

ANIMAL WELFARE AND THE OIE
(WORLD ORGANISATION FOR ANIMAL HEALTH)

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The *Office International des Epizooties* (OIE), also known as the *World Organization for Animal Health*, is the intergovernmental organization charged with improving the health and welfare of animals worldwide. Through its member countries, the OIE establishes standards, guidelines and recommendations (exclusively science based) as the international reference body in the field of animal diseases and zoonoses.

Since 2001, the OIE has identified Animal Welfare as a priority, recognizing it as a key component to Animal Health. This has led to the establishment of recommendations and guidelines covering animal welfare practices.

Over the years the OIE, has adopted 11 animal welfare standards including the transport of animals by land, sea and air, the slaughter of animals for human consumption and the control of stray dog populations among others.

The OIE, while recognizing the present economic situation and varying cultural practices, has remained committed to putting the Animal Welfare Standards to work. It continues to support the implementation of Animal Welfare Standards by its members with a focus on addressing

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regional specificities and expectations.

As the focal point of Animal Welfare for Jamaica, veterinarians are charged with the responsibility of effecting these standards by addressing legislative changes and building local awareness. Jamaica's current legislative position on Animal Welfare requires urgent review and the necessary legislative amendment to provide influence in stimulating change from the farm level. The significance of this cannot be over emphasized as lack of change will have negative impacts on the export of animal based products in the long term. The government has, however, since July 2012 begun to address the issue through policy changes as well as by improving the awareness among farmers through workshops and seminars.

As a member of the OIE, Jamaica will continue to remain focused on current standards and drive the necessary change in improving local animal welfare practices.

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