

# REGIONAL ANIMAL WELFARE STRATEGY

Asia, the Far East and Oceania



## PREFACE

Animal welfare is a particularly important contemporary social issue.

The need for science based welfare standards and their effective implementation cannot be underestimated. It is for this reason that OIE has included animal welfare as a key strategic issue and leads in the development of animal welfare guidelines.

The OIE Regional Animal Welfare Strategy represents a shared vision and provides for an integrated planning approach to animal welfare at the national level. It reflects the views of a number of countries in the Region as well as a range of stakeholders. Key to the success of the Strategy will be the development of practical and applied implementation processes and the ongoing support of governments, welfare organisations, practitioners, scientists and industry.

The Strategy is a 'living document' and will be amended as necessary in the light of experience. I commend the Strategy to you.

*Gardner Murray*

**Dr Gardner Murray**, President, OIE Regional Commission for Asia, the Far East and Oceania



Thank you to the Australian Government Department Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and the participants involved in the Animal Welfare Workshop and the Writing Group meeting for their valuable input into the development of the *Regional Animal Welfare Strategy for Asia, the Far East and Oceania*.

Photos courtesy of World Society for the Protection of Animals, OIE Regional Coordination Unit and Animal Health Australia.

## FOREWORD

The inclusion of animal welfare in the third strategic plan for the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), for the period 2001–05, recognised the ever-increasing public, political and scientific attention being given to the topic and the need for intergovernmental leadership in the development of science-based animal welfare policies and guidelines.

The OIE's unanimous adoption in 2005 of the first four sets of animal welfare guidelines, covering animal transport by sea and land, and animal slaughter for human consumption and for disease control purposes, was an important achievement in a relatively short timeframe. It is equally pleasing to see the degree of support for the OIE's leadership role from international livestock industry and farmer groups, international food retailers, international financial institutions, animal welfare organisations, science organisations and the veterinary profession.

The challenge now is to ensure the implementation of the adopted guidelines throughout the OIE membership. Regional Commissions will play a vital role in this regard. The OIE recognises animal welfare as a complex, multifaceted international public policy issue with scientific, economic, religious, regional and cultural dimensions. This is particularly true within the Asia, Far East and Oceania region.

This regional strategy aims to facilitate the implementation of the animal welfare guidelines adopted in 2005 and to provide a framework to coordinate animal welfare activities and address emerging issues. It recognises the varying degrees of socioeconomic development and cultural and religious considerations in the countries of the region. The plan includes a strategic commitment for governments to work in partnership with non-government stakeholders from industry and animal welfare organisations to protect and promote the welfare of animals in a sustainable manner.

The strategy also reflects the agreed OIE guiding principles for animal welfare contained in the *Terrestrial Animal Health Code* and includes a regional mission statement modelled on that adopted by the International Committee. The

International Committee's mission is: *To provide regional leadership in animal welfare through the development of science-based standards and guidelines, the provision of expert advice and the promotion of relevant education and research.*

The agreed vision for the strategy is: *A region where the welfare of animals is respected, promoted and incrementally advanced, simultaneously with the pursuit of progress and socioeconomic development.* This vision presents both significant challenges and opportunities. These are reflected in four priority goals, and their supporting objectives and specific activities.

It is envisaged that the establishment of a Regional Animal Welfare Coordination Group will provide a mechanism for planning annual operating activities and updating the strategy every three years. The establishment of similar national coordination groups is also likely to be necessary; there is the opportunity to establish a small number of such groups on a pilot basis.

The need for this regional strategy was discussed at a workshop held in Bangkok in November 2007, which was attended by 13 countries from the region, as well as private sector and animal welfare nongovernment organisations. An equally successful strategy writing group meeting was held in February 2008. The generous support of the Australian Government, in funding these meetings, is gratefully acknowledged.

We would also like to recognise the active and enthusiastic support given by regional member countries for the preparation of this plan, which we see as a possible model to be followed by other OIE regions.

Animal welfare issues will assume increasing significance in the years ahead, and we are confident that this strategy will play an important role in guiding, coordinating and prioritising operational activities within the region.



**Dr Bernard Vallat**  
Director General, OIE

## BACKGROUND

The World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) agreed to include an animal welfare initiative in its third strategic plan, for the period 2001–05, and established an ad hoc group to review all animal welfare issues. This group prepared an options paper in late 2001, which led to the establishment of the Permanent Animal Welfare Working Group in 2002. The first priorities of the working group were to draft an OIE animal welfare mission statement and animal welfare guiding principles, and to plan for the first OIE Global Conference on Animal Welfare in Paris in 2004.

The first five sets of OIE animal welfare guidelines were unanimously adopted at the 73rd Annual General Session of the International Committee of the OIE in 2005. These guidelines cover slaughter for human consumption, land transport, sea

transport, air transport and humane killing of animals for disease control purposes.

In addition to work already in progress on aquatic animal transport and slaughter, the OIE General Session in 2005 supported the start of work in four new priority areas — stray dog control, wildlife issues, laboratory animals, and housing and management of production animals. Significant progress has been made in all these areas except for wildlife issues.

The fourth OIE strategic plan, for the period 2006–10, continued to emphasise animal welfare. Formal resolutions passed at the 74<sup>th</sup> and 75<sup>th</sup> General Sessions in 2006 and 2007 emphasised the important role to be played by OIE members and Regional Commissions. These resolutions influenced the decision to hold a Regional Animal Welfare Workshop in Bangkok on 6–7 November 2007 and to include animal welfare presentations in the 25<sup>th</sup> Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for Asia, the Far East and Oceania, which was held in Queenstown, New Zealand, on 27–30 November 2007.

The Bangkok workshop recognised the need to prepare a broad-based regional strategy that would both engage all key stakeholders and recognise the cultural, religious and socioeconomic differences influencing animal welfare practices within the region.

Implementation of the OIE guidelines will also be the theme for the second OIE Global Conference on Animal Welfare, to be held in Cairo, Egypt, on 19–22 October 2008.



# INTRODUCTION

Animals have played an important role in the history and development of the region (Asia, the Far East and Oceania) and continue to contribute significantly to the region’s progress and sustainable socioeconomic development. This Regional Animal Welfare Strategy — Asia, the Far East and Oceania has been developed to provide member countries with a direction for future improvements in the welfare of animals. The Strategy also recognises activities being undertaken by governments, industry and organisations to improve animal welfare and develop sustainable production systems. It notes the connection between climate change and animal health and welfare, “one health” and the United Nations Millennium Development Goals.

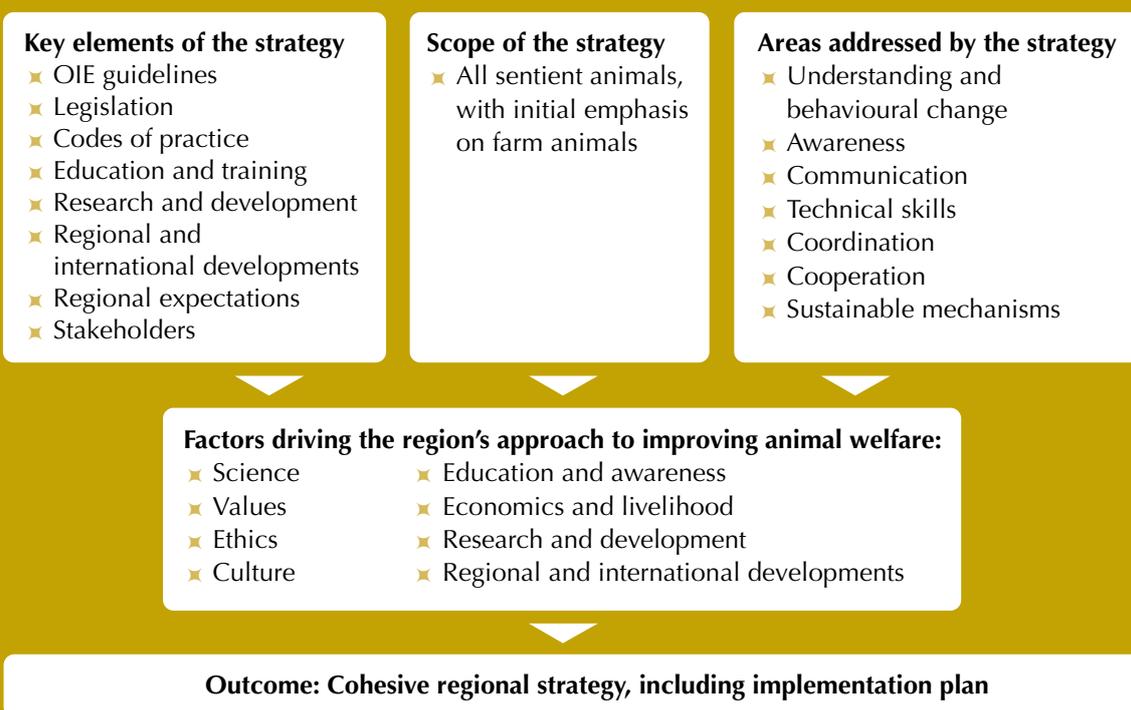
The strategy:

- ✦ focuses on ensuring the health and welfare of animals by promoting the development and adoption of sound animal welfare standards and handling practices
- ✦ addresses farm animal welfare in the first instance and will address other emerging issues on the basis of priorities set by the OIE
- ✦ recognises the interrelationship between animal welfare, health, production and food safety

- ✦ facilitates a regional consultative approach to animal welfare that welcomes involvement of the government sector and nongovernment organisations (NGOs)
- ✦ seeks to develop regional support for the implementation of the OIE guidelines
- ✦ establishes a framework for sustainable animal welfare outcomes based on, or informed by, scientific evidence and knowledge
- ✦ recognises the importance of education and training, and animal welfare research and development, areas in which the OIE collaborating centres play a role.

The development and implementation of animal welfare guidelines is a complex public policy issue that involves science, evidence based outcomes and ethics and is influenced by cultural, religious, social, economic and food safety considerations. Engagement of all the stakeholders in the region is important for the pursuit of the strategy’s common vision and mission.

The following diagram depicts the components, drivers and expected outcomes that support a sustainable animal welfare strategy in the region.



## I. Vision

**A region where the welfare of animals is respected, promoted and incrementally advanced, simultaneously with the pursuit of progress and socioeconomic development.**

## II. Purpose

The strategy:

- ✦ provides direction for the development of action plans for member countries to implement existing OIE guidelines and standards
- ✦ provides a roadmap for the development of future animal welfare policies, based on a regional consultative approach
- ✦ facilitates the establishment of priorities that are consistent with agreed strategic goals
- ✦ provides a framework for cooperation among member countries and stakeholders in promoting and advancing animal welfare in the region.

## III. Scope

This strategy relates to the care of, use of, and direct impact of human activity on all sentient species of animals in the region. Its initial emphasis is on the welfare of farm animals during handling, transportation and slaughter, according to OIE standards and guidelines.

The strategy embraces a broad vision for the humane treatment of animals, including during emergency situations, and provides a framework for sustainable improvements in animal welfare outcomes based on scientific evidence and social, economic and ethical considerations.

The strategy is aimed at people and organisations throughout the entire region, including:

- ✦ persons in charge of animals
- ✦ animal users
- ✦ the veterinary, animal science and agricultural professions
- ✦ livestock producers, processors and transporters

- ✦ animal welfare bodies
- ✦ researchers and animal technicians
- ✦ educational facilities and teachers
- ✦ consumers
- ✦ government agencies and allied entities.

## IV. Benefits

The expected benefits from this strategy include:

- ✦ a clear regional direction on animal welfare
- ✦ optimum sustainable welfare outcomes and indicators
- ✦ readily identifiable and clearly defined regional standards and guidelines
- ✦ focus and guidance on future resource decisions to protect and promote sustainable animal welfare
- ✦ reinforced societal values and sustainable livelihoods
- ✦ improved identification of research priorities for the region, taking into account relevant international developments
- ✦ improved animal health
- ✦ improved animal handling and care by animal owners
- ✦ recognised animal-welfare-friendly products
- ✦ exploration of previously unavailable international marketing opportunities as a result of investment in animal welfare (eg niche markets, accreditation/certification schemes).



## V. Goals

Four goals aim to provide the fundamental and critical achievements that will steer action plans towards attainment of the strategy's vision:

1. Promotion and achievement of a high level of understanding and awareness of animal welfare in the region through effective coordination, communication, education and training.
2. Ensuring a coordinated regional approach and ongoing commitment to the implementation of OIE animal welfare standards and guidelines.
3. Achievement of sustainable improvements in animal welfare, based on regional and international research and development.
4. Development of sustainable mechanisms to coordinate and promote animal welfare programs and priorities.

## VI. Objectives and activities

Each goal is associated with specific objectives and activities.

### Goal 1

**Promotion and achievement of a high level of understanding and awareness of animal welfare in the region through effective coordination, communication, education and training.**

#### Objective 1

To promote ownership of the strategy by all member countries of the region.

##### *Activities*

- 1.1 Publicising the existence of the strategy, and of welfare legislation, codes, standards, etc, using appropriate tools and mass media. Where necessary, these should be translated into national languages for clarity and understanding.
- 1.2 Involving religious leaders and authorities, as well as leading public personalities, in the implementation of animal welfare programs.

### Objective 2

To improve attitudes, skills and knowledge of all animal carers and handlers, with initial emphasis on farm animals.

##### *Activities*

- 2.1 Developing appropriate education and training tools based on customised needs of member countries.
- 2.2 Promoting and facilitating the inclusion of animal welfare concepts and applications in veterinary and animal science-related courses and curricula.

### Objective 3

To raise the profile of animal welfare with stakeholders, including decision makers, legislators and educators.

##### *Activities*

- 3.1 Exploring different ways of consulting with the general community, including decision makers and legislators, on animal welfare issues of regional and national importance.
- 3.2 Incorporating animal welfare issues and programs into public awareness campaigns related to animal health, food safety and production.

### Goal 2

**Ensuring a coordinated regional approach and ongoing commitment to the implementation of OIE animal welfare standards and guidelines.**

#### Objective 1

To facilitate the development or improvement of legislation within member countries.

##### *Activities*

- 1.1 Reviewing existing and new animal welfare laws with reference to OIE guidelines.
- 1.2 Promoting a harmonised approach to the development or improvement of animal welfare codes of practice across all member countries.

## Objective 2

To obtain high-level support for the implementation of the strategy in each member country in the region.

### *Activities*

- 2.1 Regularly informing and updating department/ ministry heads on animal welfare developments.
- 2.2 Seeking the support and endorsement of key decision makers for the implementation of programs.

## Objective 3

To ensure effective implementation and monitoring of the strategy.

### *Activities*

- 3.1 Establishing a Regional Animal Welfare Coordination Group, comprising key stakeholders responsible for monitoring, reviewing and reporting on the progress of implementation.
- 3.2 Coordinating between the OIE focal points of member countries to facilitate implementation of agreed programs and attainment of set goals.

## Goal 3

**Achievement of sustainable improvements in animal welfare based on regional and international research and development.**

### Objective 1

To ensure that new knowledge and developments in animal welfare are broadly communicated and adopted into the OIE standards.

#### *Activities*

- 1.1 Establishing a process whereby animal welfare research is continually monitored so that, where appropriate, sustainable standards can be updated.
- 1.2 Identifying possible research and development needs and priorities.

### Objective 2

To explore opportunities for the dissemination and use of research outcomes from regional OIE collaborating centres.

### *Activities*

- 2.1 Networking with OIE collaborating centres and achieving outreach through the 'twinning' process.

## Objective 3

To explore mechanisms for community involvement in the development and implementation of welfare standards.

### *Activities*

- 3.1 Encouraging effective inputs from industry, member governments, regional bodies, animal welfare NGOs, national veterinary associations and veterinary practitioners, and other stakeholders across the spectrum of humane treatment of animals.

## Objective 4

To continuously learn from regional and international experiences and best practices.

### *Activities*

- 4.1 Developing close working relationships with, and obtaining effective inputs from, animal welfare NGOs and institutions that undertake animal welfare programs.

## Goal 4

**Development of sustainable mechanisms to coordinate and promote animal welfare programs and priorities.**

### Objective 1

To seek and maintain cooperation and support from regional and international organisations, key trading partners and NGOs.

#### *Activities*

- 1.1 Identifying program needs and priorities and, if necessary, preparing project proposals for funding and assistance.
- 1.2 Undertaking joint initiatives with relevant partners to implement programs and animal welfare campaigns.
- 1.3 Coordinating animal welfare activities of member countries with assistance from the OIE Regional Commission.

## VII. Roles and responsibilities

All people who have animals in their care have a responsibility to ensure that they have adequate knowledge, training and skills to protect the welfare of animals. More specifically, the following groups, organisations and institutions will play an important role in the implementation of the strategy:

- ✦ member countries (the main implementers)
- ✦ animal industry groups
- ✦ animal welfare NGOs
- ✦ academic and educational institutions
- ✦ national and regional veterinary associations (eg FAVA)
- ✦ regional groupings (ASEAN, SAARC, SPC, etc)
- ✦ international organisations (OIE, FAO, WVA, WB-IFC, ADB, etc).

## VIII. Implementation and evaluation

This strategy sets broad regional goals on animal welfare and provides a framework for sustainable, scientifically based and acceptable animal welfare outcomes. It recommends (Goal 2, Objective 3) the establishment of a Regional Animal Welfare Coordination Group under the aegis of the OIE Regional Commission. The group will formulate

and monitor an implementation plan, to be developed in consultation with key stakeholders, and explore constructive working relationships with regional groupings such as ASEAN, SAARC and SPC. Subsequently, a small number of subregional national animal welfare coordination groups will be established on a pilot basis.

This strategy is a living document and will be examined again in three years. A process of ongoing review to ensure that the activities are focused on achieving its set goals will be developed.

## Acronyms

ADB	Asian Development Bank
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FAVA	Federation of Asian Veterinary Associations
NGO	nongovernment organisation
OIE	World Organisation for Animal Health
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SPC	South Pacific Countries
WB-IFC	World Bank–International Finance Corporation
WVA	World Veterinary Association





Printed with vegetable based inks on stock that comprises 80% recycled fibre from post-consumer waste and 20% totally chlorine-free pulp, sourced from sustainable forests.