

Regional Animal Welfare Strategy Newsletter

December 2015

Note from the Chair

This newsletter summarises key meetings since November 2014 on the Regional Animal Welfare Strategy (RAWS). A key theme running through all was the future of RAWS activities given resource constraints. A paper by the RAWS Coordination Group (CG) was considered at the Regional Commission Meeting for Asia, the Far East and Oceania at its meeting in Ulaanbaatar, 14 – 18 September 2015. The Regional Commission agreed on the need and value of the RAWS and made recommendations on its continuation. Since that time the RAWS Secretariat (OIE Regional Representation for Asia and the Pacific: RRAP) has worked closely with the Regional Commission to establish a new Advisory Group for the RAWS, and the Bureau of the Regional Commission has proposed membership, a chair, and a slightly modified terms of reference and *Modus Operandi* for the OIE Director General's approval. The development and success of the RAWS is a tribute to all involved in the RAWS CG and the Secretariats from Australia and the OIE RRAP. The RAWS was a 'first' Regional Strategy, and the Model has and is being used in other parts of the world. I anticipate that under the new arrangements the progress and innovation seen in the past will be reflected in the future. The RAWS would not have happened without funding and resource support from Australia. Australia should be thanked for its assistance. In conclusion, compliments of the Season; have a happy and healthy New Year.



Dr Gardner Murray

Chairman RAWS Coordination Group

Outcomes of RAWS CG Meeting 8

The 8th meeting of the RAWS CG was held on 11th November 2014 in Canberra, Australia back-to-back with Animal Welfare Focal Point Seminar. The RAWS CG includes representatives from Australia, Bhutan, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, World Animal Protection (WAP; formerly known as WSPA), observers from New Zealand, European Commission and OIE.



The RAWS CG is chaired by Dr Gardner Murray and the secretariat role is performed by the OIE RRAP, following a recent transfer from the Australian Government Department of Agriculture.

The group was asked to deal with the issue raised by the OIE Director General, handling of cattle and sheep during *Eid al-Adha* (Qurban festival) during both

transport and slaughter.

The meeting discussed and made recommendations relating to country/organisation progress and regulatory developments, the promotion of the Action Plan implementation, the status of existing Animal Welfare education and training materials and their further use, contribution to ISO Standards development, the future of funding of the RAWS CG and its activities and the welfare issue of *Eid al-Adha* (Qurban festival) and slaughter.

The meeting noted that good progress has been made on animal welfare issues by those countries and organisations that are members of RAWS CG and agreed to further promote RAWS implementation within the region by involving more member countries via their OIE National Focal Points for Animal Welfare and/or directly approaching OIE National Delegates at the Regional Commission meetings.

Outcomes from RAWS CG Meeting 9

The RAWS CG held its 9th meeting on 26 - 27 March in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Representatives attended from Australia, Bhutan, Indonesia, Malaysia and WAP. Observers from the OIE, NGOs, governmental agencies and OIE Collaborating Centres also participated.



The Chairman of the RAWS CG, Dr Murray noted that Australian Government funding for the RAWS would finish after the meeting, and as such the meeting's key objectives were to review the RAWS progress within countries; discuss the current format of the RAWS Action Plan and identify any key developments since the last meeting; discuss the future governance and finance options for the RAWS and recommend any small future projects/meetings.

Country-level reports of the RAWS implementation demonstrated pleasing progress towards improved animal welfare outcomes through legislation, educational programs and outreach to the private sector. The CG noted that a more comprehensive picture of the RAWS efficacy would become apparent if all member countries in the region submitted a report on the status of animal welfare in their nations.

As a result of a breakout session held on the second day, the CG recommended that a RAWS regional meeting be held, and the Action Plan be updated. A small writing group consisting of members from Malaysia, the OIE and WAP formed to update the existing Action Plan.

Finally the CG discussed a number of options for future governance and funding of the RAWS. The CG agreed that the OIE RRAP remain the secretariat for the organisation, and recommended that the Regional Commission take over full responsibility for the RAWS under the guidance of an Advisory Group selected by the OIE Director General.

Update on the RAWs Action Plan

The RAWs Action Plan is a living document to be a useful tool, define and track activities under the RAWs. A small writing group comprised representatives from Malaysia, Thailand, WAP and OIE, developed the 2nd version which is consolidated version built upon both the previous RAWs Action Plan and RAWs Implementation Plan.

The activities in the Action Plan are linked to the four RAWs goals and objectives to ensure that the strategy is progressing in line with the regional vision. Regional

member countries are encouraged to download a copy of the RAWs Action Plan from the RAWs website at: <http://www.rr-asia.oie.int/strategies/regional-animal-welfare-strategy/>.



Outcomes of OIE RAWs Regional Meeting, 2015

Between 29-30 July in Bangkok, a RAWs Regional Meeting convened to discuss the future of the RAWs initiative. Participants included regional member countries; OIE National Focal Points; OIE Representatives from HQ, RRAP and SRRSEA; OIE Animal Welfare Working Group; WAP; OIE Council and OIE Regional Commission. Under discussion was the future of the RAWs management, actions and funding.

The Regional Meeting agreed that the Regional Commission would assume responsibility for the RAWs and that the RAWs CG hand over responsibility to a RAWs Advisory Group (AG). The meeting discussed the terms of reference and a *modus operandi* for the AG including group membership, selection procedures, methods of communication and leadership responsibilities in future projects.

Prior to the RAWs Regional Meeting, a small group formulated a draft consolidated RAWs Action Plan (7th April & 28th July) with the aim of creating a resource document to which the RAWs AG and member countries can refer. This Action Plan will provide a framework for member countries to implement the RAWs in their animal production systems, with scope to mold it to their national requirements and take advantage of the social and economic benefits of improving animal welfare.



Further considerations on the RAWs Action Plan and the ongoing funding, and future activities produced fruitful discussions between the participating groups. Going forward the CG recognised the importance of collaboration between the National Focal Points for Animal Welfare and the National OIE Delegates for the RAWs' ongoing progress.

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