Regional Seminar for OIE National Focal Points for Veterinary Products (second cycle)

Vienna, Austria, 20–22 November 2012

This regional seminar of OIE National Focal Points for Veterinary Products (second cycle) was organised by the OIE Regional Representation for Eastern Europe from 20 to 22 November 2012, in Vienna, Austria. It came as a follow-up to the first cycle of seminars, held in Belgrade, Serbia, from 26 to 28 July 2010. This second meeting of the Focal Points from Eastern Europe took place under the technical guidance and responsibility of the OIE Scientific and Technical Department (Dr Elisabeth Erlacher-Vindel and Dr Susanne Münstermann).

Invited to attend were the National Focal Points for Veterinary Products from 26 Member Countries of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe. Of these, 23 countries sent representatives, including Focal Points from 11 Russian-speaking countries, six EU Member States (Austria, Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Slovakia) and six non-EU Member States (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Israel, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Turkey).

The three overall objectives of the seminar were:

1. to provide participants with knowledge on the rights, commitments and responsibilities of OIE National Focal Points in the standard-setting process and in compliance with OIE international standards,
2. to provide participants with information on the role and responsibilities of Veterinary Services, of regional or international structures relevant to veterinary products, and on the specific tasks of National Focal Points in this area, and
3. to allow discussion and the sharing of experience among the countries of the region and stakeholders.

The official language of the seminar was English but Russian simultaneous translation was also provided.
The event was opened and chaired by Prof. Dr Nikola Belev, OIE Regional Representative for Eastern Europe and Delegate of Bulgaria to the OIE.

A welcoming address was made on behalf of the host country by Dr Ulrich Herzog, Delegate of Austria to the OIE, who highlighted in his remarks the importance of this issue. Dr Elisabeth Erlacher-Vindel welcomed the participants on behalf of the OIE.

The agenda was organised into lectures and working-group sessions. The latter were dedicated to:

- discussion and application of the VICH Guidelines;
- the responsible use of veterinary medicinal products;
- a monitoring plan for veterinary drug residues;
- the establishment of monitoring systems for antimicrobial resistance and the quantities of antimicrobials used in animals.

Speakers from both OIE Collaborating Centres on Veterinary Products – the Agency for Food, Environmental and Occupational Health and Safety (ANMV-ANSES, France) and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA, USA) – presented their work in relation to veterinary products, as did representatives from the World Health Organization, the European Medicines Agency and the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe.

We are pleased to report that many of the participants extended their sincere thanks to OIE Headquarters and the OIE Regional Representation for Eastern Europe for a successful seminar.

An OIE National Focal Points Seminar on Animal Welfare was organised from 4 to 6 December 2012, to discuss concepts of good governance to improve animal health and welfare at the national level, and to explain and clarify the role and responsibilities of OIE Animal Welfare Focal Points.

Out of 12 invited countries, nine participated in the seminar: Bahrain, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, the host country Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Syria, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen. Representatives from various non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and industry were also present.

As an important part of the recommendations made by the Third OIE Global Conference on Animal Welfare, held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, from 6 to 8 November 2012, the OIE was requested to support the development and implementation of OIE Regional Animal Welfare Strategies (RAWS). Within the current capacity-building framework, the OIE is likely to be able to obtain funds to train in-country teams of trainers to promote best practice in animal transport and slaughter in specified eligible countries in the region.