
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE WORKSHOP

SESSION 1. International standards and regulations on animal identification and recording/traceability (AIR/T)

- The applicability and usage of international standards and norms for AIR/T differ between production chains. Such standards serve as references that guide the design of systems that comply with the respective regulations, particularly those related to trade and animal health. The challenge in Latin America is to implement these standards through legislation and AIR/T systems, especially for species, groups and production systems for which the cost-benefit analyses are unfavourable (e.g. small ruminants and small-scale production).
- AIR/T responds to public interests that go beyond the trade of animals and animal products. It needs to be included in the development agendas of governments.

Recommendations

- To facilitate the implementation of AIR/T systems, countries are encouraged to consider existing international standards and existing recommendations on evaluated equipment. Each country has to develop its own system and regulation, taking into account its sanitary conditions, the species targeted, the types of production system involved, the conditions in export markets and other interests. To achieve the objectives of a traceability system, countries must adopt national legislation that includes audits and penalties.
- Harmonization and recognition of equivalence among AIR/T systems must be encouraged. To this end, the international standards should set parameters that facilitate the recognition of equivalence. Access to existing mediation and dispute-resolution mechanisms that facilitate the recognition of equivalence between systems should be encouraged.
- Manufacturers and international organizations must work on the development of international standards for other species besides cattle. They should also facilitate the implementation of international standards in all production systems.

SESSION 2. The status and trends of AIR/T in Latin America and the Caribbean

- Significant progress is being made in the implementation of AIR/T in Latin America, where the development of such systems has been driven by export markets or sanitary requirements.

- There is awareness of the importance of implementing AIR/T systems in the region, but there are differences in the level of implementation. Systems are at various stages of development: some are already implemented; some are in the process of development (starting with animal identification); and some are at the planning stage.

Recommendations

- Countries that are starting to implement AIR/T systems can learn from the experiences of countries whose systems are more advanced. Long-term commitment from national authorities is required.
- The effective implementation of an AIR/T system requires a socialization programme that includes awareness-raising, information dissemination and training. Regional organizations can play an important role in these efforts and in supporting implementation.
- National competent authorities (such as veterinary services) must be strengthened if AIR/T systems are to be implemented successfully. The roles and responsibilities of those who implement and those who control these systems must be clearly defined.

SESSION 3. Identification and traceability of live animals - linkages with animal health, livestock production and breeding

- The benefits of AIR/T have been demonstrated in many fields, including public health, animal health, trade, industry, food security, productivity, planning and policy implementation.

Recommendations

- Integration of AIR/T systems with other livestock systems or databases should be done in such way that data need to be collected and entered only once.
- Producers must be the starting point of the system and its key players, without losing view of the fact that the system is a public good.
- There is a need to develop a culture that seeks to take advantage of existing databases and to integrate them through better interoperability in order to facilitate linkage between animal identification and other activities.
- The system manager must always control the use of identification devices and their distribution (ranges) to ensure the reliability of the identification systems.

SESSION 4. Identification and traceability of live animals: tools and technology

- Traditional AIR/T systems currently used in the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean face various challenges. There are specific problems - related to the identification of some breeds/species (e.g. hot branding of dark animals; animals with bad temperament) and the keeping of registers for small herds, herds kept on communal farms/lands and transhumant herds - that need to be solved in order to allow the owner (keeper) and the location of the animals to be defined.

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- The authorities should make efforts to control the movement and slaughter of animals and to establish a proper system for capturing and disseminating related information.
 - There was consensus on the need to promote the use of identification devices, visual and/or electronic, that are adapted to the diversity of the production systems.

Recommendations

- Double identification of animals using two devices (e.g. one visual tag and one electronic transponder) with the same code and following a standardized coding system is recommended.
- The AIR/T system should include the coding, registration and analysis of the information and its use for the various purposes for which the systems was created.
- The widest use of the animal identification for multiple purposes should be encouraged.
- The tool or technology to be implemented should be based on the equivalence principle stated in the SPS Agreement and on consensus recommendations.
- Countries must collaborate to ensure the reliability and the operability of the AIR/T systems.
- International organizations or agencies should promote the dissemination of standards and the updating of reference web sites.
- Forums for sharing ISO and ICAR experiences and to help resolve disputes should be encouraged and developed.

SESSION 5. Economics of AIR/T

- An AIR/T system provides public and private benefits. To implement such a system, it is necessary to determine where in the livestock sector value chain the added value is generated. Given that AIR/T is a public good, governments should coordinate efforts and resources, in collaboration with the private sector.
- There is a need to develop AIR/T models for each specific species and production system and to encourage the participation of all actors in the chain.
- It is necessary to create inter-related national databases that reflect the particular conditions of the various countries.

Recommendation

- For the design and conceptualization of AIR/T systems, it is important to develop comprehensive analyses of options, costs, benefits and risks.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

- FAO (Animal Production and Health Division, AGA), ICAR, FEPALE or other international organizations are invited to develop a characterization of AIR/T systems, as a part of a guide to good practices in identification and traceability, that establishes a scale for country assessments in order to monitor and provide support to countries according to their needs. This characterization must be based on self-assessment by countries.
- Participants request FAO to include the development and improvement of AIR/T systems in its Programme of Work.
- The establishment of working groups that collect data at the regional level to identify and support the needs of the countries should be promoted.
- It is crucial to undertake a characterization of each country, focusing on animal identification as a first phase and including traceability in a second phase. Such characterizations will require financial support from the manufacturers.
- It is important to develop a specific glossary for AIR/T.