



7th Stakeholders consultation meeting of the WOAH Platform on animal welfare for Europe

5th July 2022 – Brussels

MEETING REPORT

INTRODUCTION

The seventh Stakeholders consultation meeting of the WOAH Platform on animal welfare for Europe took place in Brussels on July the 5th, 2022. The objectives of the meeting, in line with the previous one, were to report on the implementation of the Platform activities carried out over the last 8 months and present the activities to be implemented until the end of the year according to the 3rd Action Plan for 2021-2023. Stakeholders were asked to report on new and planned activities in the five priority topics of the Platform – transportation, slaughter, dog population management, disasters, working equids, comment and suggest on possible additional initiatives to be taken in the frame of the Action Plan.

The agenda of the meeting is available in *Annex 1*. Seventeen participants attended the meeting, the full list of participants is available in *Annex 2*. The meeting was chaired by Dr Estelle Hamelin, acting WOAH Sub-Regional Representation in Brussels. Dr Paolo Dalla Villa and Dr Tomasz Grudnik also represented the Platform secretariat.

Terms of reference of the WOAH Platform on Animal Welfare for Europe and the Third Action Plan of the WOAH Platform on Animal Welfare for Europe (2021-2023) were distributed to the participants as background documents along with the invitation letter.

Dr Leopoldo Stuardo attended in representation of the WOAH HQ and opened the works by reminding the objectives of the meeting and welcoming old and new participants.

A round of introductions followed and participants were invited to comment, express their opinions and offer constructive suggestions on what could be improved for the future.

1. State of the art of the WOAH Platform for Animal Welfare in Europe 2021-2023 Action Plan implementation ([Link to see the presentation](#))

The Platform secretariat presented level of implementation of activities for each of all five priority topics of the 3 Action Plan. Dr Grudnik briefly recall overview background of the Platform activities of since its launch in 2013 (two previous action plans), governance of the Platform and main points of the 3rd Action Plan including priority topic, objectives (long and short/mid-term objectives) and indicative timetable for the implementation of the action plan.

1.1. Slaughter of animals

A series of capacity-building activities to improve animal welfare practices during the slaughter of animals (cattle, sheep and pigs) was conducted under the framework of the WOH Platform in the past years. The 3rd Action Plan foresees the organisation of two regional seminars to ensure a follow-up of these activities and re-engage with the participants of those previous activities as well as involve any new people working on those issues in targeted countries. Considering the difficulties linked to organising physical events and willing to exploit the opportunities offered by information and communication technologies, the WOH proposes to develop online learning resources based on improved and updated existing training materials on the welfare of animals at slaughter produced by the WOH and/or its Collaborating Centres on animal welfare and other partners. The package containing the revised resources should be available by the end of this year on the WOH Platform for the training of Veterinary Services, enabling it to serve as a basis for other WOH activities in Europe and other regions

1.2. Stray dog control

The 4th workshop on stray dog control for Balkans (SDB4) meeting took place online on 30 November 2021, 19 participants attended from 8 countries. Although considerable efforts are still needed, the vision to reach full compliance with the TAHC Chapter 7.7 standards on stray dog control by 2025 remains achievable. A new web-based Self-Assessment and Monitoring (SAM Tool 2.0) platform will be developed to conduct the next self-assessment rounds on stray dogs and rabies in the Balkans and West Eurasia, and to monitor the progress in the sub-region over time. to automatize the self-assessment process and allow live-time and user-friendly analysis of the information. The SAM Tool 2.0 will have an important role in helping countries to analyse their own data independently. The planned activities of the regional stray dog roadmaps were briefly discussed. The Platform will also continue to strengthen the level of technical assistance to the WOH Members and stakeholders by promoting the setting a pool of 'stray dog managers' in the Balkans. It remains essential to expand the range of training and capacity building programs aiming at increasing the professional skills and capacities of the VEs involved in the development and implementation of the National Action plans and Dog Population Control Programs and the technical know-how of the personnel carrying out carrying out stray dog control activities at Municipal/local level, in line with the revised TAHC Chapter 7.7 on Stray dog population control recommendations.

1.3. Transport of animals by land and by sea

Transport of animals remains a priority topic in Europe. Following the adoption of the Terms of Reference of the OIE National Contact Point on long-distance transportation in November 2020, the WOH Platform Secretariat invited all European WOH Delegates to nominate their contact points. The kick-off meeting of network of the National Contact Points on Long-Distance Transportation in Europe took place on 17 November 2021 as an online event. The participants, representatives of 33 countries, highlighted the importance of establishing the network as a tool to facilitate communication between Competent Authorities and the relevance of the activities on animal transport included in the 3rd Action Plan of the Platform. The network will focus its work on two topics: transport by land and transport by sea, according to specific countries interests. The first WOH WJS Workshop on long-distance transport by land in Europe was held in 2018 in Poland. The workshop was based on a scenario route that was subject of the European Court of Justice ruling C-424 related to the transport of cattle originating in Germany and travelling to Uzbekistan via Poland, Belarus, Russia, Kazakhstan. As a follow-up of this meeting, the regional WJS Workshop in Europe was organised on 17 November 2021 as an online event and addressed to the same targeted countries. The main objective of the workshop was to reinforce the collaboration between Competent Authorities, review the progress achieved over time and actualization of best practices. During the webinar representatives of countries provided an update on new developments, changes in regulatory frameworks, procedures and practices. The discussion focused on appropriate journey planning, including resting points and their verification, possibly audits of resting points along the route and sharing the list of available facilities. The Multi-regional WJS workshop on long distance transport (land and sea) for Europe, Middle East and North Africa is planned in the 3rd Action Plan for second semester 2022. The Platform secretariat explores options to organize this event in physical format in November 2022 in Tunis. The specific interregional route and meeting agenda will be developed based of outcomes of previous WJS meetings and feedback from National Contact Points on Long-Distance Transportation and NFP on animal welfare

1.4. Natural disasters

The triennial pilot project on natural disaster preparedness in the Balkans was concluded with the last meeting of the project (DMAWB3) held online on 9-11 November 2021 in form of a virtual Tabletop Exercise (TTX). The TTX aimed at testing and validating model Veterinary Service's Contingency Plans (VS-CP) to timely address animal welfare matters in a flooding scenario and identifying issues and improvements of protocols and operational procedures employed in managing the event. The essential contribution of the Romanian, Bulgarian and Montenegro representatives was highlighted as an example of the progress achieved in response to natural disasters, over time and introduced their own VS-CP. The interest, importance and success of the pilot project was highlighted and the proposal to expanded similar approach to other countries was discussed. Other events of this kind will follow, but Veterinary Services should maintain a proactive attitude toward contingency planning and be prepared where risks for natural disaster are greater and where communities and animals have fewer resources to mitigate, survive, and recover from diverse types of disasters. Based on the results of the triennial pilot project and the outcomes of the ongoing regional needs assessment exercise focusing on Veterinary Services preparedness and capacity levels, geographical scope and disaster scenarios, new initiatives will be developed in this area, within the context of the 2021- 2023 Action Plan.

1.5. Welfare working equids

The 3rd Action Plan includes an awareness campaign on the welfare of working equids targeting selected West Eurasian countries. Based on the results of the baseline survey conducted in 2019, the Platform secretariat, in collaboration with the International Coalition for Working Equids, is working on defining the activities (e.g., an awareness campaign including main focus areas, target audience, and tools). The goal is to develop activities that would have the most impact in selected West Eurasian countries to raise public awareness of working equids' welfare and economic importance.

2. Updates on the WOAHP activities at global level

Dr Leopoldo Stuardo (Scientific Coordinator of the WOAHP Standards Department) provided update on general WOAHP activities at global level in the framework of the WOAHP Global Animal Welfare Strategy and its four strategic pillars. Regarding the pillar on the development of animal welfare standards, he highlighted the adoption of the revised Chapter 7.7. Dog population management, adopted at 89th OIE General Session and the revision process Chapter 7.5, 7.6 and the animal transport chapters from 2023. Regarding the Capacity building pillar, he described the new way of engaging with the WOAHP National Animal Welfare Focal Point through short and focused biannual meetings and informed about the progress done to finalise the establishment of the Global Network of AW Collaborating Centres.

Regarding the pillar on the implementation of the animal welfare standards, the Work Plan includes the support of the Regional Animal Welfare Strategies and Platforms. Tailor made meetings have been conducted with the Middle East, Americas, and African region, to relaunch the activities of these Strategies and Platforms. Finally, he recalled the finalization of the paper on the outcomes of the last Global Forum on animal welfare and the UN Sustainable Development Goals, submitted to Frontiers on Animal Science. The selected topic of the Fourth Global Forum will be on 'Animal Welfare Economics'. ([Link to see the presentation](#))

3. The WOAHP Regional Strategic Action (RSA) on animal welfare in Europe

The 2022- 2025 WOAHP Regional Strategic Action (RSA) on animal welfare for Europe, which intends to strengthen the WOAHP CC networks' capability of providing multidisciplinary technical/scientific support to the development and the implementation of the WOAHP aquatic and terrestrial animal welfare policies in Europe was also briefly presented. This new WOAHP regional initiative offers an additional opportunity to better incorporate the WOAHP Europe Members' needs in the WOAHP CC consortiums/networks on animal welfare multiannual action plans and align the Platform future initiatives to the 7th Strategic Plan. By following the proposed process, the WOAHP Members and stakeholders will make a better use of the consortium/networks opportunities to address local AW issues in the best manner, both in "peace" and in "emergency" times. In addition, such mechanism intends (1) to favour the RSA partners enduring access to international research resources in close multidisciplinary collaboration (2) to promote new WOAHP twinning leading to the establishment of new CCs (I.e., aquatic animal production, veterinary emergencies) on animal welfare. The "RSA on animal welfare for Europe" kick-off meeting is planned to be held in the second half by the end of 2022. ([Link to see the presentation](#))

4. Round table on the stakeholders' animal welfare recent and planned activities in Europe

The round table provided to all attending stakeholders an opportunity to present update on their new and planned activities, since the last stakeholder's consultation meeting, with focus on the five priority topics of the WOAHP Platform – transportation, slaughter, stray dogs, disasters and working equids.

The **Four Paws (FP)** activities presented by Pierre Sultana were related to the ongoing revision of the EU animal welfare legislation and the active participation to the works of the EU Platform on Animal Welfare (slaughter and transport). With reference to stray dog control, a revised and modernized version of the CARO DOG website, aiming at disseminating scientific knowledge on cats and dogs and promoting responsible ownership as fundamental elements of dog population management, will be launched in September. Over the last few months FP has been also highly active in the assistance of the animals affected by Ukraine crisis with local teams operating in Bulgaria and Romania. Unfortunately, the scale of the conflict in Ukraine has limited the operational capacity of the teams deployed on the ground. To be noted the particularly good opportunities offered by the EU GREEN DEAL and the F2F strategy to integrate the risk reduction approach at various levels. FP is actively involved in different working groups at EC level and will persist to explore with DG SANTE the best ways to enforce this important approach.

The “New world for animals” **World Animal Protection (WAP)** strategy, promoting the shift towards humane and sustainable food systems that prioritize plant-based proteins and high welfare farming for animal welfare as well as the contrast of commercial exploitation of wild animals was briefly introduced by David Garrahy. Disaster prevention and mitigation will be also addressed by focussing on climate change and deforestation impact on animals. Habitat destruction, animal trade and the production animal feed for industrial purposes (Europe, China) are also part of the WAP policies. The transition towards a more sustainable food system changes will be also pursued by supporting initiatives aiming at changing diets and food habits the EU and help curbing the problem of antimicrobial resistance (AMR). A study on the economies of industrial agriculture will be launched in August. The European Citizens' Initiative “Fur Free Europe” calling on the EU to ban fur farms and farmed fur products from the European market will be also supported.

The **Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE)** has been mainly focusing its efforts on the new EU AW legislation development by contributing to the activities of several working groups of the EU Platform for AW. The FVE Animal Welfare strategy has been adopted in November, a dedicated brochure will be distributed over the next few weeks. Two position papers on animal transport and AW labelling have been developed, and another one on the training of animals is in the pipeline. The crisis in Ukraine is keeping the FVE very busy. Since the very beginning it became clear the need to coordinate the multitude of veterinarians offering support and resources to aid refugees and animals, both in UA and in the neighbouring countries. A dedicated web portal was therefore set up to assist both vets and refugees fleeing the war with their animals. Detailed information about the rules for introduction and transit of animals in different countries, details of persons to be contacted in case of need, norms regarding veterinary diploma recognition in the EU, disease risk management recommendations (rabies) and means for veterinary student's support were also disseminated. The portal has been widely consulted, with more than 50,000 hits only the first week. Another important action launched in collaboration with Humane Society International is free treatment of animals in need. So far more than 1600 animals have been assisted and the scheme will be extended until end of August. The general shortage of vets in Europe, not only in the livestock/food production sector but even for companion animals, already reported on 2021 is growing at an alarming rate. This worrisome multifaceted phenomenon is under FVE close attention as it's mainly due to a progressive abandonment of the veterinary profession. A third round of the periodic FVE survey on the veterinary profession in Europe will be launched in September.

Mrs Clare Carlisle recalled strong involvement of the **International Federation for Animal Health (IFAH)** in the implementation of the new EU rules on veterinary medicines, setting out several limitations and restrictions regarding the use of antibiotics in animal health care, and the development of the few outstanding delegated acts to be completed. Last year the IFAH revised its strategy with a focus on sustainability and innovation. One Health action plans are being developed in the vein of the quadripartite alliance to accelerate coordinated strategy on human, animal, and ecosystem health. To date, IFAH has been also highly active in the Ukrainian scenario and cooperates with the Ministry of Agriculture to supply veterinary medicines and other animal health products with the support of national members and in partnership with the EC emergency response units. The annual EU pet night will be revived this year in September, and it will be dedicated to the animals involved in animal - assisted therapy and the need for harmonized guidelines on the training of these animals. A

communication campaign will be launched to promote the wide range of opportunities to monitor health and welfare with a “One Health” preventative approach.

Alexandra Hammond – Seaman reminded the long-standing commitment of the **Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) International** to guide and support countries wishing to join the European Union in line with EU laws on animal welfare during the enlargement process. The RSPCA is also one of the advocacy organizations for animals, Eurogroup for Animals and actively participates to the WOAHP Platform of the action implementation in the areas of dog population and disaster management. In 2008 the RSPCA set up the Western Balkans Veterinary Network (WBVN) network to establish and support multi stakeholder's platform, to improve animal welfare at all stages of the food production process, as well as promoting responsible pet ownership, tackling stray dog problems, and encouraging methods that avoid or replace the use of animals in research. The Network activities are meant to strengthen cooperation and bring together professional working on AW in the region to find opportunities to link policies and science. ToT programs on animal welfare during slaughter and transport and animals in science have been offered to more than 200 professionals working in different areas at regional level. The Network was formalized as the Regional Animal Welfare Centre (RAWC) in 2014 and finally registered this year. Over the last few years several workshops and events have been organized, the first scientific conference in the Balkans was held in 2021. To date, the RAWC (Regional Animal Welfare Centre) is focusing its energies on the development of a DPM (Dog Population Management) pool of experts to support the local municipalities in the development and implementation of dog population control programs and on how to design tailor made interventions based on national actions plans. Within the frame of the WOAHP Platform, the RSPCA also supported the “Be my hero” awareness campaign. With reference to the ongoing conflict, the RSPCA is still struggling with the lack of understanding of the real situation on the ground and will continue to get for more detailed information through its collaborative network of local NGOs currently involved in the disaster response phase.

The **European Commission's Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety's** representative Dr Stanislav Ralchev briefly updated the participants on the state of progress of the ongoing revision of the EU legislation on animal welfare acquis, the upcoming launch of the impact assessment and the recent adoption of EFSA opinions on pigs and on transport. Six subgroups of the EU Platform on Animal Welfare are currently working in support to the EU regulatory process. Long distance transport remains a priority and this is fully reflected in the WOAHP Platform initiatives addressing the transport of animals by road and sea across and beyond the EU borders, especially with Middle East and North African countries: The Commission has also appreciated the establishment of the WOAHP National Contact Point on Long-Distance Transportation network and will continue to support the future WOAHP Platform initiatives on slaughter and killing for disease control purposes and stray dog control. The next meeting of EU Platform on Animal Welfare will be held in December.

The **European Federation for Animal Health and Health Safety (FESASS)** representative Alain Cantaloube contributed to the discussion by reminding that FESASS current activities are also mainly focused on the EU ongoing legislative revision and there are positive expectations around the effects of the “Farm to Fork Strategy” at the heart of the Green Deal. At the same time, FESASS is also greatly interested on animal welfare developments. A dedicated working group on animal welfare is about to be established, and a paper on the implementation of the F2F is in the pipeline. Public awareness initiatives, communication tools and training programs remains essential to raise the farmers and livestock producers' understandings on the importance of animal welfare, and biosecurity measures. FESASS will continue to organize informative meetings and training activities to bring advice farmers by farmers in partnership with veterinarians. Since 2019, a new regulation deals with heat waves and obligation for operators to be informed about them in France. A FESASS expert group will be set very shortly to raise the profile of these issues at the EU level.

The **European Livestock and Meat Trades Union (UECBV)** was represented by Kartsen Mayer and Carolina Cucurulla. Several meetings on animal's trade, F2F strategy and Green Deal were mentioned amongst the most relevant initiatives carried out over the last year. Emphasis was placed on the fact that training, education and supporting education structures are key elements, as these are crucial for promoting animal welfare and food production sustainability within the context of the existing legal framework. The discussion around the ongoing revision of the EU legislative measures on the transport of live animals, and of unweaned calves, and the stunning of pigs with CO₂ should be further discussed and complemented by the identification of feasible solutions aiming at securing the business continuity, in the perspective of an ever-increasing social sensibility towards the current livestock production methods.

The **International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW)** representative Stacy Mc Lennan attended on behalf of Celine Sissler-Bienvenue and reported about the activities conducted in Europe within the frame of the IFAW Disaster Response and Risk Reduction global program. Throughout the development of a need assessment program currently running in France, The Netherlands, Germany, Belgium, IFAW intends to expand their Disaster Response and Risk Reduction teams' capacity. As for Ukraine, an IFAW team has been deployed on the ground and took over animal services offered at the displacement camps distributed along the way from Ukraine to Poland. It also cooperates with the Veterinary Services by aiding the animals taken by refugees arriving by train. These activities have been recorded since several months now and a significant quantity of data is already available. A dedicated team will collaborate with the competent Authorities in the development of long-term recovery projects to assess need in the country and building resilience in two more years. Based on the lessons learned, IFAW will also inform the DG ECHO and Civil Protection after action assessments about the challenges faced in the rescuing, caretaking and transporting wildlife and captive animals, and to portrait advocacy in the coming years. IFAW is also committed to address the issues of wildlife crime within the context of the European Green Deal and will support the establishment of an EU expert group on biodiversity and pandemics. A report on animals in disasters in Europe, putting together recommendations based on what would be need in the coming years will be published in few months.

5. Emerging ideas and priority topics to be considered for the WOAHP Platform for Animal Welfare in Europe 2024-2026 action plan development

The session is dedicated to discussion on ideas, priorities, actions and activities to be considered for the development of the next action plan of the Platform (2024-2026). The discussion was opened with brief recall on relevant outcomes of previous activities and summary of results available from surveys and assessments tools. ([Link to see the presentation](#))

5.1. Transport of animals by land and by sea

The WOAHP Platform completed a series of activities on the transport of animals, including development of training materials, 'training of trainers' workshops, regional seminars, whole journey scenario workshops and establishing the regional network of contact points for long distance transportation. The main issues identified by completed activities include: the need for strengthening communication and collaboration between Competent Authorities and all actors involved in transporting live animals, appropriate planning, and emergency procedures, including the processes for their verification, sharing results of official controls and inspections, and development guidance documents and sharing experience, solutions and best practices.

In addition, The Regional Commission for Europe agreed to address the topic of "Long distance transport of live animals: WOAHP standards and best practices including societal perception and communication aspects "as a Technical Item with a questionnaire at the 30th Conference of the Regional Commission for Europe. This technical item will provide an opportunity to collect information on the best practices in the long-distance transport of animals by land and sea applied across the European Region at country and regional levels, analyse the current strengths and weaknesses and identify best practices in implementing WOAHP standards. The results of the questionnaire and follow-up conclusion and recommendation will support the identification and development of specific activities for the next action plan of the Platform.

5.2. Stray dog control

As part of the first Action Plan of the WOAHP Platform on Animal Welfare for Europe, the WOAHP decided to launch medium to long term regional initiatives on stray dog population control in the Balkans and West Eurasia, in the interests of both dogs (animal welfare aspects) and the wider community (public security and health aspects). So far, 10 Balkan countries conducted their 1st self-assessment round with the SAM Tool 1.0 in 2015/2016 and 9 participated to a second one in 2018. A third self-assessment round has been completed last year. Comprehensive national and regional Reports have been produced as key outcomes of these self-assessment rounds. They collate and analyse the results of the self-assessment and are based on the data reported and validated by the WOAHP Delegates. Some of the results of the third self-assessment were shortly presented to review the advancement in the implementation of the national Roadmaps and the progress achieved in terms of regional Vision in the Balkans. So far, 8 out of 11 Countries have been able to count the number of owned dogs but only two of them had the means to measure the consistence of the stray dog population. Half of the responding countries identify owned dogs or abandoned animals as the main source of stray dogs, whose

presence is still considered a problem for 7 out of eight countries, posing public health and security risks (i.e., dog bites, risk for zoonotic diseases transmission). Dog Population Control Programs (DP-CPs) have been implemented in 7 out of 8 countries and they were made in accordance with the territorial situation related to the local dog population. Dog identification is a legal obligation in all countries, that have centralized databases in place, and normally use ISO approved transponders for animal ID. Whilst several positive developments of national control strategies can be noted in different degrees across countries, stray dog control is mainly managed by local governmental authorities. Follow up Actions; (1) To contribute to the development of the new SAM Tool 2.0 (2022) (2) To conduct a SAM 2.0 self-assessment round on stray dogs and rabies and organize the 4th workshop on stray dog for West Eurasia (TBC – 2022). (3) To strengthen the Platform's level of technical assistance by promoting the setting of a pool of 'stray dog managers' in the Balkans and to expand the range of training and capacity building programs (4) To enhance the opportunities to access to technical assistance projects/financial measures with the support of the Platform Secretariat, the WOAHA Network of CCs on Animal Welfare, RAWC, other sub-regional Academic bodies/Institutions and local/international NGOs (i.e., WOAHA Europe Regional Strategic Action 2022-2025).

5.3. Slaughter of animals

In the framework of two previous action plans the WOAHA Platform conducted series of capacity building activities on slaughter of animals including development of training materials, 'training of trainers' workshops and cascading and follow up activities. The WOAHA standard on slaughter (Chapter 7.5 of Terrestrial Animal Health Code) on is currently under revision. The existing training material will be revised and updated to reflect changes in the WOAHA standard and new scientific evidence. The development of the structured and systematic methodology and tool for assessment of the level of the implementation of the WOAHA standard still needs to be addressed after the adoption of the revised Chapter 7.5 to understand situation of European countries in terms of compliance with this chapter and allow for measuring progress over time.

5.4. Animal welfare in natural disasters

A survey on the levels of "Veterinary Services' preparedness for animal welfare emergencies during natural disasters" was completed in 2021. Forty-nine WOAHA Europe Members responded for a 92% completion rate. Fifty-two percent indicated they incorporated animal welfare into their disaster planning. Thirty-one percent indicated they had no or limited legal authority to manage animal emergencies in natural disasters. The species covered in national response plan ranged from laboratory animals at 17% to livestock at 48%. Eighty-two percent had no or limited standard operating procedures and 73% had no training to respond to animal welfare in disasters. Budget, trained personnel, equipment/supplies and legal authority were the most frequently identified gaps. The survey demonstrated there is a wide range of European Member Countries capacity to respond to animal welfare in natural disasters, and it provides the baseline to provide focused and actionable support to Member Countries. The paper on "World Organization for Animal Health Members' capacity to deal with animal welfare emergencies during natural disasters in Europe" for publication in a peer review is being submitted. Based on these results, the outcomes of the TTX conducted in 2021 workshop and of the ongoing regional needs assessment exercise focusing on Veterinary Services preparedness and capacity levels, new initiatives will be developed in this area, within the context of the 2021-2023 Action Plan. Follow up actions:(1) to jointly organize the IZS/WOAH Appreciative enquiry summit on animal welfare in flooding scenarios (2022) (2) to involve the participants to the triennial pilot project in the Balkans and the Platform stakeholders in the quarterly EmVetNet webinar sessions (2022) (3) to support the organization of a Portugal/Spain workshop on Animal Welfare in natural disasters (2023).

5.5. Welfare working equids

The baseline survey developed by the Platform secretariat together with the International Coalition for Working Equids on the welfare of working equids for West Eurasia was conducted in 2019. The survey targeted eight countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan). The survey covered topics on working equids population and their role in a local country context, veterinary and para-professional services, health and welfare issues, stakeholder engagement, and awareness. Key findings of the survey confirm that working equids play a valuable role in West Eurasian countries, and Member countries recognize the importance of raising awareness of the welfare of working equids. The future activities targeting in selected West Eurasian countries to raise public awareness on the economic and welfare importance of working equids are under the development to define most relevant, applicable and impact-oriented format (e.g., an awareness campaign).

Main points of discussion

- ✓ SAM Tool 1.0 assessment reliability of data (i.e., number rabies cases, vaccinated animals) and accessibility to Country report information
- ✓ Frequency of the meetings of contact points on transportation and details about the WJS meetings with the Middle East, and North African region
- ✓ Upcoming Platform initiatives on disaster mitigation, animal increased vulnerability in the context of climate change, the role of animals in sustainable development according to the UN
- ✓ The reliability and accuracy of the data provided by the Members participating in the survey on “Veterinary Services’ preparedness for animal welfare emergencies during natural disasters”
- ✓ The need to better assess the impact of non-epidemic emergencies on animal welfare
- ✓ Elements to be included in the next external evaluation round, to set the 2024-2026 Action Plan in the perspective of the WOAHA Members, and stakeholders’ expectations and needs
- ✓ The need to strengthen the resilience of the livestock production sector to natural hazards and climate related emergencies and to invest in disaster risk reduction

Proposal for follow up action

Multiple and sometimes unknown and uncoordinated interventions are taking place in relation to current conflict in Ukraine and a difficulty to understand the real needs persists. The FP representative offered to the WOAHA and to the EC to set up an information exchange event/call with the scope of bringing more clarity on situation in Ukraine and where technical difficulties have been limiting the best assistance.

Considering the scarcity of data about the impact of natural disasters on animals at national, regional or global level the WAP representative suggested the opportunity to promote the setting of a database/centre /hub aiming at providing an objective base for effective disaster relief response and prospective disaster resilience planning. This initiative will also increase the awareness about the need of improving the welfare of animals affected by catastrophic events and allow the NGO to better advocate their full integration into vulnerability assessment, priority setting and informed decision making for disaster preparedness interventions.

List of annexes

Annex 1 – Agenda

Annex 2 – List of participants