

1st Western Balkan Regional meeting of Animal Welfare Experts

Tuhelj, Croatia 27-28 February 2014

Organized by the *Croatian Veterinary Institute* and the *RSPCA International*

Meeting objectives:

- To review the activities of the WBVN and follow up on the recommendations of the WBVN meeting held in Teramo in 2012
- To present the newly appointed Animal welfare centre held at the Croatian Veterinary Institute to a wide stakeholder forum from the region
- To inform the participants of the current EU, OIE, IZSAM Teramo plans and priorities for the Europe region
- To discuss possible models for the establishment of a regional advisory board and specific tasks
- To exchange, share and inform of the current activities in the region
- To presents the industry views, both the industry standard and the higher welfare standard
- To discuss next steps for the development of the regional advisory board

Countries:

Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Bulgaria, Kosovo, Macedonia
UK, Belgium, Italy

Workshop outcomes:

Following the plenary session on Day 2 , the participants were divided into 4 focus groups to discuss the establishment and tasks of the regional advisory board.

They were asked to discuss:

1. Discuss possible models for the regional advisory bord in terms of organisation:
 - Independent expert group
 - Representative group

and management:

discuss criteria which should drive the selection of members (experts/representatives)

2. What would be the role and the specific tasks of the regional advisory board?
3. What are the regional animal welfare priorities of the board?
4. What mechanisms, networks and groups do we need to develop and utilise to ensure functionality of the board?

In the plenary the funding of the board was also discussed.

The summary of the discussions:

Q1 National or multinational? Multinational – avoid duplication build on existing networks

- Governance of RAWB? Funder controls agenda?

If independent -Use independent Trust fund obtain money from

National Government and other sources

If independent each country pays for it' nationals to attend the board and per diem

If representative each organisation pays for their representative.

Non political or administrative only technical advice

- Criteria for experts

Board has management role in welfare risks

Strategic documents

Action plan to resolve a welfare issue

Produces a model plan for it resolution

Species / system experts

Vets Animal welfare Science, Economics

Knowledge of national regional and EU welfare

Ethics

Social science, consumer, retail

The group conducted SWOT analysis for independent and representative groups which will be further analysed

Q2

To provide a scientific, practical and ethical advice to the WBVN + stakeholders on the animal welfare issues

- To make a screening and to elaborate a clear map of the situation
- To prioritize the main AW issues/problems in the region
- To draft AW strategy taking into account the specifics of the region
- To communicate/coordinate with the decision makers/ stakeholders within the region
- To collaborate with the OIE, EC, third parties
- To formalize of the Western Balkan animal welfare network
- To advice the candidate countries of EU
- To provide documented procedures (templates), recommendations, guidelines, scientific opinions
- To share experience/ knowledge/ milestones
- The advisory board/ network are in place, functional and possible enlarges
- Implementation of the AW strategy plan in the Western Balkan region
- Strong network with all stakeholders involved (industry, farmers, consumers, etc.)
- Finances to continues the work

Q3

- Support to TCs in process of transposition of legislation and its implementation
- Training of official staff (just expert database or organizing)
- Promotion of AW (awareness, AW friendly farming systems)
- Creation and promotion of guides to good practice
- Getting the AW message into the education system (schools, education of teachers)
- [Certification body] (?)

Q4

Define target group for:

- Education, twinning, exchanging needs for upgrading standards, type of farm, compare best practices in the region recommendation for technical expertise model of animal welfare practices for sharing transfer technologies understanding the regional variation related to the different practices propose actions activities

Communication instruments:

- Meetings on regular basis (open meetings with interesting parties depending of topics, main stakeholders in the region) Information and collaboration with regional retailer
- Communication with OIE platform or other EC institution to avoid repetition and to coordinate activities.
- Development of database (WEB database) for training programs training materials links to Europe platforms for training of stakeholders.
- Database for existing expert (AWARE)

Educational programs

- Information for existing educational program in the region
- Evaluation of training materials, recommendation linked with different EU legislation recommendations to national authorities for acceptances of this training materials

Recommendations for the tasks of the RAB:

- To build structures and processes to actively share knowledge and expertise
- related to the implementation of EU legislation.
- To cooperate and liaise with the European network of reference centres and facilitate bridging activities with the CCs.
- To facilitate the consistent implementation of EU legislation through the identification of difficulties and bottlenecks as well as related risks for animal welfare.
- To advise on interpretation of national and EU laws.
- To develop knowledge strategies to overcome difficulties and bottlenecks and to assist Member States and CCs with implementation of legislation.
- To increase stakeholders' awareness, engagement and collaboration in addressing animal welfare issues.
- To minimise duplication of effort by Competent Authorities from Member States and CCs in developing tools to implement animal welfare legislation.
- To provide scientific and technical advice to national support bodies on animal welfare risks and indicators as well as on best practices to alleviate or resolve welfare problems.
- To conduct and/or coordinate studies on the welfare status of animals, on methods and indicators to assess welfare and on welfare improvement strategies.
- To design and conduct training courses for staff of Competent Authorities and experts from third countries.
- To disseminate research findings and technical innovations and to collaborate with European Union research bodies.

Proposed action:

- Steering Group meeting 1 -2 April to agree an action plan.
- CVI appointed as a coordinating body, to provide the secretariat and coordinate the activities of the Regional Advisory Board (RAB) for Animal Welfare in the Balkans supported by the RSPCA.
- Tomislav Mikus appointed a coordinator.

- CVI to deliver a work plan in agreement with the RAB steering committee.
- CVI will organise and co-ordinate the activities of the Regional Advisory Board in agreement with the steering committee.
- Set up working groups that will ensure dissemination and exchange of knowledge and will be focussed on specific tasks designed to overcome identified welfare problems.
- Managing the website and the RAB's administration).
- Coordinate the selection and deployment of experts with the RAB standing committee
- Organise and co-ordinate meetings and schedule of work
- Organise regional annual meeting to report on the RAB activities and outcome
- Establish contacts with the relevant authorities and institutions to set up a working framework for the delivery of the project.

A.H-S, March, 2014