

Veterinary Services

The Veterinary Services belong administratively to the Ministry of Environment and Agricultural Development and consist of Divisions and Sections. Two divisions function as the main administrative centres: The Animal Health and Welfare Division and the Veterinary Public Health Division. These divisions cover the entire spectrum of activities as provided for by the country's legislation and are responsible for the development and implementation of the strategies to be followed. The Sections of Veterinary Laboratories and Veterinary Drugs and Supplies are also managed by the main administrative centre.

There are also five district veterinary offices in Nicosia, Limassol, Larnaka, Famagusta and Pafos and five rural veterinary stations.

Division of Animal Health and Welfare

The primary responsibility of the Animal Health and Welfare Division (AHWD) is the prevention of the introduction and spreading into the country of animal diseases. Towards this end surveillance, control and eradication programs for certain diseases are planned and implemented.

Moreover, emergency schemes are prepared for the control of highly contagious diseases, which bring about serious socioeconomic consequences. As a result, all the farms in Cyprus have been registered and mapped. This division is also responsible for the registration and identification of

animals. Within the framework of this responsibility a computer database is kept, where all the data regarding the identity of bovines, small ruminants, pigs and dogs, is stored. Through the Import of Animals and Trade Control Section, the AHWD coordinates and regulates issues related to the intercommunity trade and the operation of the two Border Inspection Posts (BIPs), one at Larnaka Airport and one at Limassol port, through which the veterinary checks for products of animal origin imported from third countries are applied according to the EU requirements.

Division of Veterinary Public Health

The Veterinary Public Health Division (VPHD) has the overall responsibility for the organization and the coordination of controls of production, handling, transport, storage and distribution of food of animal origin in the market and the responsibility for controls, inspections and approvals of the establishments that produce food of animal origin (including butcheries), with the exception of establishments producing ice-cream and honey, where the competence belongs in the Ministry of Health. Additionally, the management on a daily base of all information regarding Rapid Alert System for Food (RASFF) on behalf of the Veterinary Services and the preparation and implementation of the National Control Program for Residues and Pharmaceutical Substances in live animals and their products, give the ability to the VPHD, when a food incident arises, to take all the necessary measures immediately and effectively. In this way it ensures that none of the unsuitable food of animal origin is channeled into market. Equally vital is the role of Veterinary Public Health Division (VPHD) in coordinating trade within Member States (intra-community trade).

Furthermore, an important role of the VPHD is to ensure the protection and safety of public health.

Veterinary Laboratory Section

The Veterinary Services have two laboratories: The Laboratory for the Control of Food of Animals, which deals mainly with the control of food of animal origin, and the Laboratory for Animal Health, which covers the whole spectrum of laboratory examinations related to the diagnosis and surveillance of animal diseases. The latter includes five sections: virology, microbiology/serology, pathology/bacteriology /parasitology, histopathology and TSEs (Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies). Both laboratories are accredited to EN ISO 17025.

Section of Veterinary Drugs and Products

This section, through the activities of its four subdivisions, has the responsibility for the control and inspection applied to manufacturers, wholesalers and retailers of the Veterinary Medicinal Products (VMPs) –according to a quality system- and the control and inspection of medicated feeding stuffs. In addition, it coordinates the Pharmacovigilance System, the Assessment and Licensing of VMPs and the Harmonization of the National Legislation with the EU Directives/Regulations. These activities which implement the legal provisions ensure the quality, safety, efficacy of VMPs and the protection of animal and public health.

District Veterinary Offices and Rural Stations

The district veterinary offices and rural stations are responsible for the implementation of the policies, which are set out by the main administrative centres and operate under the surveillance of the Animal Health and Welfare Division, and the Veterinary Public Health Division.

Internal Audit

Implementation of the audit function is carried out using the guidance provided in Commission Decision EC No. 677/2006 and the mandatory requirements from Regulation (EC) No. 882/2004.

Education and Research

The Veterinary Services attach special importance to the continuous education of its staff and of the groups involved (farmers, owners of establishments where food of animal origin is handled etc). For this reason they organize annual education programs including seminars and workshops where international experts as well as officers from other countries are invited.

Additionally, the Veterinary Services also carry out research work within the framework of resource programs which are mainly funded by the Research Promotion Foundation,

contributing in this way to the field of research.

For more details please refer to: <http://www.moa.gov.cy/vs>