

PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP AS A MEANS TO ENHANCE ANIMAL WELFARE GLOBALLY

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Managing complex food systems is a responsibility shared amongst relevant stakeholders, governments, and intergovernmental organizations to ensure consumer confidence, affordability and food security.

Food safety, animal health, animal welfare and plant protection are critical aspects of food production. Animal welfare stands alone in that it is not formally recognized under the WTO SPS agreement, although it is within the scope of the WTO Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade.

In 2004, the first standards were included in the OIE *Terrestrial Code*, i.e. the Guiding Principles on Animal Welfare. Private certification schemes were already in existence at this time.

Three years later, the OIE signed an official Agreement with SSAFE (Safe Supply of Affordable Food Everywhere), a not-for-profit organization whose vision is the integration of food safety, animal health, and plant health across the supply chain in order to improve public health and well-being. This Agreement provides a formal framework for dialogue and collaboration between OIE and the private sector, represented primarily by entities in the food and animal feed supply chain. One area of common interest between SSAFE and OIE is the alignment of the private certification schemes with public (official) standards, to leverage the scientific evidence-based nature of the official public standards, the transparent process of their development and consensus based mechanism for adoption.

In the field of animal welfare, specifically, in addition to the harmonization of standards and certification schemes, SSAFE is aligned with OIE in two critical areas, i.e.: the focus on outcome based standards to allow for flexibility; and the development of scientifically derived standards for global implementation. Therefore, SSAFE supports the development of ISO Technical Specifications on Animal Welfare as this will promote the OIE standards on Animal Welfare globally by providing farmers, manufacturers, and retailers with a single set of specifications and drive implementation in a consistent manner.

Keywords: OIE – animal welfare – SSAFE – standards.