

Systematic Failures In BiH's Veterinary System Cause Health Risk

"Serious outbreaks of Q-Fever in the RS, and Brucellosis in the F BiH, are indicative of the poor controls in animal health in BiH", said the Principle Deputy High Representative, Donald Hays today. "The failure of BiH's authorities to harmonise the veterinary system is not only threatening public health, but the outbreak of disease, and this only highlights the need to improve control measures in order to stop it spreading. Failure to do so could have a negative effect on BiH's livestock trade and exports" warned Ambassador Hays.

Five basic problems plague BiH's veterinary system;

- BiH doesn't have jurisdiction over veterinary border crossings and the international trade of animals and animal products.
- There are shortfalls in the legislation governing the reference laboratories responsible for health control and the issuance of valid health certificates.
- Under current legislation there is no clear line of responsibility between Entity, Brcko and State Veterinary Offices.
- Systematisation in the veterinary sector is being prevented by a lack of financing.
- There has been no implementation of a systematic programme of animal identification.

BiH's veterinary sector is divided in to four independent parts; BiH, Entity's and the Brcko District. The result is an overly complicated system, which can only work if the State undertakes its proper role of directing and coordinating the other elements. Despite the engagement of the State Veterinary

Office in rebuilding an efficient veterinary system to European health standards, co-ordination in the BiH veterinary system remains total unsatisfactory.

If this country is serious about EU membership and more importantly the health of its citizens it must take action to ensure that the veterinary services and Ministries of Agriculture undertake a greater willingness to implement current legislation. This legislation clearly defines jurisdiction, procedures, control and the measures for disease prevention. Without improvement public health, membership of the European Union, foreign investment, job creation and economic recovery could be seriously damaged.

“BiH does have an effective Veterinary Law, but to effectively protect citizens’ health and maximise economic potential, the State, Entities and the Brcko District must realize that implementation, and the current organization, of the veterinary inspection service is not adequate,” said Ambassador Hays.