

# OBJECTIVES AND EXPECTATIONS FOR THE OIE THIRD OIE GLOBAL CONFERENCE ON ANIMAL WELFARE

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This 3<sup>rd</sup> OIE Global Conference on Animal Welfare, which will take place on 6-8 November in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, follows two very successful OIE global conferences on animal welfare. Animal welfare continues to increase in importance and has an important bearing on trade in animals and their products. Recognising that animal health is a key input to animal welfare, the OIE *Codes* cover the veterinary domain holistically, including recommendations on animal health, animal welfare and veterinary public health.

In choosing the theme: 'Implementing the OIE standards - addressing regional expectations' the OIE underlined the priority of helping Members to implement the adopted animal welfare standards. The OIE, in collaboration with governments and donors, has made a strong commitment to supporting the global improvement of animal health and welfare and veterinary public health.

At the 80th OIE General Session (2012), Member countries adopted two new chapters on animal welfare, which brought the total number of adopted chapters of standards to twelve including transport and slaughter methods. This represents rapid progress, given that animal welfare was first mentioned in the OIE 3rd Strategic Plan (2001-2005). According to the mandate of Member countries, OIE standards are science based and focus on the welfare outcomes for the animal, rather than the design of the system. This provides flexibility to adapt the standards to local conditions and facilitates implementation by Members.

The OIE has no mandate to police the implementation of its standards. Rather, it encourages and supports Members by providing technical advice and capacity building, including via the OIE PVS Pathway for Good Governance. The OIE advocates for national Veterinary Services (VS) and the veterinary profession to provide leadership in relation to animal health and welfare. Ongoing work on veterinary education and veterinary statutory bodies should lead to better veterinary governance and more efficient VS, with better capacity to implement legislation and programs for animal health and welfare. In parallel, the OIE communicates permanently with media with the goal of convincing them to advocate the use of its animal welfare standards.

With reference to regional expectations, the OIE supports the creation of mechanisms at the regional level, with full involvement of OIE Regional and Sub-Regional Representations. The nomination of national Animal Welfare Focal Points by National Delegates (of 178 Member Countries) helps to raise awareness and encourage collaboration at the regional level. Regional Animal Welfare Strategies

(RAWS), as implemented in the Asia, Far East and Oceania region, provide a valuable framework, adapted to regional specificities, for leadership, practical support and encouragement.

This conference provides a global forum for discussion of the needs and priorities of OIE Members with respect to the development and implementation of animal welfare standards in the five OIE regions. Regional specificities, as well as the important contribution to be made by partner organisations, donors, non-governmental organisations and the livestock and food production sector, will be taken fully into account in planning and revising approaches and activities for the future. Through its global leadership in setting animal welfare standards and by providing a framework for support and implementation of these standards, the OIE aims to improve animal health and welfare globally.

**Keywords:** OIE animal welfare standards – PVS Pathway – Regional Animal Welfare Strategy (RAWS).