    - Office equipment
    - Technical equipment
    - Access to the Internet
  - Suitable premise/accommodation
- Documentation for demonstration (evidence to demonstrate capabilities)
  - Policies on communication
  - Work plans
  - Communication products
- Quality assessment and evaluation
  - Monitoring system in place
- Consequences

## For the society

- Increased knowledge and awareness
- Acceptance of policy decisions
- Consequential change of perception, attitude and/or behaviour

## For VS

- Raising the profile/awareness/knowledge
- Improve trust/credibility