Virtual Breakout Session for Animal Biotechnology Workshop Session VII

Africa and Middle East

November 27, 2020

14 Participants from 7 countries

- Kenya
- Nigeria
- Ethiopia
- Ghana
- Senegal
- South Africa
- Mozambique

Regulators, Scientists and Communicators

Technical Issues

Available Capacity

- Human capacity
- Animal genetic resources (indigenous animals)
- Sometimes facilities available e.g. national agricultural research institutes
- A few private entities e.g vaccine company in Senegal

Technical Issues

Challenges/ Limitations

- Fragmentation of capacity in the public sector, in Africa
- Financial, Equipment, Power; Reagents and other consumables is a major challenge
- Administrative & Policy challenges
- Private sector not keen on venturing into animal biotech
- Acceptance
- There are no biotech labs that have brought any products to the market yet

Recommendations

- Facilitation of animal research companies
- Consider local production of reagents
- Develop the right products

Engagement and Communication

Key Stakeholder Concerns

- Awareness
- Many in Africa don’t like any interference with natural processes
- Politicians do not understand the importance of science; High political turn-over
- Brain drain – e.g. scientist going into other trades or moving to other countries

Addressing the Concerns

- Creating awareness needs a product
- Have experts in media
- Increasing education for policy makers and media persons
- African countries need to put a certain percentage of their GDP into research

Engagement and Communication

Engaging stakeholders in policy setting process

- Identify all stakeholders for the subject in question
- Engage the stakeholders in meetings to establish the policies together
- Engagement in policy setting has to happen through regulators

Building Trust

- Trust must start with the government itself
- Transparency: the framework and processes be well understood, hence predictability…….there's no such thing as "without bias"

Engagement and Communication

Promoting public acceptance of animal biotechnology

- The public need to see the product & the proof that it works, before they can accept!
- Start with beneficial non-food based products
- Developers should focus on the needs of people i.e. develop products that have clear benefits
- Regulators ensure that such beneficial products go through without many complications, for the consumer to have confidence in the product
- Having an exhibition to showcase products
- Support from politicians will help with acceptance

Training

- Train scientists and regulators on how to simplify scientific language to terms that the public can understand and relate with
- Create working groups from various stakeholders
- Make training continuous and have sustainable capacity building programs because technology is always evolving

Retention of developed capacities

- Give incentives to maintain e.g. providing facilities and good environment for the scientist or regulator, so they want to stay
- Good pay for scientists, equivalent to their education

Marketing and Trade

- Regulation harmonization – without which there'll always be challenges in international trade
- IP is a key issue as it ensures developer benefits? Effect on users?

Labelling

- Labeling have unintended consequences, it's an indirect proof that the product is different from the original: As long as product is safe, no need for labeling
- Labeling is important, for information purposes, to give people choices
- Labeling is ok, except if used as a marketing gimmick

Next steps: Potential Activities

- Work towards collaboration
- Training involving all stakeholders
- Focal points to have sessions for deliberations on regulations and policies
- Institutionalization, we shouldn’t wait for conferences to know what’s going on in other places – have platforms for regular communication

➢ **Target**: Scientists, Regulators, Policymakers, Communicators