

- **Identifying priority diseases and the areas** where these diseases are located is the next important step in the design of disease surveillance system;
- **Developing an action plan**, which define priorities, targets, responsibilities, resource allocation and responsibilities;
- **Setting up** a fully functional disease information system so that there can be a two-way flow of information among all stakeholders; and
- **Putting a legal framework in place**, which guides and enforces the disease surveillance and reporting.

#### PREPARING FOR DISEASE SURVEILLANCE

- Instruction should be given to all parties on surveillance and reporting responsibilities, and other disease control actions;
- Awareness creation about the importance of disease reporting is the most critical aspects of the system;
- It is important to provide a first-hand experience to all animal health workers to recognise basic clinical features of animal diseases and disease reporting systems;
- Field diagnostic manuals are useful if they are prepared in a simple, practical and graphic format;
- Specialist diagnostic teams need to be readily available to prove field reports of a suspected animal disease;
- Fully equipped laboratories are crucial to rapidly and accurately diagnose diseases and thus linking with the networks of FAO and OIE reference laboratories is important for assistance;

- Compliance with international and regional standards such as OIE and AU-IBAR are essential to meet obligatory disease reporting requirements.

#### CONDUCTING SURVEILLANCE

Passive and active surveillance methods assist to collect basic information such as location of the disease outbreak(s), the names and addresses of affected farms or villages, livestock species affected, numbers of sick and dead animals, clinical signs, causes and sources of disease outbreak, etc.

#### USING THE INFORMATION

Three things must happen to the information/data collected: firstly, it must be managed, quality checked and stored; secondly, it must be analysed, and thirdly, it must be acted upon, that is, the information should be used for decision-making.

In its capacity as a leading continental organisation for livestock development, the African Union Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR), in collaboration with the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), assists Member States of IGAD to improve LITS and Disease Surveillance Systems through its regional project, STSD.

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**STEP OUT!** TOGETHER, WE CAN SAFEGUARD OUR ANIMAL RESOURCES FROM DISEASES!



#### STSD PROJECT

Improving Animal Disease Surveillance in Support of Trade in the IGAD Member States  
[www.au-ibar.org](http://www.au-ibar.org)



## ANIMAL DISEASE SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM (ADSS)

### WHAT IS IT?

Animal disease surveillance system (ADSS) refers to the collection, organisation and analysis and dissemination of information related to animal health. The information is meant to enable pertinent bodies make informed decision in animal disease management. In specific terms, it is the action of following-up a given animal population closely in order to see if a disease, which constitutes importance to national economy, food security and trade, makes an incursion. The objective of surveillance is therefore to make an early detection of a disease with the aim of initiating a response to control it.

### WHY DO WE NEED IT IN THE IGAD REGION?

The IGAD Region is endowed with huge livestock resources. Studies indicated that the Region is endowed with about 336 million ruminants. Despite this huge resource, the livestock dependent communities and national governments of the Region could not fully harness and tap the potential to earn substantial incomes.

Although there are a number of underlying factors that hamper the Region to develop the sector, trans-boundary animal diseases (TADs) and zoonoses (diseases that can be transmitted from animals to people) constitute a prime place in the spectrum of these challenges. TADs deter the IGAD Member States (MS) from adequately taking part in regional and international trades.

One of the key tools to address this challenge is the animal disease surveillance system. The system provides MS with the required data and information to:

- Determine the presence, level of occurrence and distribution of disease;
- Demonstrate absence of disease;
- Detect emergence or incursion of new disease into a country; and
- Provide data for risk analysis and sanitary measures in trade of livestock commodities.

### CHALLENGES IN ANIMAL DISEASE SURVEILLANCE IN THE REGION

Studies indicated that the existing animal disease surveillance systems in many of the IGAD Member States are unsatisfactory.

*The system provides MS with the required data and information to launch an effective disease control programme. In doing so, national governments, (i) increase their export trade; (ii) small holders can benefit from increased livestock productivity, market access, employment, and better public health services; and (iii) animal health workers will have a common platform for dissemination of animal disease information and instant alert system for outbreak and spread of diseases.*

The systems often suffer from low geographical coverage (low representation of the national livestock population), inadequate integration of laboratory diagnostic units into the passive surveillance system, overlong reporting chains from local to district, and then to provincial and national offices, inordinate delays, distortion of information, etc.

Reporting in many countries is therefore remained to be incomplete and hardly representing the true picture of the disease situation. This has been leading to uninformed decision making in the controlling of animal diseases, including TADs.

### WHAT DOES THE SYSTEM ENTAIL?

- **Attaining buy-in:** National governments must realise that the system is an important function of their national veterinary services and agree on establishing and maintaining a well-structured system;
- **Conducting a situation analysis:** ADSS requires a good understanding about the distribution, patterns, causes and effects (epidemiology) of diseases in the country;
- **Setting objectives:** Agreeing on the objectives of the system is a critical phase as it determines the types and levels of activities and resources;