

Japan's Comment on the Report of "Meeting of the OIE Ad Hoc Group on Veterinary Education"

Japan appreciates the OIE's effort on this topic and welcomes its approach to have had discussion on veterinary education and to draft "Minimum Competencies Expected of Veterinary Graduates to Assure Delivery of High-Quality National Veterinary Services" in order to globally strengthen the veterinary services. Japan generally supports the mentioned minimum expected competencies as well as the OIE's plan to continue its discussion on aquatic animals on the same topic in the ad hoc group.

Although there was an opinion that "veterinary schools that could not meet basic competencies should be closed" in the ad hoc group, it is important to improve the overall level of veterinary education worldwide by OIE Members' cooperative activities taking into account the reality that there is an existing gap in educational system and its level among countries. Japan therefore considers that the direction of our discussion should be that veterinary schools which strive to fulfill the basic competencies would have opportunities to be assisted by the OIE or Member governments.

Japan's Comments on "Minimum Competencies Expected of Veterinary Graduates to Assure Delivery of High-Quality National Veterinary Services"

1. General Comment

Japan understands the description of the introduction that detailed figures such as the required credit hours of educational contact for teaching each competency cannot be determined in a uniform way since they depend on the needs and resources of each country. However, if the Ad hoc group proceed to discuss detailed figures, Japan thinks that it could make consideration for developing some concrete benchmark figures such as the size of educational/research premises and the number of teachers (based on actual teaching hours), and credit hours.

2. Specific Comments

Introduction

(last paragraph)

While the *ad hoc* Group outlined minimum competencies relevant to the delivery of National Veterinary Services, no attempt was made to dictate in which specific course or during which educational year each competency should be taught. Indeed, it may be that many of the following competencies cross course boundaries and can be integrated across the curriculum in multiple courses. Nor did the *ad hoc* Group suggest how many credit hours of educational contact were required to teach each competency, as this might vary depending on the needs and resources of each country. What was unanimously agreed upon, though, is that education in the following minimum competencies during the course of each veterinary school's curriculum will prepare the average entry level (new graduate) veterinarian to promote global veterinary public health and provide an excellent base for advanced training and education for those veterinarians wishing to pursue a career in both public and private components of National Veterinary Services. The *ad hoc* Group also mentioned the importance of communication with stakeholders. Since collaboration of multiple disciplines is essential in delivering National Veterinary Services, importance of communication should be taken into account, especially with medical doctors for issues related to food safety and zoonoses.

It is important to note that Veterinary education includes not only school education but also postgraduate continuing education and on-the-job training. The authorities should bear in mind the importance of the lifelong learning to ensure the various competencies of veterinary graduates such as protecting animal and public health.

Rationale

The guidance should include the importance of communication as discussed during the first session of the *ad hoc* group. Especially the communication between veterinarian and medical doctors needs to be highlighted as this cooperation is important for controlling zoonotic diseases, preventing emerging antimicrobial resistance microorganism, or controlling issues related to food safety of animal origin.

In order to maintain and ensure good quality in veterinary services, postgraduate continuing education is essential, such as updating necessary knowledge on treatment skills and veterinary legislations. "Commitment to lifelong learning" which is now listed in section 1.5 is basic principle that all veterinarians should bear in mind regardless of their educational stage. Therefore, it should be highlighted in "Introduction" rather than placed in "general competencies" as those included in core curriculum.

Day 1 Competencies Relative to the Delivery of National Veterinary Services

1. General competencies

- 1.1. Basic veterinary sciences
- 1.2. Clinical veterinary sciences
- 1.3. Animal production including:
- 1.4. Food hygiene and safety including:
- ~~1.5. Commitment to lifelong learning~~
- 1.5. Animal Welfare

Rationale

See above for the deletion of "1.5 Commitment to lifelong learning".

A section for "Animal welfare" should be added because;

- 1) There are some OIE Members which do not pay sufficient attention on this issue; and
- 2) Animal Welfare is a general subject that need to be taught before moving to professional curriculum. As section 2.4 mentions specific competencies related to Animal Welfare, the item corresponding to section 2.4 need to be indicated in “1. General competencies”.

3.6.2. the importance of excellent interpersonal communication skills and professional ethics in the delivery of quality national veterinary services, to include self-knowledge and knowledge of others;

Rationale

In order to provide veterinary services with good quality, professional ethics should be included in addition to communication skills.