Role and responsibilities of the veterinarian in the aquatic sector

The OIE perspective

“The OIE perspective”

“Caring for health and welfare of fish: A critical success factor for aquaculture”

FVE Conference
Brussels (Belgium), 16-17 May 2013

Dr Etienne Bonbon, Advisor to the OIE
Global Context as regards fish production

- World demand increasing at a faster rate than economic growth and the world’s population
- Production of food-producing animals in an aquatic environment is a rapidly expanding industry worldwide: **protein from aquatic animals = 50%**
- Emergence of health risks associated with globalisation and climate change (e.g. farmed shrimp and salmon), with disastrous economic and social consequences. Average production losses related to aquatic diseases are estimated to currently exceed 25% worldwide
- Importance of a harmonised framework for aquatic animal health protection, incl. through trade measures
Aquatic animal health has been part of the OIE mandate for over 50 years

List of diseases of importance of fish, molluscs, crustaceans and amphibians

For each, standards on surveillance, detection, risk analysis and standardised laboratory techniques

Delegate of OIE Member Countries to nominate a National Focal Point for aquatic animal diseases
OIE international standards

- OIE develops international standards for animal health (including zoonoses) and welfare for both aquatic and terrestrial animals
- Including standards on the quality of Veterinary Services and Aquatic Animal Health Services
- Including definitions of Veterinarian and (draft) Aquatic Animal Health Professional

International standard setting organisations

- SPS Agreement
- Food Safety
- Plant Health
- OIE
- CODEX
- IPPC
The OIE standards applicable to aquatic animals and aquatic animal products are in the:

Aquatic Animal Health Code and the
Manual of Diagnostic Tests for Aquatic Animals
Some of the information available in the Aquatic Code

- Zoning & compartmentalisation
- Guidelines for risk analysis
- Quality of Aquatic Animal health Services
- Conditions for trade
- Model export certificates
- Transport of farmed fish
- Disease reporting obligations
- Surveillance for disease
- OIE listed diseases
- Procedures for aquatic animal waste disposal
- Responsible and prudent use of antimicrobial agents
- Stunning and killing of farmed fish for human consumption
- Criteria for disease freedom
Aquatic Code Glossary

Examples

- Competent Authority
- Veterinarian, Veterinary Authority, Veterinary Statutory body
- Aquatic Animal Health Services, Aquatic Animal Health Professional
- Notification
- Certifying official
Aquatic Code Glossary

- **Competent Authority**
  means the *Veterinary Authority* or other Governmental Authority of a Member having the responsibility and competence for ensuring or supervising the implementation of *aquatic animal health and welfare measures, international health certification* and other standards and recommendations in the *Aquatic Code* in the whole territory.
Aquatic Code Glossary

- **Veterinary Authority**
  means the Governmental Authority of an OIE Member, comprising **veterinarians, other professionals and para-professionals**, having the responsibility and competence for ensuring or supervising the implementation of aquatic animal health and welfare measures, international aquatic animal health certification and other standards and recommendations in the Aquatic Code in the whole territory.

- **Veterinarian**
  means a person registered or licensed by the relevant veterinary statutory body of a country to practise veterinary medicine/science in that country.

- **Veterinary statutory body**
  means an autonomous authority **regulating** veterinarians and veterinary para-professionals.
Aquatic Code Glossary: proposed modified definition

- **Aquatic Animal Health Services**
  means the governmental and non-governmental organisations that implement animal health and welfare measures and other standards and recommendations in the *Aquatic Code* in the territory. The Aquatic Animal Health Services are under the overall control and direction of the Competent Authority. Private sector organisations, veterinarians, or aquatic animal health professionals or veterinary paraprofessionals are normally accredited or approved by the Competent Authority to deliver the delegated functions.
Aquatic Code Glossary: proposed new definition

Aquatic animal health professional means a person who, for the purposes of the Aquatic Animal Health Code, is authorised by the Competent Authority to carry out certain designated tasks in a territory, and has the appropriate qualifications and training to perform the designated tasks.
Aquatic Code Glossary

- **Notification**
  means the procedure by which:
  - the *Veterinary Authority* informs the *Headquarters*,
  - the *Headquarters* inform *Veterinary Authorities of Members*
  of the occurrence of a *disease*, according to the provisions of Chapter 1.1. of the *Aquatic Code*.

- **Certifying official**
  means a person authorised by the *Competent Authority* to sign health certificates for *aquatic animals*. 
Aquatic Code Chapter 3.1. Quality of Aquatic Animal Health Services

- Art. 3.1.2. Fundamental principles of quality means the procedure by which:
  7. General organisation

Aquatic Animal Health Services should define and document the responsibilities and structure of the organisation (in particular the chain of command) in charge of issuing international aquatic animal health certificates.

Each position within the Aquatic Animal Health Services that has an impact on their quality should be described. These job descriptions should include the requirements for education, training, technical knowledge and experience.
Global Conference on Aquatic Animal Health

Recommendation #23: ... to advocate for the key role of veterinarians and aquatic animal health professionals in the prevention and control of disease and to encourage governments and donors to invest in Veterinary Services and Aquatic Animal Health Services as a Global Public Good
Recommendation # 24: ... continue taking steps to make the PVS Pathway, appropriately adapted to national aquatic animal health systems, more accessible to governments that wish to strengthen Aquatic Animal Health Services (AAHS), including through the conduct of pilot evaluations of AAHS at the request of OIE Members
Recommendation # 28: … address the particular needs of veterinarians working with aquatic animals as part of its recommendations on the Day 1 competencies of graduating veterinarians, including by asking the Aquatic Animal Health Standards Commission to prepare recommendations on the content of the curriculum for Day 1 and Specialist Veterinarians.
Support to the public and private health systems: Standards on the quality of the Aquatic Animal Health Services

Tool to evaluate these services’ compliance with standards of quality + on a strictly voluntary basis, an evaluation conducted by independent experts trained and certified by the OIE

Guidelines on Veterinary Education
A tool for the Good Governance of Aquatic Animal Health Services

Chapter 3.1. Quality of Aquatic Animal Health Services
New PVS Tool – Aquatic will be:

- made available on the OIE website by June 2013;
- printed in hard copy by July 2013;
Ch. I. Human, Physical and Financial Resources

Critical Competencies

Section I-1  Professional and technical staffing of the Veterinary Services or Aquatic Animal Health Services

Section I-2  Competencies of veterinarians or aquatic animal professionals, and other technical personnel

Section I-3  Continuing education

Section I-4  Technical independence

Section I-5  Stability of structures and sustainability of policies

Section I-6  Coordination capability of the Veterinary Services or Aquatic Animal Health Services

Section I-7  Physical resources

Section I-8  Operational funding

Section I-9  Emergency funding

Section I-10 Capital investment

Section I-11 Management of resources and operations
Veterinary Education

The quality of veterinary education is not adequate in up to 80% of veterinary education establishments in the world.

Initial & continuing veterinary education is a key tool for global governance.
Minimum competencies brochure published on OIE website:
Conclusion

Global veterinary education: a key component of the quality of veterinary services and aquatic animal health services

=> Veterinary education must evolve to meet societal demands and new sanitary risks in food security, food safety, animal and public health and animal welfare, and include aquatic animals.

=> The OIE is addressing the issue of veterinary education and legislation as part of its commitment to strengthening animal health and welfare and veterinary services globally.
Thank you for your attention