National Livestock Policy Hub (NLPH)

Full-Day Workshop to Present the Findings of the VET-GOV Pilot Project

“Evaluation of Basic Veterinary Care in Mauritius”

Labourdonnais Waterfront Hotel

Le Sirius, Port-Louis

Wednesday 10th August 2016
Mr Vishnu Gondeea, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security,
Mr Raj Makoond, CEO, Business Mauritius
Dr Yoseph Y. Mamo, AU-IBAR/VET-GOV Program Coordinator COMESA
Dr Meenowa, Ass Director (Livestock and Veterinary Division)
Mr Yee Tong Wah, National Livestock Policy Focal Point
Senior Management of the MAIFS
Representatives of other Ministries and parastatal bodies
Representatives of the private sector
Representative of non-governmental organizations,
Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen

I am pleased to be associated with the workshop that will focus on the evaluation of basic veterinary care in Mauritius. At the very outset, let me thank the African Union - InterAfrican Bureau for Animal Resources
(AU-IBAR) which is supporting this project under the Vet Gov Programme.

Let me also extend a very warm welcome to the representative of the AU-IBAR, Dr Yoseph S. Mamo, COMESA Regional Coordinator for the Vet–Gov Project.

I wish to commend this joint laudable initiative of the AU-IBAR, World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) and Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) for implementing the continent-wide project to reinforce veterinary governance.

**Ladies and Gentlemen**

To-day we are living in a globalized world. It is important that we analyse the development of the livestock sector in the prevailing socio-economic world context.
With increasing urbanisation and purchasing power of consumers, demand for animal protein is on the rise.

Consequently, the livestock industry has to intensify production, and also to ensure that aspects relating to animal welfare, animal health and veterinary public health issues are simultaneously taken into consideration.

In the past two decades, the livestock sector worldwide has been faced with major constraints ranging from the outbreak of several notifiable infectious diseases of livestock (classical swine fever in Poland and Belgium, mad cow disease in France in the mid-1990s, foot and mouth disease in the UK in 2001, African Swine Fever in Mauritius in 2007, bovine tuberculosis in 2011 and tuberculosis in non-human primates in 2012) and food intoxication from food of animal origin (dioxins in food, salmonellosis and listeriosis).
To-day itself, the Rodrigues livestock population is being seriously affected by the outbreak of an infectious disease.

The National Livestock and Veterinary Division is therefore called to be at the very core of livestock development not only as a department which caters only for animal health issues but as one which encompasses animal health, veterinary public health and trade of animal and animal products.

The National Livestock and Veterinary Division is expected to provide a conducive environment for livestock production to develop.

This will be achieved by ensuring that animal health measures and Food Safety standards with respect to animal products are being implemented by stakeholders, through effective official controls.
Animal Health measures and food safety standards derived from OIE Terrestrial Animal Health and the Codex Alimentarius respectively, and enshrined in the upcoming national Animal Health Bill will provide the basis for the development of a sustainable livestock industry.

The ability of the National Livestock and Veterinary Division to carry out credible official controls through inspection, audits and certification in the livestock sector is fundamental to building consumer confidence in the production and supply chain of livestock products and maintaining trustworthiness among trading partners.

Credible official controls rest on the principles of transparency and accountability. As mentioned earlier Mauritius has not been spared by outbreaks of major livestock diseases.
The argument that Mauritius being an insular state is protected from notifiable livestock diseases seems to no longer stand good.

Mauritius is self-sufficient in poultry meat and eggs owing to well established vertically integrated poultry industries and it is of paramount importance that the industry be protected from major poultry diseases.

Should they arise, the National Livestock and Veterinary Division should be in a position to effectively implement measures to control the diseases with their subsequent eradication.

As trade is being increasingly liberalized, the National Livestock and Veterinary Division will also have the responsibility to protect the local livestock industry from dumping practices by other countries.
On the other hand, we should also provide the appropriate framework for our livestock industry to export their products to the international remunerative markets.

On the local front, Government is very committed to give a boost to the livestock sector in the wake of global food insecurity.

We are a net food importer and except for poultry meat, eggs and venison, we depend heavily on imports of livestock based food items.

Although a panoply of schemes has been implemented by Government in the past, the livestock sector still seems to be lagging behind, especially the small-holder livestock owners.
Those people are still plagued by low productivity, and not able to make their way in the supply chain of livestock products.

The VET-GOV pilot project has laid a lot of emphasis in empowering the small-holder livestock owners to boost production through training in basic animal health care, which will significantly reduce morbidity and mortality of management-related health problems.

Some 80 small farmers have been trained in three batches of 11-week sessions (theory and practical) since the inception of the training course in August 2015 till to-day.

FAREI officers have also attended the training sessions. The objective of the Pilot Project is to reach out to 125 small cattle and goat breeders. We are running out of time. It is highly urgent and pertinent in the actual
context to translate the recommendations of this pilot project into practice.

My Ministry will see to it that all necessary actions will be taken to bring about the appropriate institutional and legislative set-up.

However, for this to happen, we need the full collaboration of the private sector and all stakeholders.

The Livestock Policy Hub has been set up as a mechanism for continuous consultation with all parties in the livestock sector in a participative approach.

I invite you to take full advantage of this platform.

With these words, I am pleased to declare this workshop open.

Thank you for your kind attention