

Recommendations for Specialized Inspection Based on Compliance with the Law on Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Medicine of Animal Husbandry Establishments: A Study of Thai Binh Province, Vietnam

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Abstract

This article is based on the research framework of the compliance with laws on animal husbandry, veterinary medicine and specialized inspection to analyze the current status of the compliance with laws on animal husbandry and veterinary medicine in Thai Binh province. The article proposes five recommendations for specialized inspection regarding the compliance with laws on animal husbandry and veterinary medicine to ensure food safety in animal husbandry: Capacity improvement for inspection staffs; Inspection focus on the use of animal feed, veterinary drugs and biological products in animal husbandry; Development of specialized technical means for specialized inspection of animal husbandry and veterinary medicine; Standardization of inspection conclusions to communicate awareness of law compliance to animal husbandry establishments; Combination of planned and unscheduled inspection forms to promptly detect violations of laws on animal husbandry and veterinary medicine.

Keywords: Law on Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Medicine, Thai Binh, specialized inspection based

1. Introduction

1.1. The urge of topic

Animal husbandry is an economic sector that greatly affects food safety and environmental safety. In Vietnam, the animal husbandry industry is gradually transforming its large-scale livestock farming model, towards modern industrial orientation, biosafety and disease-free livestock farming processes. Animal husbandry establishments (AHEs) in Thai Binh province are increasingly shifting towards farms. As of 2023, the province had 2,390 farms, of which more than 20% met farm economic standards. Household establishments have also begun to pay attention to meeting household VietGap standards (Thai Binh DARD, 2023).

Along with this development, AHEs in Thai Binh province are increasingly aware of and comply with animal husbandry and veterinary medicine (AHVM) laws. However, with the increasing social concern for food safety and environmental safety in Vietnam, compliance with AHVM

laws by AHEs remains an urgent issue. The role of state management is increasingly important, especially specialized inspection to strengthen compliance with AHVM laws.

The objective of this article is to clarify the current status of compliance with the law on AHVM; the current status of specialized inspection of compliance with the law on AHVM through the case of Thai Binh province. From there, the article makes recommendations on specialized inspection to strengthen compliance with the law on AHVM. Research process: i) determine the theoretical basis for compliance with the law on AHVM and specialized inspection of compliance with the law; ii) clarify the research framework and research methods; iii) analyze the current status of compliance with the law on AHVM; the current status of specialized inspection of compliance with the laws in Thai Binh province; iv) summarize the advantages and limitations of compliance with the laws in Thai Binh province and clarify the causes of the limitations; v) propose some recommendations for specialized inspection to strengthen compliance with the law on AHVM in Thai Binh province.

1.2. Theoretical background

Animal husbandry and animal husbandry establishments

Animal husbandry

According to Tran & Nguyen (2000), animal husbandry is an agricultural production sector that provides food for humans, supplies inputs for the processing industry, provides traction, and organic fertilizers for the crop growing industry. “Animal husbandry is an economic and technical sector that includes activities in the fields of animal breeds, animal feed, animal husbandry conditions, processing, and livestock product markets” (14th National Assembly, 2018). Animal husbandry activities, according to the law on animal husbandry, include raising for growth, raising for reproduction of animals, and other activities related to animals and livestock products for the purpose of food, exploitation of traction, decoration, or other human purposes (14th National Assembly, 2018).

Animal husbandry establishments

AHEs are organizations and individuals that carry out animal husbandry activities including raising for growth, raising for reproduction of animals and other activities related to animals and livestock products for the purpose of food, exploitation of traction, decoration or other human purposes (Government of Vietnam, 2020).

AHEs are grouped based on different criteria: “Large-scale, medium-scale, small-scale livestock farms; households”(Government of Vietnam, 2020). Based on the production and business model, AHES are organized in the form of livestock enterprises, cooperatives, cooperative groups, and household-based. Based on the form of livestock organization, these establishments include household establishments or husbandry farms. These two forms differ in scale, techniques, and product productivity.

Compliance with livestock and veterinary medicine laws of animal husbandry establishments

Compliance with law is “a form of law enforcement in which legal entities perform legal obligations that the law requires them to perform” (Nguyen, 2019).

Compliance with AHVM laws by AHEs is a form of law enforcement in which these establishments perform mandatory obligations required by AHVM laws. The level of compliance with AHVM laws by these establishments includes: i) good compliance; ii) compliance but need to be corrected according to the recommendations of the inspector; iii) violations and subject to administrative sanctions; iv) violations and subject to criminal sanctions.

Compliance with the law on animal husbandry, veterinary medicine of AHEs includes the following five contents: i) procedures in animal husbandry: certificates of business registration; certificates of eligibility for animal husbandry; animal husbandry processes; records and documentation; invoices and documents for the purchase and sale of breeding animals, animal feed, veterinary medicines, and other materials for animal husbandry; ii) regulations on facilities, workshops, and works serving animal husbandry such as animal housing; water sources; waste collection and treatment systems, and safe distances in animal housing; iii) regulations on the organization of animal husbandry activities including animal husbandry declaration; waste collection and treatment processes and technologies; disease prevention; iv) regulations on the use of animal feed such as product labels, food preservation; compliance with regulations on warning information about the potential unsafety of animal feed; the use of prohibited substances in animal husbandry; v) regulations on the use of veterinary drugs and biological products in animal husbandry.

Specialized inspection of compliance with animal husbandry and veterinary laws of animal husbandry establishments

Monitoring business activities through the inspection system is an important component of the government's regulatory apparatus. Inspection is a state activity to ensure that public policy goals, such as consumer protection and food safety, are achieved with minimal burden on businesses (Molfetas-Lygiaris, A., & Ottimofiore, G., 2022). The law on inspection stipulates that “specialized inspection is the inspection of compliance with specialized laws, technical and professional regulations, and sector management rules by agencies, organizations, and individuals” (15th National Assembly, 2022).

Based on the above concept, specialized inspection of compliance with laws on animal husbandry and veterinary medicine of AHEs is the activity of reviewing, evaluating, and handling in an orderly and procedural manner the compliance with laws on animal husbandry and veterinary medicine of AHEs.

The content of DARD's specialized inspections focuses on reviewing, evaluating, and handling AHEs regarding their compliance with AHVM laws. The purpose of specialized inspections is to contribute to ensuring food safety and environmental protection in animal husbandry activities. The objectives of specialized inspections are: i) Detect and handle violations of animal

husbandry and veterinary medicine laws by AHEs; ii) Identify limitations and make recommendations to as well as to state management agencies to strengthen state management of animal husbandry; propose recommendations to state management agencies for the improvement of policies and laws on AHVM; iii) Protect the legitimate rights and interests of AHEs (14th National Assembly, 2018).

The specialized inspection of the DARD is carried out through the inspection apparatus of DARD; following the inspection methods and procedures; applying inspection tools, including the law on inspection, the law on animal husbandry, and the law on veterinary medicine; and requires a specific inspection plan and specialized equipment and tools.

2. Method

This study examines: (1) the compliance of AHEs with the law on animal husbandry and veterinary medicine based on five key aspects; 2) the analysis of specialize inspection factors conducted by DARD and (3) the analysis of the inspection environment's impact on AHEs' compliance with the law on AHVM; on food safety and environmental protection.

2.1. Research framework

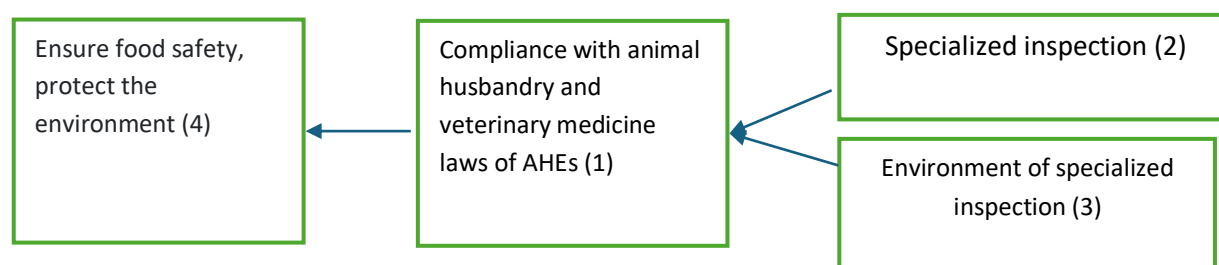


Figure 1: Research framework

2.2. Research methods

Data collection methods: Secondary data on AHEs, compliance with the law of AHEs, data on specialized inspections were taken from reports of the Thai Binh DARD in the period of 2021-2023. Primary data was collected through interviews with four AHEs, that had been subjects of specialized inspections. The four establishments interviewed included two AHEs in An Thanh commune and two AHEs in Vu Lang commune, Tien Hai district, Thai Binh province. These establishments had been inspected for compliance with the law on animal husbandry and veterinary medicine. The sample size was 4/27 establishments inspected in the period of 2021-2023, thus ensuring the reliability of the research data. The AHEs were interviewed directly about the current status of specialized inspections; about ensuring food safety, environmental protection, and enhancing social responsibility animal husbandry activities.

Data analysis methods: Applying the methods of system analysis, synthesis, and modeling in setting the research framework; applying the methods of data analysis over the years, situation

analysis, comparison, evaluation, and synthesis to clarify the current status of compliance with the law on AHVM; the current status of specialized inspection of the Thai Binh DARD.

3. Research Results on Compliance With the Law on Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Medicine in Thai Binh Province

3.1. Compliance with animal husbandry and veterinary laws in Thai Binh province

3.1.1. Animal husbandry establishments in Thai Binh province

Animal husbandry is an important industry of Thai Binh province. The period from 2021 to 2023 marks a relatively strong development phase of the animal husbandry industry and AHEs in Thai Binh province. AHEs in Thai Binh province, with many various types and forms, have made significant contributions to the province's overall animal husbandry results.

Regarding business organization: In 2021, Thai Binh province had 01 association, 05 cooperatives, 9 collaborative groups, and 22 enterprises in the animal husbandry industry. By 2023, the province had 01 association, 08 cooperatives, 12 cooperatives groups, and 36 enterprises. In addition, Thai Binh had a relatively large number of the animal husbandry households. In 2023, the province had 15,351 households in this sector. However, the number of households decreased by more than 200 households compared to 2021, while the number of enterprises, cooperatives, and cooperatives groups increased. This indicates a positive structural shift in the industry of Thai Binh province.

Regarding production forms: Animal husbandry production in Thai Binh province has been undergoing a positive transformation, aligning with the province's policy and orientation for animal husbandry sector restructuring - reducing small-scale household-based production and promoting the development of professional farm-based animal husbandry production. The growing number of professional farm-based production, alongside the reduction in household-based production, reflects a promising outlook for the sector. In 2023, the province had 2,390 animal husbandry farms, an increase of 89 farms compared to 2021. Among them, 30 large-scale farms were established by 5 enterprises. These large-scale farms are gradually improving their production scale through the application of modern science and technology, implementing biosecure and disease-safe farming practices, and maintaining and developing vertical linkage chains. The proportion of farms meeting official economic farm standards is 20%. In addition, nearly 3,000 animal husbandry households are actively adopting Good Animal Husbandry Practices (VietGAP for households), reaching a rate of 22% in 2023. This has been a significant driving force behind the positive animal husbandry production results of Thai Binh province in recent years.

Table 1. Animal husbandry establishments in Thai Binh province

	Indicator	Unit	Year 2021	Year 2022	Year 2023
I	Business organization form				
1	Association	<i>Establishment</i>	1	1	1
2	Enterprise	<i>Establishment</i>	22	30	36
3	Cooperative	<i>Establishment</i>	5	6	8
4	Cooperatives group	<i>Establishment</i>	9	11	15
5	Household	<i>Establishment</i>	15,564	15,380	15,351
II	Production form				
1	Farm-based livestock production	Farm	2,301	2,353	2,390
	In which # meeting the official economic farm standards	Farm	346	424	478
	In which % meeting official economic farm standards	%	15.1	18.0	20.1
2	Household-based production	Household	14,504	13,801	13,004
	In which # meeting VietGAP household standards	Household	2,208	2,330	2,897
	In which % meeting VietGAP household standards	%	15.2	16.9	22.3
III	Animal husbandry production results	Units	Year 2021	Year 2022	Year 2023
1	Production value (2010 constant prices)	Billion VND	9,681.2	10,069.4	10,424.5
2	Total herd of buffaloes and cattle	Thousand heads	58.5	57.7	60.0
3	Buffalo and cattle live weight meat output	Thousand tons	11,123	10,427	10,670
4	Total pig herd	Thousand heads	800.0	556.4	710.0
5	Pig live weight meat output	Tons	184,400	167,700	171,700
6	Total poultry flock	Million heads	13.5	14.3	14.4
8	Poultry live weight meat output	Thousand tons	68.5	70.9	72.7
9	Egg production	Miliion eggs	335	338	340

10	Production output at farms /total provincial livestock production output	%	64	62	63
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Source: Thai Binh Province Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Sub-Department,

Regarding animal husbandry production results: Animal husbandry production in Thai Binh province has achieved high, sustainable results in terms of productivity, quality, and value. On average, during the 2021–2023 period, the production value of this sector reached 10,000 billion VND; the output of buffalo and cattle live weight meat reached 10,740 thousand tons; the total poultry flock reached 14.0 million heads; the output of poultry live weight meat reached approximately 70.7 thousand tons; and egg production reached 337 million eggs.

3.1.2. The current status of compliance with livestock and veterinary laws among animal husbandry establishments

Compliance with AHVM laws among AHEs in Thai Binh province was evaluated based on the inspection results of the Thai Binh DARD in the 2021–2023 period. During this period, the Department's inspection teams examined 27 establishments and found that 24 of them had errors or violations of the laws. Among these 24 establishments, 12 committed violations warranting administrative penalties, with total fines amounting to 58.5 million VND. In total, 79 instances of errors or administrative violations were detected during the inspections.

More specifically, the current status of compliance with animal husbandry and veterinary medicine laws among the AHEs is evaluated across the following five aspects:

Table 2: Errors and violations in compliance with animal husbandry and veterinary medicine laws in Thai Binh Province

	Indicator	Unit	Year 2021	Year 2022	Year 2023	Total
I	The number of AHEs inspected	<i>Establishment</i>	9	10	8	27
II	Number of AHEs with errors or violations	<i>Establishment</i>	8	9	7	24
	In which, #AHEs with administrative violations	<i>Establishment</i>	5	3	4	12
	#Act subject to administrative penalty.	Act	3	7	4	14
	Administrative penalty fine	Miliion VND	7,5	41,0	10,0	58,5
III	Details of errors and administrative violations	Act	24	26	29	79
1	<i>Conditions and procedures in animal husbandry production</i>	Act	20	19	24	63
1.1	Business registration certificate	Act	0	2	4	6
1.2	Certificate of eligibility for animal husbandry	Act	9	10	7	27
1.3	Animal husbandry process	Act	0	0	1	1
1.4	Records and documentation	Act	3	2	4	9
1.5	Invoices and documents	Act	3	2	4	9
1.6	Environmental protection measures	Act	5	3	4	12
2	<i>Conditions of physical facilities, animal housing, auxiliary structures for production</i>	Act	1	2	1	4
2.1	Animal housing	Act	1	0	0	1
2.2	Water source	Act	0	1	0	1
2.3	Waste collection and treatment system	Act	0	1	0	1
2.4	Safe distance of animal housing	Act	0	0	1	1
3	<i>Organization of animal husbandry production</i>	Act	1	3	2	6
3.1	Animal husbandry declaration	Act	0	3	0	3
3.2	Process and technology for collecting and treating organic solid waste	Act	1	0	1	2
3.3	Process and technology for	Act	0	0	1	1

	Indicator	Unit	Year 2021	Year 2022	Year 2023	Total
	collecting, treating animal husbandry wastewater					
3.4	Disease prevention	Act	0	0	0	0
4	<i>Use of animal feed</i>	Act	1	1	1	3
4.1	Product label	Act	1	0	0	1
4.2	Storage of animal feed	Act	0	1	1	2
4.3	Warning information about potential safety risks of animal feed	Act	0	0	0	0
4.4	Use of banned substances in animal husbandry	Act	0	0	0	0
5	<i>Use of veterinary drugs and biological products in animal husbandry</i>	Act	1	1	1	3
5.1	Product label	Act	1	0	0	1
5.2	Storage conditions for veterinary drugs and biological products	Act	0	1	1	2
5.3	Warning information about potential safety risks of goods	Act	0	0	0	0

Source: Compiled from AHEs inspection records of Thai Binh DARD

Conditions and procedures in animal husbandry production: This is the area with the highest incidence of errors and violations. The inspection teams detected 63 errors and violations, primarily related to the certification of eligibility for animal husbandry production (27 instances) and environmental protection measures (including environmental protection commitments and environmental permits, 12 instances). There is a trend of increasing errors and violations in these conditions and procedures, even though the number of establishments inspected has decreased.

Conditions of physical facilities, housing, and auxiliary structures for production: In this aspect, AHEs generally comply well, with few errors or violations. The main shortcomings observed include failure to meet the requirements regarding animal housing facilities, water sources, waste collection and treatment systems, and safe distances of animal housing.

Organization of animal husbandry production: Inspection teams have also detected errors and violations in animal husbandry reporting, as well as shortcomings in the procedures and technologies for waste collection and treatment, and for the collection and treatment of animal husbandry wastewater. However, compared to the past, AHEs have become increasingly aware and standardized in organizing their production (Thai Binh DARD, 2023)

Conditions of physical facilities, animal housing, and auxiliary structures for production: Some AHEs have not adequately complied with these requirements. The inspection teams discovered

several instances of non-compliance with the regulations regarding animal housing, water sources, waste collection and treatment systems, and safe distances in animal husbandry production.

Use of animal feed: Violations of regulations regarding the use of animal feed still persist, as reflected in inspection results. Some errors primarily relate to product labeling and feed storage. Overall, AHEs have begun to recognize the harmful effects of using feed of unclear origin and containing prohibited substances in the production (Thai Binh DARD, 2023).

Use of veterinary drugs and biological products in animal husbandry: During the 2021–2023 period, inspection teams did not detect any errors or violations concerning the labeling of veterinary drugs and biological products used in animal husbandry production; the storage conditions for these drugs and products; or compliance with warning information regarding potential safety issues of these products.

3.2. Specialized inspection and the inspection environment in Thai Binh Province

3.2.1. Specialized inspection

Inspection personnel: The inspection personnel responsible for specialized inspections on compliance with animal husbandry and veterinary medicine laws among AHEs under the Thai Binh DARD consist of both direct inspection personnel and coordinating inspection personnel. The direct inspection team currently comprises 8 individuals, including 1 Chief Inspector, 2 Deputy Chief Inspectors, and 5 inspectors. These personnel hold at least a university degree; they have received training certificates for inspectors and other certificates as required by law; and they exhibit a strong sense of responsibility, integrity, honesty, fairness, and objectivity. Notably, 100% of the personnel have over 5 years of work experience (Thai Binh DARD, 2023). However, the interview results indicate that the inspection personnel's experience in inspections on compliance AHVM laws remains limited. Some inspectors have participated in only one or two inspections related to compliance with these laws. Moreover, the coordinating personnel from the Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Sub-Department and other specialized departments of the Thai Binh DARD have relatively little experience in handling flexible situations, and they are not yet sufficiently agile or up-to-date with changes in policies and laws.

Box 1: Interview results from AHEs on specialized inspections in Thai Binh Province

Opinions on Specialized Inspection Personnel: Inspectors are experienced, conscientious, and responsible in their inspection work. However, the coordinating inspection officers lack flexible and agile situation-handling skills and a thorough understanding of the laws relevant to their respective areas.

Opinions on the inspection content: The inspection teams focused on the five aspects of compliance with animal husbandry and veterinary medicine laws; however, they did not employ adequate inspection, testing, and measurement tools, which resulted in a rather time-consuming process and conclusions that are flawed, with the determination of violations not being fair to the inspected AHEs. The

inspection conclusions still lack recommendations for reviewing, adjusting, and amending the animal husbandry and veterinary medicine regulations, as well as for handling administrative violations to safeguard the rights of the establishments. Furthermore, some inspection conclusions recommending actions for the AHEs did not reference the relevant legal provisions.

Opinions on the inspection methods and tools: All AHEs are included in the planned inspections and are not subject to surprise inspections. However, some livestock regulations are incomplete, such as the technical standards for solid waste treatment in animal husbandry production and the regulations on air quality monitoring in animal husbandry production, resulting in insufficient grounds to inspect aspects related to solid waste and air quality.

General opinion on specialized inspections of animal husbandry and veterinary medicine laws: Specialized inspections will help rectify animal husbandry activities in Thai Binh Province, thereby contributing to ensuring food safety and protecting the environment—provided that the identified shortcomings in the inspection process are addressed.

Source: A summary of interview results from Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Sub-

Department, ThaiBinh DARD (2024).

Inspection Content: Thai Binh DARD conducted a comprehensive specialized inspection on compliance with animal husbandry and veterinary medicine laws, focusing on identifying errors and violations related to the conditions and procedures in animal husbandry production. Regarding other aspects of legal compliance, the inspection teams did not thoroughly detect errors and violations. Interview results indicate that this is mainly due to the inspection teams primarily using observational methods, with limited measurement and testing, owing to a lack of specialized tools and equipment. The process of sending samples for testing is time-consuming and costly, while the inspection period is short. Furthermore, some animal husbandry regulations are incomplete, leaving no basis for inspection (Thai Binh DARD, 2023).

In some AHEs, certain aspects of legal compliance have not been adequately emphasized by the inspection teams, such as adherence to regulations on the use of animal feed and on the use of veterinary drugs and biological products in animal husbandry production. Interview results indicate that the inspection conclusions still lack recommendations for reviewing, adjusting, and amending the animal husbandry and veterinary medicine regulations or the administrative violation handling regulations to ensure the rights of the AHEs. Some recommendations addressed to the AHEs do not reference the relevant legal provisions in the inspection conclusions. In addition, some inspection conclusions lack recommendations for the local Commune People's Committee and District People's Committee in managing animal husbandry.

Inspection Methods and Tools: In recent times, Thai Binh DARD has focused on planned inspections but has not implemented surprise inspections. This is a limitation, as surprise inspections can lead to better compliance with the laws. The department develops a general periodic inspection plan for all inspection subjects without specifying the inspection content for each AHEs, so inspections do not focus on the specific weaknesses in legal compliance at each

establishment. Interview results indicate that currently, inspection equipment for monitoring animal husbandry and veterinary medicine laws is severely lacking, especially specialized tools such as measuring tapes, digital scales, kits, tests, etc.

3.2.2. Environment of specialized inspection

Characteristics of AHEs: AHEs in Thai Binh province are currently operating on a small-scale and fragmented basis. Their technological level remains low. Household-based production, often intermingled with residential areas, still accounts for a high proportion, and the application of modern science, technology, and safe production processes is limited. Chain-linked livestock production is not yet widespread, contract farming being predominant and its effectiveness is not truly sustainable. Agricultural cooperatives have not yet established a definitive role in leading, organizing cooperation, and linking production with processing and consumption. Moreover, Thai Binh province lacks large enterprises that can spearhead and guide the value chain in livestock production. Additionally, the treatment and management of environmental issues in livestock production at some AHEs remain limited.

State management of animal husbandry: The advisory efforts and issuance of policies to support digital transformation in agriculture in Thai Binh province have not been truly appropriate or timely, and they have not generated the necessary impetus for a focused and effective digital transformation in agriculture overall, and in the animal husbandry sector in particular. The effort to enhance farmers' capacity to access and integrate digital technology into agricultural production has not received sufficient attention from the Provincial Government. In implementing policies and laws on animal husbandry, the District People's Committees in Thai Binh province have been slow in developing and executing plans for establishing key livestock zones at the commune and district levels.

Legal Environment: Animal husbandry and veterinary medicine laws are incomplete, posing challenges for specialized inspections, such as the lack of regulations on technical standards for solid waste treatment in livestock production. Environmental laws do not yet include specific provisions on air quality monitoring in livestock production. Additionally, some sanctions remain inadequate for addressing violations.

Natural Environment: AHEs are affected by climate change, and many dangerous diseases among animals and poultry pose the risk of further outbreaks, compounded by the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. Meanwhile, the prices of materials, fertilizers, feed, and other inputs have risen sharply, and the area of agricultural land has decreased as more land is allocated for industrial and service development (Thai Binh DARD, 2023)

4. Conclusions and Recommendations for Specialized Inspections in Thai Binh Province

4.1. Conclusion on compliance with animal husbandry and veterinary medicine laws in Thai Binh Province

4.1.1. Some limitations in compliance with animal husbandry and veterinary medicine laws in Thai Binh Province

Firstly, violations of with animal husbandry and veterinary medicine laws continue to occur at AHEs in Thai Binh Province. Almost all AHEs inspected on a rotational, annual basis exhibit errors and violations of these laws. This underscores the need to consider enhancing the capacity of specialized inspection.

Secondly, although the number of AHEs subject to annual specialized inspections has decreased, the number of violations per AHE has increased, with each AHE committing more violations each year. This indicates a growing complexity in non-compliance with legal regulations at these AHEs.

Thirdly, the errors and violations of the AHEs mainly concern the conditions and procedures in animal husbandry production. However, in other areas of compliance, these AHEs still exhibit violations and are subject to administrative penalties, such as failing to meet requirements regarding barns, water sources, waste collection and treatment systems, and safe distances in animal husbandry production; not ensuring proper procedures and technologies for waste collection and treatment; not ensuring proper procedures and technologies for collecting and treating animal husbandry wastewater; as well as some violations related to product labeling and feed storage.

4.1.2. Primary causes

Problems in compliance with animal husbandry and veterinary medicine laws in Thai Binh province are primarily due to the current state of specialized inspections by the DARD, namely: (i) The personnel have limited experience in handling situations flexibly and are not sufficiently up-to-date with changes in policies and laws; (ii) The inspection teams primarily rely on observational methods and lack specialized tools and equipment; (iii) In some AHEs, the inspection teams have not focused on inspecting compliance with regulations on the use of animal feed and the use of veterinary drugs and biological products in animal husbandry production; (iv) The inspection conclusions still lack recommendations for improving animal husbandry and veterinary medicine regulations or for administrative violation handling regulations to protect the rights of AHEs; (v) Some recommendations in the inspections do not reference the relevant legal provisions; (vi) Some inspection conclusions still lack recommendations for the local Commune People's Committee and District People's Committee in managing animal husbandry; (vii) There is a lack of combining periodic inspections with surprise inspections; and (viii) The inspection plan has not focused on key content for each AHEs.

Some other causes are: (i) AHEs in Thai Binh Province operate on a small-scale and fragmented basis, and their technological level remains low; (ii) The enhancement of farmers' capacity to access and integrate digital technology into agricultural production has not received sufficient attention from the Provincial Government; (iii) Animal husbandry and veterinary medicine laws

are not comprehensive enough regarding technical standards for solid waste treatment in livestock production, and environmental laws do not include specific provisions on air quality monitoring in livestock production. Additionally, some sanctions remain inadequate for addressing violations.

4.2. Some recommendations

To strengthen compliance with livestock and veterinary laws in Thai Binh Province, this study proposes the following recommendations regarding specialized inspections by the DARD:

Firstly, rotate inspectors to participate in animal husbandry and veterinary medicine inspection teams, thereby providing opportunities for learning and accumulating experience; and facilitate inspectors' participation in training courses to enhance their knowledge of the livestock sector, in addition to training in inspection techniques.

Secondly, focus inspections on compliance with regulations regarding the use of animal feed and on the use of veterinary drugs and biological products in animal husbandry production, thereby contributing to ensuring food safety from the animal husbandry production stage.

Thirdly, invest in enhancing technical capacity in specialized inspections, with priority given to acquiring tools and equipment for testing, measuring, and evaluating compliance with animal husbandry and veterinary medicine standards.

Fourth, standardize the inspection conclusions: fully reference the legal provisions when making recommendations to AHEs; include recommendations to improve the animal husbandry and veterinary medicine regulations and the regulations on handling administrative violations to safeguard the rights of AHEs; and add recommendations that fall under the responsibility of the Commune People's Committee and the District People's Committee for areas where AHEs have committed administrative violations.

Fifth, combine periodic inspections with surprise inspections to promptly detect legal violations, along with disseminating legal knowledge to AHEs; develop specific specialized inspection plans with a focus on key compliance aspects for each AHE.

Additionally, Thai Binh DARD advises the Provincial Government to issue and implement policies for developing animal husbandry farms that meet the required standards and for advancing household-based production in accordance with VietGAP standards; it also recommends improving the legal regulations on animal husbandry and veterinary medicine matters, environmental laws, and laws on handling administrative violations.

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