

53RD MEETING OF THE SANITARY AND PHYTOSANITARY (SPS) COMMITTEE

Update from the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE)

The following communication, received on 12 March 2012, is being circulated at the request of the OIE.

1. The OIE is pleased to provide this update for the information of SPS Committee Members.
2. This report focuses on (1) developments in the OIE standards for terrestrial animals (2) collaboration between the OIE and the Codex Alimentarius Commission, and (3) capacity building using the OIE PVS Pathway, including latest developments on veterinary education.

1. Developments in the OIE standards for terrestrial animals

3. The Terrestrial Animal Health Standards Commission (Code Commission) met on 14-23 February 2012. The meeting focused on new and revised Terrestrial Animal Health Code (Terrestrial Code) texts proposed for adoption at the 80th General Session (20-25 May 2012). The OIE draws the attention of WTO Members to the following important developments.

(a) African horse sickness

4. The OIE has developed provisions for the official recognition of freedom of countries and zones from African horse sickness (AHS). Relevant text will be proposed for adoption at the 80th General Session (2012).

(b) Foot and mouth disease

5. A major review of the chapter on foot and mouth disease (FMD) is on-going. For the first time, provision will be made for OIE endorsement of a member's official FMD control programme. This could help to facilitate the export of animals and products from countries that are not officially free of FMD.

(c) Peste des petit ruminants

6. The OIE is updating current provisions on peste des petit ruminants (PPR), an important disease of sheep and goats in Africa. With the support of members, the OIE may in future propose conditions for official recognition of freedom from PPR, with the eventual objective of global eradication of this disease, as recently achieved for rinderpest.

(d) Avian influenza

7. In light of a member's concerns about the OIE provisions for reporting avian influenza (AI), the Code Commission restated the relevant provisions of the Terrestrial Code and made a small modification to the current text to improve clarity. This revised text is proposed for adoption at the 80th General Session (2012).

(e) Veterinary legislation

8. Following the recommendations of the 1st OIE Global Conference on Veterinary Legislation (Djerba, Tunisia, December 2010), the OIE has developed a new Terrestrial Code Chapter 3.4 on veterinary legislation, based on the OIE Guidelines on the same topic. It is hoped that the new chapter, which is proposed for inclusion in Section 3 (Quality of Veterinary Services), will be adopted by the World Assembly at the 80th General Session (2012).

9. The objective of standards on veterinary legislation is to support members, particularly developing countries, who seek to strengthen governance and the delivery of animal health programmes. Many developing countries face significant challenges due, *inter alia*, to outdated and inadequate veterinary legislation. The new Code chapter provides a stronger legal basis than the previous "Guidelines" and can be used by members to help convince governments and donors of the need for investment in the legal framework of veterinary services in order to improve animal health, food safety and food security.

10. Advice of the SPS Committee secretariat was taken into account in the development of the new text. The Code Commission also modified Chapter 5.3., to clarify the obligation of WTO Members to notify veterinary legislation and SPS measures in accordance with the SPS Agreement.

More information on the OIE initiative on veterinary legislation can be found at: <http://www.oie.int/en/support-to-oie-members/veterinary-legislation/>.

(f) OIE Guidelines on assessing the risk of non-native animal species becoming invasive

11. The OIE convened an expert meeting with the objective of providing guidance to members on assessing the risk of non-native animal species becoming invasive. In addition to globally recognized scientists, representatives of the WTO SPS secretariat and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) secretariat attended the meeting. The guidelines written by the expert group, which were endorsed by the Terrestrial and Aquatic Code Commissions, will soon be placed on the OIE website.

2. Collaboration between the OIE and the Codex Alimentarius Commission

12. The OIE continues to work closely with the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC) in relation to animal production food safety.

13. The Codex Committee on General Principles will again address the issue of common OIE/CAC standards at its meeting on 2-6 April 2012. Bearing in mind the feedback of CAC members to the CAC secretariat on this topic, the OIE has revised its thinking on means to strengthen collaboration. In addition to the established arrangements, which have functioned very well in relation to the development of standards on zoonotic parasites and salmonellosis, the OIE proposes to explore "mutual recognition" of standards. In the first instance, the OIE proposes that the secretariats of the two organisations develop a discussion paper for future consideration by members of both organisations.

3. Capacity building using the OIE PVS Pathway

14. The OIE continues its global initiative to support member countries wishing to strengthen Veterinary Services and Aquatic Animal Health Services (AAHS) using the OIE PVS Pathway.

15. An expert group will be convened in 2012 with the objective of refining current OIE recommendations on the evaluation of AAHS.

16. A summary of OIE members' engagement in the PVS Pathway may be found in the Annex.

4. Veterinary education

17. The OIE is preparing a short publication entitled "Minimum Competencies expected of Day 1 Veterinary Graduates to assure delivery of high quality National Veterinary Services" for distribution at the 80th General Session (2012). The document will also be available on the OIE website. This publication identifies the requirements when training veterinarians to assure that each graduate can fulfil his/her role in national veterinary services according to the OIE mandate. The quality of veterinary education is directly relevant to the quality of veterinary services. Veterinary ethics, assured by an independent Veterinary Statutory Body (VSB), and veterinary education are key factors in assuring the credibility of sanitary certificates for international trade.

18. With the objective of raising awareness of the links between veterinary education and ethics and good governance, in 2013 the OIE will convene a Global Conference on Veterinary Education and the role of Veterinary Statutory Bodies.

19. Next steps include the development of recommendations on a core veterinary curriculum and the establishment of a framework for "Twinning" between veterinary education establishments (VEE) in developed and developing countries. Based on successful experience during several years on Laboratory Twinning, the OIE is developing "Guidelines on Twinning Projects for VEE". Members wishing to strengthen veterinary governance are encouraged to review these guidelines.

More information on the OIE initiative on veterinary education can be found at:

<http://www.oie.int/en/support-to-oie-members/veterinary-education/>.

ANNEX

PVS Evaluations – State of play up to 1 march 2012

	OIE members	PVS evaluations requests received	PVS evaluations missions implemented	Draft PVS evaluations reports received	Reports available for (restricted) distribution to donors and partners	Publication on the OIE website
Africa	52	51	47	46	35	3
Americas	29	22	20	20	17	8
Asia, the Far East and Oceania	32	18	17	16	11	1
Europe	53	14	14	14	10	0
Middle East	12	12	11	11	5	1
TOTAL	178	117	109	107	78	13

Aquatic PVS missions requests: Nicaragua, Maldives, Mozambique, Philippines and Seychelles

PVS Gap Analysis: State of play up to 1 March 2012

	OIE members	PVS gap analysis requests received	PVS gap analysis missions implemented	PVS gap analysis missions reports received	Reports available for (restricted) distribution to donors and partners
Africa	52	36	29	27	14
Americas	29	11	9	8	5
Asia, the Far East and Oceania	32	12	9	9	6
Europe	53	6	6	5	2
Middle East	12	8	2	2	0
TOTAL	178	73	55	51	27

PVS Legislation Missions – State of play up to 1 March 2012

	OIE members	PVS legislation missions requests received	PVS legislation missions implemented	PVS legislation document received
Africa	52	21	14	12
Americas	29	4	2	2
Asia, the Far East and Oceania	32	5	3	3
Europe	53	3	2	1
Middle East	12	4	4	4
TOTAL	178	37	25	22

Non including (Pilot project) Botswana, South Africa and first mission in Zambia.
