

STATEMENT BY THE OFFICE INTERNATIONAL DES EPIZOOTIES
AT THE MEETING HELD ON 8 AND 9 OCTOBER 1996

The involvement of the Office international des Epizooties in matters connected with world trade concerns the normative sector and technical assistance to developing countries.

Normative activities

1. Since the SPS Committee meeting on 29 and 30 May 1996, the OIE has organised further meetings of its Specialist Commissions and Working Groups in Paris. The International Animal Health Code Commission, the Foot and Mouth Disease and Other Epizootics Commission and the Standards Commission met in September 1996 and the Working Group on Informatics and Epidemiology in October 1996. The International Animal Health Code Commission prepared draft texts with a view to amending the text of the *International Animal Health Code*, and in particular the chapters dealing with foot and mouth disease (FMD), bovine spongiform encephalopathy and equine influenza. The Commission also agreed to the proposals made by an Ad hoc Group on Categorisation of Animal Diseases, and requested the Director General of the OIE to convene another Ad hoc Group to consider the sanitary conditions that should govern international trade in non human primates. The Foot and Mouth Disease and Other Epizootics Commission concentrated on examining the latest applications made by Member Countries with a view to all or part of their territory being recognised as free from foot and mouth disease. The Commission also defined a procedure to allow a list of FMD free countries to be kept up-to-date, subject to the approval of the International Committee. An international meeting to coordinate epidemiological research and investigations on transmissible spongiform encephalopathies, to which all the Member Countries were invited, was organised under the auspices of this Commission. During its deliberations, the Standards Commission selected new international reference laboratories for various animal diseases, reviewed progress on international standardisation of diagnostic tests and finalised guidelines on evaluating the quality of a laboratory. The Commission also finished preparing the third edition of the *Manual of Standards for Diagnostic Tests and Vaccines*, which should be available at the beginning of 1997. The Working Group on Informatics and Epidemiology discussed actions which the OIE should implement in order to collect animal health data of a higher standard and to develop the electronic distribution of the information at its disposal on animal health and standards for international trade. The Group also established a programme of work to draw up detailed guidelines on risk analysis.

Technical assistance

2. Following the report of the OIE Second Strategic Planning Group, the International Committee decided in May 1996 that the only seminars and training courses that would be financed by the Office during the next five years would be those concerned with disease information systems, methods of animal disease surveillance and diagnosis, and harmonisation of the registration and control of vaccines and chemoprophylactic products. In addition, the Committee recommended that these courses and seminars be developed on the basis of regional initiatives. In consequence, the OIE will be participating, through the intermediary of its specialist Collaborating Centre, in training courses on veterinary drug

registration and control (1996: Bogor [Indonesia] - 1997: New Delhi [India], Niamey [Niger]). The OIE will also be providing the secretariat for the 'International Technical Consultation on Veterinary Drug Registration' and chairing the 'International Cooperation on Harmonisation of Technical Requirements for Registration of Medicinal Products'. In the epidemiological field, an association is also being sought with specialist Collaborating Centres. One such Centre already exists in South Africa and a second Centre, located in Italy, is likely to be designated in May 1997. Discussions are also under way with a North American country, with a view to covering the Americas region. The activities undertaken by these Centres will be conducted in consultation with FAO and WHO, which have established training programmes in this field. Furthermore, in order to control animal diseases that present an obstacle to international trade, the OIE also provides specific assistance to developing countries that so wish. This is the case for the countries of South-East Asia (Cambodia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam), which benefit from the FMD control programme conducted by the OIE in collaboration with other international organisations and cooperation agencies. It is likewise the case for Madagascar (control of Teschen disease and tuberculosis). Other examples of specific requests include aid in organising animal disease surveillance systems in Africa (Angola, Burkina Faso, Uganda) and brucellosis control in the Middle East (FAO/OIE/WHO programme).