

**MESSAGE FROM DR. OSBIL WATSON, CHIEF VETERINARY OFFICER, MINISTRY OF
INDUSTRY, COMMERCE, AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES ON THE OCCASION OF
THE CELEBRATION OF WORLD VETERINARY DAY 2018
SATURDAY, APRIL 28, 2018**

Veterinarians around the globe will celebrate World Veterinary Day on April 28, 2018. This year's theme, **"The Role of the Veterinary Profession in Sustainable Development to Improve Livelihoods, Food Security and Safety"**



is chosen at a time in the 21st century when

animal agriculture faces increasing and persistent challenges to produce more animal protein in the context of emerging, globally complex conditions for sustainable animal production, such as climate change. As the world's population increases, the demand for livestock products also rises. In light of the fact that food animals directly support the livelihoods and nutrition of more than a billion people worldwide, much effort has to be directed at achieving food security. There is a direct correlation between the quality of livestock production and the provision of veterinary services. It is known that a healthy and productive livestock population is crucial to food production, income generation, job creation, economic growth,

and poverty alleviation. Therefore, effective measures for the prevention and control of infectious diseases at the animal-human-interface are key to the safeguard against the spread of diseases in animals and humans, enhancing food security and fostering poverty reduction.

As a result of their specialized training, veterinarians are uniquely placed to support the production of sustainable, nutritious and safe food and to promote human, animal and environmental health. In addition to their knowledge in the areas of biosecurity, animal welfare, animal health and production, veterinarians are able to facilitate the sustainable production of foods of animal origin.

Arguably, today's veterinarian is perhaps the only doctor educated to safeguard the health of both animals and people at the same time. The veterinarian works tirelessly to address the health and welfare needs of all animals. At the same time, the veterinarian also plays a critical role in environmental protection, food safety, research and public health. In order to prevent the introduction of foreign animal diseases into Jamaica, veterinarians and veterinary paraprofessionals are employed by Government at our ports to quarantine and inspect animals imported

into the country. This is geared towards reducing the entry of diseases, which could threaten our animal and human health status or our food supply.

A healthy and productive livestock population provides a variety of food products for human consumption and processing. These include, but are not limited to meats and meat products, eggs, milk and dairy products. For this very reason the provision of veterinary services is a key component of efforts to support sustainable production of food from animal origins and to the success of farm operations. Veterinarians play a lead role in the early detection and early response to accidental or deliberate introduction of exotic animal diseases and are a key line of defense against agro-terrorism and bioterrorism thereby safeguarding national security, food chain safety and animal and human health and welfare.

We commend the hard work of our veterinarians and veterinary paraprofessionals in government, private practice and academia, for their continued support towards the safeguard of food security, food safety, animal health, human health and public health.