

Brooke Latin America and the Caribbean is writing to you to urge you to prepare for the El Niño phenomenon in the spirit of One Health.

El Niño presents risks for people, animals and the environment alike. One Health is an integrated, unifying approach that aims to sustainably balance and optimize the health of people, animals and ecosystems. It recognizes the health of humans, domestic and wild animals, plants, and the wider environment (including ecosystems) are closely linked and inter-dependent ([One Health High Level Expert Panel](#)).

El Niño increases the risk of animal diseases and poor welfare, as well as zoonotic diseases. As a consequence, we face threats to human health, as well as the consequences of food shortages.

We urge you to plan ahead using a One Health approach by:

- 1) Strengthening animal health surveillance, including at community level where community members may be the first to detect changes in the animal population. Provide animal owners with incentives to report animal disease and effects on agriculture.
- 2) Build strong animal health systems in the long term, including: improving access to and strengthening the efficiency of animal health services, upskilling and increasing the animal health workforce, and improving access to medicines and vaccines.
- 3) Include livestock, including working horses and donkeys, in disaster preparedness plans. Ensure food reserves for livestock.
- 4) Bring veterinarians, human health practitioners and disaster risk management (DRM) organizations together to prepare for El Niño, to protect the health of both animals and people, as well as people's livelihoods.
- 5) As well as the Pan American Health Organisation, Consult the World Organization for Animal Health and the Food and Agricultural Organisation of the UN (FAO) for expertise and guidance.
- 6) To promote educational campaigns with measures to prepare for the El Niño phenomenon, making it important to work together to respond and be ready for this phenomenon that is now beginning.

Let's spread this information in networks of common interest, since this phenomenon affects us all. Those who suffer the most are families who depend on their animals for their livelihoods.