

INCEPTION REPORT

For the Development and Implementation of a Livestock/Cattle Movement Control System in Costa Rica

April 23, 2009

The Initial report of the project "Development and Implementation of a livestock/cattle movement control system in Costa Rica" makes a brief reference to the background that promulgated the formulation of the project and a strategy for its implementation, it gives a quick overview of the project status as of February 2009, the aspects addressed by the project, and finally, it lists the actions that have been developed during February and March 2009, in preparation for the project implementation.

1. Background of the Project and strategy for its implementation.

SENASA was recently (year 2007) evaluated by experts of the World Organization of Animal Health (*OIE*) in which was described the functions, strengths and weaknesses of this public agency. In the evaluation report which determined the levels of progress, comments and recommendation of every identifiable aspect related to the service, including the traceability issue. Based on some of the weaknesses detected, an evaluation was formulated for this project in order to strengthen the National Program for Epidemiological Surveillance, and provide foundations for developing a gradual and sustainable Traceability Program, first for Bovines in the Primary Production Stage. The project is based on the general principles of Traceability, as defined by the OIE, and also those formulated with the evaluation and inputs from Dr. Emilio León, consultant for the WTO.

The Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture IICA, through its office in Costa Rica, will support the implementation of the project, which was formalized in a contract between WTO and IICA.

The management of the project will be developed by a Project Execution Organism PEO, formed by SENASA and IICA.

2. Status of the Projects to February 2009.

This is a summary of the status as of February 2009 referring to components that the project will cover, from the point of view of the Epidemiological Surveillance and the Traceability, to get a reference of the base status and, in the future, to evaluate the progress and the impact of the activities developed by the project.

First it is important to consider that in Costa Rica actions for epidemiological surveillance as well as programs for the control and eradication of endemic diseases, certification of process and control of entry ports to the country. have already been developed. However a traceability system is not yet in place; despite which some actions related to traceability have been developed.

Related to animal products, the general Law of the National Service of Animal Health¹, empowers SENASA to establish, regulate and apply any necessary action for traceability of origin.

In Costa Rica, in accordance with the last livestock census (MAG-PEGB-VE/CORFOGA 2000), there are 46.640 cattle farms and 1.369.715 bovines. The country has a database that contains approximately 50.000 farms so far registered, with different grades of update status. It is therefore necessary to homogenize, update and validate the information. The geo-reference of the farms that have been made needs to be verified and validated because errors have been detected.

In the case of the animal's identification, the official system used is the branding of cattle as is regulated by Law N. 2247 relating to the branding of cattle, which was passed in 1958.

For the regulation of the cattle transportation within the country, there is an executive order (N. 28432-MAG-SP year 2000) that includes the obligation of a zoological sanitary guide which indicates, property and transportation of the animal in question; however, there is no system for information management that allows the guarantee of the origin of the movement, so it is difficult to maintain traceability of the animal at each point of the trade chain.

One important characteristic is that the majority of the cattle (*according to FESUGAN² 60% of the total cattle*) are commercialized through auctions, which represent approximately 8.000 to 10.000 head of cattle per week directly by producers or through intermediaries. Nowadays it is mandatory to have a veterinarian in attendance at each cattle auction, this person must ensure the sanitary status of the animals that are commercialized and require a transportation guide, the guide is registered in the auction house. Each commercial transaction is registered in a system controlled by the auction house, however, some of the data is not transmitted to SENASA, this condition represents a problematic issue for animal traceability.

Finally, the slaughterhouses must have a resident veterinarian who ensures the sanitary status of animals and products, but also is required to demand the transportation guide, which is registered by each establishment. Frequently this information is not transferred to SENASA; therefore it represents a problematic issue for animal traceability.

In the case of specific normative, there is a proposal for the regulation of cattle movement and a law has been proposed for the control of such movements, that initiative have been presented in seminars, workshops and forums involving different interested parties in the bovine chain. In the same way, comments from those interested parties have been incorporated and are available on the SENASA website. Also, there are available movement guides for bovine transportation

3. Actions made for the project implementation.

¹ Law N° 8495 published in the Official Newspaper "La Gaceta", May 16th, 2006.

² FESUGAN: en Spanish: Costa Rica Auction Federation

Planning Meetings: During February 2009, two meetings on planning took place in order to generate the correct conditions for the effective implementation of the project. One outcome of those meetings was the design of an active tri-monthly plan based in the following elements: Activity in accordance with the description and schedule of activities enclosed in the project; status of the activity, sub-activity, work, responsibilities, deadline, midterm product, final product if applicable; indicators of results, budget, limitations and comments.

Establishment of POE: After the signing of the contract WTO-IICA and the programming of the first disbursement, the organization for the management of the project was established. Dr. Yayo Vicente, general director of SENASA and Dr. Byron Miranda, representing the IICA in Costa Rica, do hereby designate the following members of the POE for each institution.

The members of the POE as designated are:

- Dr. Bernardo Calvo Rodríguez – Chief National Program for Traceability. SENASA
- Dr. Alexis Sandí Muñoz – Chief Unit of Epidemiology. SENASA
- Lic. Rosa Maria Rojas Pérez – Unit of Cooperation and Protocol, SENASA
- Lic. Alejandra Bolaños Retana – Direction of Legal Assessors, SENASA
- Dr. Rafael Angel Vindas Bolaños – Screwworm eradication program-Epidemiological Surveillance, SENASA
- Lic. Jorge Villalobos Villalobos – Chief Department of Material Resources, DAF, SENASA
- Lic. Juan Luis Vargas Cambronero - Chief Department of Information Technology, SENASA
- Dr. Sacha Trelles Zárate, Agricultural Health and Food Safety Specialist, IICA.

When the POE was conformed, Dr. Bernardo Calvo was designated coordinator and Dr. Sacha Trelles as technical secretary. Also the action of the POE and the implementation procedures were regulated, from a technical and administrative point of view. Each memorandum and the documents have been archived by the technical secretary, in IICA, and by the Unit of Cooperation and Protocol in SENASA.

In the conformation meeting there were officials present from the administrative and accounting department of IICA, who made a presentation about procedures for the purchase and acquisition of goods and services in the project, in addition, all the commitments agreed to in the contract between IICA and WTO were approved.