



Improving animal health systems by integrating public and private interests

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Introduction

Existing private and public animal health (monitoring) information systems (AHIS) often operate in isolation, while there is a common need for comprehensive AHIS's and extensive data collection across the food chain. Available data is not fully exploited, and double administration leads to frustration. Little progress has been made in the Netherlands, probably because most of the attention was directed to technical solutions. Often the social, economical and legal aspects of realizing an AHIS are neglected and the process of common interests and threats of private and public organisations for AHIS has been insufficiently used. Therefore, we propose to use the Interactive Technology Assessment (ITA) approach [1].



Meat inspections RVV



Quarterly veterinarian check

Methods

The Interactive Technology Assessment (ITA) approach focuses on resolving complex socio-technical issues by a construction of consensus amongst stakeholders on a specific solution. This is achieved by interactively evaluating and constructing proposals for new technologies or technological arrangements. This poster presents the preliminary results of the first step.

The first step was to identify a wide range of stakeholders including directly and indirectly involved organisations or groups, including for example the keepers of hobby animals.

Problem definition and possible solutions per stakeholder were recorded by:

- i) organisation form;
- ii) problem(s) an integrated AHIS could solve;
- iii) which data (when available) is already been gathered;
- iv) added value to the stakeholder of an integrated AHIS;
- v) possible risk / threat of integrated AHIS for stakeholder;
- vi) readiness to share information with others.



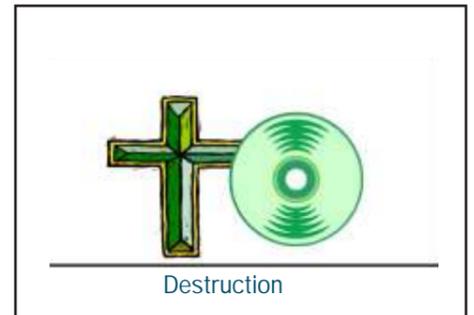
Medicine and health registration on farm



I&R system



Dutch Animal Health Service



Destruction

Results

Analysis of this information demonstrated the importance of ITA. At first glance an integrated AHIS seemed to offer a solution for the realisation of the goal of both private and public organisations to achieve more transparency of the production process. Consensus turned out to be superficial. Governmental bodies interpret transparency as 'more governmental control'. The primary sector interprets transparency as 'more control in the chain', in order to avoid more governmental control. Hence, although there seemed to be a common basis for an integrated AHIS initially, in practice efforts to build and run such a system will fail unless the underlying conflicts are properly addressed. Our analysis further demonstrated how strategy differences between similar stakeholders, for example between organisations of primary producers, to inhibit a common AHIS. Whereas some look for collaboration with government, other gain their members by fighting legislation.

Conclusions

Using deeper insights like the one above on what drives public and private stakeholders, ITA tries to overcome seemingly unbridgeable 'conflicts-of-interests' by interactively shaping and reshaping a blueprint of an integrated AHIS that is both public and private. In an iterative process of interviews, analysis and workshop meetings, this blue print is tailored to the needs of a range of stakeholders. Because of its interactive and iterative nature, the ITA process may as well result in a transformation or redefinition of stakeholders positions and interests. In this way both technical as well as social and juridical obstacles for a common AHIS are addressed in a way that is transparent to all participants.

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References

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