

Executive Summary

Effective national surveillance and control of animal disease requires participation and full cooperation of stakeholders and/or partners including Government Agencies, Farmers and Industry. In this regard stakeholder consultation to create awareness of the veterinary programs and discover modalities for participation is paramount. In 2012 the Directorate facilitated the formation of an Association for Retired Veterinary Officials and further empowered the retirees to continue to do surveillance and reporting albeit on voluntary basis. As such the National Veterinary Services enjoys some representation even in community forums.

Swaziland also hosted a second bilateral meeting of the Departments of Veterinary and livestock Services of the two countries on the 12th and 13th December 2012 in Manzini. The meeting was co-chaired by the Directors of Veterinary Services, Swaziland and South Africa (Dr M. Maja). Major issues discussed included; Briefings on Animal Disease occurrence between the two countries which mainly included FMD and other diseases such as Africa Swine Fever, Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza [HPAI (H5N2, H7)], Rabies, Contagious equine metritis; Honey bees and Honey; Import and Export of Animals & Animal Products between the two countries; Import Permits and Health certificates; Movement Barriers (fences); Official notification and actions to be taken/commitment in case of stray buffalo. One of the key outcomes of the meeting was to make resolutions to be implemented between the two countries in the short and medium term.

Every year on the 28th September the world commemorate rabies as a disease of importance in humans and animals. Swaziland has been able to join the world and commemorate this day for a few years now, and we note that this event brings the desired attention that should be given to rabies as a fatal disease in humans and all warm blooded mammals. In 2012 World Rabies Day commemoration was held at Ngozi Primary School in KaLiba Chiefdom under Hosea Constituency on the 28th September 2012. The selection of this place was influenced by the sad loss of an 8 year old victim of the disease in 2008. The event was graced by the Minister for Agriculture, Honourable Clement Dlamini (MP), together with Hosea Member of Parliament Hon Mduduzi Mabuza, the Shiselweni Regional Administrator, Chiefs and their tindvuna, Ministry of Health officials and Ministry of Agriculture officials led by the Under Secretary-DAD. The objective was to highlight the importance of the disease and its prevention of spread through vaccination of dogs. We appreciate the support of some key partners in this endeavour from World health Organisation (WHO), Ministry of Health, Swaziland Animal Welfare Society (SAWS), Armed Forces as well as regional and international partners among others.

Climate change is a threat to livestock farming; September is generally a hot dry month, but in 2012 the country experienced unprecedented torrential rains accompanied by strong winds and freezing temperatures. In two weeks the country received more than 200mm rain, and the temperature range was 0 to 15 degrees Celsius. More than seven thousand cattle, mainly calves and cows, died due to hypothermia caused by the blizzard. Kraaling of emaciated animals in icy cold mud and failure to provide supplementary feeding were the main predisposing factors to the hypothermia.

The recognition of Swaziland as FMD free where vaccination is not practiced, by the OIE in 2010, remains one of the most worthy achievements. Since that time the country has had to strengthen its surveillance systems in response to risks from neighbouring territories. In 2012 the National Veterinary Services, assisted by Big Game Parks, successfully detected four solitary buffalo incursions and neutralized the risks by destroying two of them whilst the other two escaped back to the neighbouring territory. Enhanced active surveillance, including mouthing and serological testing confirmed that the country remains free of the disease.

Livestock identification and traceability is an integral part of national surveillance and control of animal disease and international trade. In 2012 the National Veterinary Services, with the assistance of the FAO, engaged an International company FLEXPRO to develop a database for the Swaziland Livestock Information and Traceability System (SLITS database). The data base links individually identified (tagged) bovine to kraal owner ID and Stock Removal Permits. Once fully implemented the database would greatly improve service delivery such as returning strays to owners, issuing of Stock Removal Permits and any other queries concerning ownership and/ or life of a bovine.