

EDITORIAL

It is our pleasure to come up with the 38th volume of Nepalese Veterinary Journal (NVJ). The current issue of NVJ includes a range of original research and review articles, short communications and case studies on several aspects of animal husbandry including health, breeding, nutrition, and management of livestock, pets and wildlife, and public health. We believe that this information will be useful to the concerned stakeholders such as veterinarians, animal scientists, public health workers, farmers and policy makers.

Livestock sector of Nepal faced several challenges in the past year. There were unusually high number of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) outbreaks in 2022 in more than 16 districts of Nepal resulting in culling of more than 700,000 birds. In year 2023 also, several outbreaks of HPAI have been detected warranting for continuous effort to be done in the sustainable management of HPAI outbreaks. A new deadly pig disease, African Swine Fever (ASF) entered for the first time in Nepal in 2022 devastating commercial and backyard pig farming in dozens of districts of Nepal. As there is no treatment or vaccine available for ASF, this disease is particularly worrying for pig farmers of Nepal. Focus should be placed in strengthening the biosecurity measures and good husbandry practices in pig farms of Nepal to prevent the entry of ASF. Lumpy Skin Disease (LSD), a cattle and buffalo disease, which entered Nepal in 2020 from the eastern part of Nepal took an epidemic form during early 2023 and reached almost all districts of Nepal causing huge economic losses to the dairy farmers. However, the exact losses being caused by these new infectious diseases, LSD and ASF, have not been yet estimated. The Government of Nepal has made a policy decision to allow vaccination against LSD and commercial LSD vaccine is already available in Nepal which is expected to contribute to reduce the burden of LSD outbreaks in the future. The emergence and reemergence of several infectious livestock diseases call for the need of an “Infectious Animal Disease Control Act” for the timely control and containment of infectious animal diseases to minimize economic losses and promote public health by reducing the spillover events.

More broadly, given the high burden of infectious diseases, there is a need to strengthen the animal health systems at all three tiers of government. Given the new federal structure of Nepal, veterinary services at province and local level is particularly weak in terms of both infrastructure and human resources. The upgrading of livestock services unit at the local level to the veterinary hospitals equipped with modern veterinary facilities and qualified human resources can be pivotal to uplift the livestock industry of Nepal. This will ultimately help to boost the local economy and farmers’ income which can bring the chain effect to the national economy. Further, the unit cost of production of livestock and its product in Nepal is higher compared to our neighboring countries. Breeding, feeding and health management of livestock and fish need to be enhanced through effective policies

and investments in the public-private partnership model to increase production and productivity and to make cost of production competitive.

Besides, the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has clearly highlighted the importance of one health approach especially for diseases that occur at the human-animal-environment interface. This is a high time for Nepal to implement the “One Health Strategy 2019” which was endorsed by the Government of Nepal. As Nepal has already prioritized 10 zoonotic diseases following a one health approach, preparedness activities against these diseases following a one health approach can be immediately embarked upon.

Nepal Veterinary Association (NVA) is a scientific professional organization of Nepalese veterinarians aimed at strengthening the technical capabilities of member veterinarians and safeguarding the veterinary profession in Nepal. NVA publishes the Nepalese Veterinary Journal (NVJ), an online accessible scientific journal indexed in Nepal Journals Online (NepJOL). The publication aims to share scientific knowledge and technology among members and stakeholders at home and abroad. We welcome original scientific research and review articles, short communications, case studies and perspectives in the area of veterinary science, animal science, food safety, public health and other cross-cutting issues. The guidelines for authors can be accessed through <https://www.nepjol.info/index.php/nvj/about>.

We would like to express our sincere thanks to the authors and reviewers for their hard work and valuable contribution to the veterinary profession. We would also like to acknowledge Ms. Pramina Shrestha for her secretarial service. We are also indebted to the executive committee of NVA for their support and encouragement.

We apologize for errors, if any, despite our effort to minimize them. We welcome constructive suggestion from our readers.

Editor-in-Chief
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