

Press Release

Livestock trade stakeholders from the Greater Horn of Africa and the Middle East meet to agree on modalities to promote safe and stable livestock trade between the Horn of Africa and the Middle East.

Countries in the Greater Horn of Africa (GHoA), with support from AU-IBAR, ICPALD, USAID and EU, are undertaking measures to enhance prevention and control of animal diseases. The intention is guarantee disease free livestock exports to the Middle East and North Africa

DUBAI (23rd November 2015)- With increased recognition of the importance of market oriented livestock production, especially in GHoA pastoral areas , livestock stakeholders from the GHoA and the Middle East are meeting this week to agree on modalities for sustaining and enhancing safe trade in livestock commodities between the two regions. The modalities aim at preventing livestock trade disruptions



Sheep and goats in a livestock quarantine station in Berbera, Somaliland

occasioned by import bans by Middle East Countries as previously experienced during outbreaks of transboundary animal diseases (TADs), especially Rift Valley Fever (RVF). Previous livestock import bans by Middle East countries resulted in informal live animal trade. This posed major health risks to human and animal populations in the importing countries. Hence, the modalities will also explore joint management approaches to counter factors that would lead to trade bans.

TADs, some of which have a public health impact, such as Rift Valley Fever (RVF), are a major challenge to livestock production, marketing and trade. They also

decrease resilience of vulnerable households especially women and youth in arid and semi-arid lands of GHoA.

The forum is jointly organized by the African Union Interafrican Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR) and the IGAD Centre for Pastoral Areas and Livestock Development (ICPALD), with financial support from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID, Kenya and East Africa) through the Standard Methods and Procedures Project (SMP-AH) and the European Union (EU) through the Enhancing Somali Livestock trade (ESOLT).

The conference was officially opened by Madame Majd Al-Herbawi, Director Animal Health and Development, Ministry of Environment and Water, United Arab Emirates. She informed the participants that the UAE is a regional hub of livestock trade and her Ministry was therefore keen on updating animal health measures to stabilise the trade. She informed the meeting that her government had adopted a number of measures such as the '*National Agenda for Animal Health*' and hoped that the recommendations of the meeting would contribute towards the achievement of the objects of the agenda.

Dr. Nacif Rihani, the FAO sub-regional representative in the Middle East observed that FAO was also promoting livestock trade between the two regions given the contribution livestock trade played in enhancing the livelihoods of livestock keepers.

Speaking at the opening ceremony, Mr. Isaac Thendiu, the Regional Resilience Advisor, at USAID, Kenya and East Africa office, remarked that USAID was glad to be associated with the Standard Methods and Procedures in Animal Health (SMP-AH) project. He observed that SMP-AH was a component of the Feed the Future initiative (a US Government 5-year strategy that addresses key regional challenges in the GHoA). He appreciated that the project also contributes to the United States Government resilience agenda for the GHoA. 'Increased trade as a result of the SMP-AH interventions that involve institutional strengthening and human capacity development should ultimately benefit the livestock keepers and traders' he said.

In his welcoming remarks the Director of AU-IBAR, Prof Ahmed Elsawalhy observed that the Horn of Africa is home to a huge animal resource that makes a significant contribution to food and nutrition security, and is a major contributor to the GDPs of the national economies. He further observed that Middle East had provided ready market for livestock and livestock products from the Horn of Africa for many years. However, access to the markets had been limited by recurrent bans associated with fear of introduction of TADS and zoonoses. 'This conference should deliberate on how to address the gaps and seize the opportunities for safe and stable trade' he remarked.

The SMP-AH Project is implemented in nine countries in GHoA, i.e. Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda. The intention of the project is to improve harmonization and coordination of disease prevention and control in the GHoA, in order to create uniform conditions necessary for safe trade with an appropriate level of protection; ease movement of livestock

across national borders for trade; enhance food and nutritional security and growth of national economies.

Enhancing Somali Livestock Trade (ESOLT) project is implemented in Somalia in partnership with the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations.

AU-IBAR (<http://www.au-ibar.org.org>) based in Nairobi, Kenya is a specialized technical office of the department of Rural Economy and Agriculture (DREA) of the African Union Commission (AUC). AU-IBAR's mandate is to support and coordinate the utilization of livestock, fisheries, and wildlife as resources for both human wellbeing and economic development in the Member States of the African Union (AU) working in collaboration with other technical institutions such as FAO, OIE, ILRI, WHO, etc.