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PANORAMA

Thematic portfolio

Public–Private Partnerships and perspectives in the veterinary domain

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Aquatic animal diseases are the greatest risk to aquaculture production globally [1]. They can also impact the environment [2, 3], local communities [4], national economies [5], food security [6] and a diverse range of public users of aquatic animal resources (e.g. recreational fishers).

Partnerships between public (represented by governments) and private (represented by industries) sectors to manage aquatic animal diseases provide a mechanism for both sectors to agree on goals that provide a common benefit. Public–private partnerships (PPPs) also motivate both sectors to work together to achieve their shared goal and increase trust. The sectors may also be willing to compromise their individual short-term goals in order to achieve a long-term shared goal that provides common benefits.

Public–private partnerships are key to improving aquatic animal health outcomes, including disease prevention and response to disease outbreaks.

An Australian example

In Australia, the development of a PPP for managing and funding responses to aquatic animal disease outbreaks is close to completion. Up to 18 industry and government sectors have been working together since 2014 to establish one legally binding agreement, known as the Aquatic Deed. This agreement represents an intention to form a long-term PPP to share the responsibilities and costs of responding to disease outbreaks and to coordinate disease prevention activities to reduce shared risk.

The Aquatic Deed will provide incentives for early reporting (including compensation for affected businesses), establish mechanisms for decisive and rapid decision-making, secure funding for disease response, increase certainty and establish governance arrangements in advance. It will also strengthen risk mitigation activities through sector-specific biosecurity plans, surveillance, training and preparedness activities. Most importantly, it formalises the involvement of public and private sectors that would benefit from a disease response because it is likely that some sectors may need to take action that is contrary to their short-term goals (e.g. destroying stock on a farm to prevent disease spread). Establishing a common goal that all sectors invest in is likely to lead to a collaborative approach to managing a response and better aquatic animal health outcomes.

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Public–private partnership: responsibility for managing aquatic animal diseases

KEYWORDS

#animal disease, #aquatic animal, #Australia, #contingency planning, #emergency management, #public–private partnership.

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