



Enforcing the Regional Marketing Authorisation System for Veterinary Medicines

The thorny issue of marketing authorisations for veterinary medicines (MA) in the region was discussed in Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire) from 20 to 22 June 2023 at a regional workshop organised by the ECOWAS Regional Animal Health Centre (RAHC), through the "Improving animal health and control of veterinary medicines" component of the Regional Support Project for Pastoralism in the Sahel, Phase 2, funded by the World Bank. Discussions among participants enabled RAHC to gather important pieces of advice and recommendations on how to speed up the operationalisation process of the existing regional system.

The proliferation of counterfeit and/or poor-quality medicines, the uncontrolled development of informal drug distribution networks and the growth of antibiotic resistance in the region have reached such a level that ECOWAS is obliged to speed up the efforts towards cleaning up the sector. Livestock farming is one of the pillars of the regional economy as animal population represents more than 75 million cattle and more than 300 million small ruminants and is a source of employment and incomes for more than 25 million people in West Africa.

ECOWAS is conscious of the challenge and is seeking commitment of Member States and all stakeholders to effectively achieve a centralised, single, and harmonised MA system, as most animal diseases are cross-border in nature.

In this perspective, resource persons and members of the Regional Veterinary Committee (RVC) from the 15 ECOWAS Member States (except Burkina Faso, Guinea, and Mali) plus Mauritania and Chad, specifically directors of veterinary services and presidents of veterinary associations, reviewed the issue and formulated practical solutions for improving the import and marketing of veterinary medicines in the region, including the management of "orphan" or "limited market" medicines.

At regional level, experts recommend, among other things, that ECOWAS (i) recruit staff as soon as possible to run the centralised system for marketing authorisation and management of veterinary medicines, (ii) adopt implementing texts for the regulations relating to veterinary pharmacy, (iii) disseminate and enforce relevant regulations and (iv) include, starting from 2024, a budget line for the operationalisation of the harmonised system for marketing authorisation and management of veterinary medicines. Considering the UEMOA countries experience in the sector, the ECOWAS Commission is also encouraged to strengthen collaborative work with the UEMOA Commission to learn from their experience in the management of veterinary medicines.



Lomé, Togo, 26 June 2023

Page 2/2

Regional Animal Health Center (RAHC)

At national level, Member States should (i) regularly and in a timely manner report on their progress in implementing the recommendations arising from meetings of the Regional Veterinary Committee, (ii) widely disseminate the ECOWAS regulatory texts relating to veterinary pharmacy and (iii) be more engaged in raising awareness of those involved in the management of veterinary medicines regarding the enforcement of the provisions of the regional regulatory framework.

The challenges related to veterinary medicines being essentially those of animal health, public health and socio-economic development, the Abidjan workshop called on ECOWAS to strengthen the existing regulatory framework and enforce it to comply with current international standards.

For Mrs FADIGA Haida Diarrassouba, Technical Advisor, who represented the Ivorian Minister for Animal and Fisheries Resources at the opening and closing of the workshop, "with the liberalisation of international trade and the opening up of markets, the region must place greater emphasis on the professionalisation of players, capacity building for public and private human resources and the quality of veterinary medicines".

The ECOWAS Commission reiterates its determination to be at the forefront of public health and population protection. Through RAHC, it will continue to strengthen coordination and support activities for Member States, with the support of its partners, to operationalise the regional veterinary medicines marketing authorisation system and thus, better tackle the prevention and control of animal diseases in the region.

To recall, the mandate of RAHC is to contribute to the fight against poverty and food insecurity through improving animal health and continuous development of animal production at both national and regional level.

-----END-----

For further information, kindly contact:

RAAF Communication Unit

Telephone: +228 22 21 40 03 – Email: fdabire@araa.org

Twitter: ARAA_CEDEAO – Facebook: araaraaf

www.araa.org