

New Animal Health strategy to propel Africa's World Animal Resource Economy

By **GERARD NYELE**

Gnyele@standardmedia.co.ke

The African union has unveiled the Animal Health Strategy for Africa (AHSA) 2018-2035 to bolster animal health, animal production, and productivity, safety of foods of animal origin, public health, and a healthy environment within the continent.

The AHSA 2018-2035 is "a continental framework for delivering a sustainable animal health system that meets global standards Healthy animals for enhanced livelihoods, safe trade public and environmental health".

The strategy, validated in November 2018 in Kigali, Rwanda, has been endorsed by the African Union Specialized Technical Committee, which comprised the ministers in charge of animal resources, water, agriculture, and the environment.

The strategy was approved by the Heads of States summit in February 2020 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The Animal Health Strategy for Africa (AHSA) 2018-2035 is "a continental framework for delivering a sustainable animal health system that meets global standards Healthy animals for enhanced livelihoods, safe trade public and environmental health".

It aims to address the challenges facing animal health service delivery in the African continent. It is aligned to the Livestock

"The AHSA 2018-2035 is "a continental framework for delivering a sustainable animal health system that meets global standards Healthy animals for enhanced livelihoods, safe trade public and environmental health."

Development Strategy for Africa (LiDeSA). Further, it provides more focused strategic interventions and approaches to addressing bee and aquatic health holistically in the context of the One Health (OH) approach. It also aims to harmonize animal health services in the continent with relevant global, continental, and regional strategies and frameworks. Therefore, it serves as an overarching strategy to enhance animal health interventions' efficiency and effectiveness in the continent.

"The strategy builds on gains made by past and ongoing interventions to address animal health challenges in Africa and incor-



Herders with their cows. [Courtesy]

porates the lessons learned and best practices; as well, it identifies several success factors necessary for the achievement of the objectives. Given the diversity of interventions required for effective, efficient and sustainable animal health delivery systems, stakeholder engagement, partnerships and multisector planning and implementation will be pursued with vigor for the realization of the objectives of the strategy. Member States will take a leading role in resource mobilization and implementation and will adapt their interventions accordingly based on their specific peculiarities and the accompanying 5 year implementation plan (2020-2024) of AHSA" says H.E. Amb. Josefa Leonel Correia Sacko, the Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture.

The strategy aims to address the challenges of delivering animal health services in a harmonized way within the context of the One-Health approach. The one-health approach is a collaborative, multi-sectoral, and trans-disciplinary approach, for working locally, nationally, regionally, and globally, to achieve optimal health and well-being of all animals, people, plants and their shared environment, recognizing as well their inextricable interconnections. Africa's One-Health approach includes neglected endemic diseases and strengthening inter-sectoral linkages and public-animal environment health interfaces.

Africa's animal resources, comprising livestock, aquatic animals and wildlife, contribute significantly to Africa's societal

needs and welfare through agriculture, food and non-food products, including tourism, and other environmental services. Other animal industry resources such as, aquaculture, apiculture, vermiculture and other non-conventional micro-livestock farming like rabbits are under exploited. The diseases and husbandry issues arising from these relatively new production systems need to be addressed. On average, livestock alone contributes 35% of the national agricultural GDP

In view of the above, AHSA is expected to contribute to achieving the aspirations of the African Union Agenda 2063 and the Malabo Declaration on accelerated agriculture growth transformation for shared prosperity and improved livelihoods, the Africa Continental Free Trade Area, and the Feed Africa Strategy.

Besides, the AHSA will contribute to the objectives of the Livestock Development Strategy for Africa (LiDeSA), Animal Welfare Strategy for Africa (AWSA), the Policy Framework and Reform Strategy for Fisheries and Aquaculture (PFRS), African Strategy on Combating Illegal Exploitation on Wild Flora and Fauna, and the Policy Framework for Pastoralism in Africa among others.

Implementing AHSA will lead to improved capacity to anticipate and mitigate the negative impacts of animal diseases, zoonosis, climate change, and disasters for healthy and productive animal populations and increased access to regional and international markets for African animals and animal products. It will also lead to improved engagement of all value chain actors considering gender inclusivity and youth in animal resource development for enhanced economic growth and social welfare of African populations, thus "putting Africa in the World Animal Resource Economic".



EUROPEAN UNION



AFRICAN UNION

INTERAFRICAN BUREAU
FOR ANIMAL RESOURCES