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Guidelines on stray dog population control

Draft chapter for OIE standards

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The chapter's objectives

- Provide guidance for veterinary services preventing zoonotic diseases involving stray dogs
- Ensure animal welfare in stray dog population control
- Help veterinary services to deal with the socio-economic, political and religious aspects of presence of feral or stray dogs

Background of the chapter

- The guidelines were drafted by a convened Group of experts
- Endorsed by the Terrestrial Animal Health Code Commission
- Currently out for consultation by OIE Members
- Proposed for adoption by the International Committee at the General Session in May 2009

Content of the chapter

- a) Definitions and identification of stray dog population
- b) Objectives of dog population control programmes
- c) Responsibilities and competencies of involved stakeholders
- d) Proposed control measures and their socio-economic, environmental and animal welfare implications
- e) A comparative list of Euthanasia (not) recommended methods considering the implications for animal welfare AND handling persons
- f) Methods for monitoring and evaluation of dog population control programmes

Definitions / stray dog population

- Dogs not under direct control by a person or not prevented from roaming -> stray dog
 - a) Free roaming owned dog not under direct control or restriction at a particular time
 - b) Free roaming dog with no owner
 - c) Feral dog (not dependant upon humans)
- Owned dog = a dog with a person / community that claims responsibility

Objectives of dog population control

- Improve health and welfare of dog populations (all)
- Reduce population
- Promote responsible ownership
- Creation and maintenance of rabies immune/free populations
- Reduce risk of transmission of other zoonotic and parasitic diseases to humans
- Environmental considerations
- Prevent illegal trade and trafficking

Control measures

Should be adapted to the local conditions and particularities!

- (1) Education and legislation for responsible ownership
- (2) Registration and identification of dogs
- (3) Reproductive control
- (4) Removal and handling
- (5) Management of captured stray dogs
- (6) Environmental controls (e.g. removal feed sources)
- (7) Dog movement control, regulation for dog dealers
- (8) Reduction in dog bite incidence (awareness, education)
- (9) Euthanasia

Monitoring dog population

- Better target intervention
- Assess and improve performance of control measures
- Sustainability of programmes

Considerations:

Elements to be monitored:

- Population size and particularities
- Changes in dog welfare
- Prevalence in diseases
- Changes in responsible ownership

Indicators:

- Feed back from local community
- Records and opinion from relevant professionals
- Animal based measurements