



22 June 2017

(17-3344)

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**Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures**

Original: English/French/Spanish

## 69<sup>TH</sup> MEETING OF THE SPS COMMITTEE

### COMMUNICATION FROM THE WORLD ORGANISATION FOR ANIMAL HEALTH (OIE)

The following communication, received on 20 June 2017, is being circulated at the request of the OIE.

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The World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) is pleased to provide this report for the information of WTO Members attending the 69<sup>th</sup> meeting of the SPS Committee.

#### 1 85<sup>TH</sup> GENERAL SESSION

1.1. On 21-25 May 2017 the OIE held its 85<sup>th</sup> General Session. This is the annual event for OIE members to examine and adopt new intergovernmental standards and guidelines aimed at preserving and improving animal health and welfare throughout the world. Around 900 participants, representing the National Delegates of 180 member countries, numerous scientists, and observers from some 43 international, intergovernmental, regional and national organisations took part in this event. The Final Report of the 85<sup>th</sup> General Session is available on the OIE website (<http://www.oie.int/en/about-us/final-reports-of-the-general-session-of-the-oie-international-committee/>).

1.2. In addition, the World Assembly of Delegates (Assembly) welcomed the 181<sup>st</sup> member country to join the OIE, Curacao.

#### 1.1 Standard setting activities at the 85<sup>th</sup> General Session

1.3. The OIE Delegates adopted updated texts in its normative publications, including the Users' Guide, Glossary and fifteen new or revised chapters in the *Terrestrial Animal Health Code* (*Terrestrial Code*) and the Glossary and sixteen new or revised chapters in the *Aquatic Animal Health Code* (*Aquatic Code*).

1.4. In addition to the adoption of new and revised chapters, some Glossary definitions were amended in the two *Codes* to ensure consistency and clarify any ambiguity.

1.5. Issues relevant to the SPS Committee include:

##### 1.1.1 Terrestrial Animal Health Code

1.6. Several chapters on various animal diseases were revised, as were some of the generic chapters including those relating to animal welfare.

- The chapter on infection with lumpy skin disease was updated and comprehensively revised to reflect the current disease outbreak situations and provide the appropriate risk management options. In addition, a major review of the chapter on African swine fever has been made.
- Two new chapters on the prevention and control of Salmonella in bovine and pig production systems were developed in order to provide guidance to reduce the burden of disease in these species, and the risk of human illness through foodborne contamination,

as well as from direct or indirect contact with infected animals. These chapters together with those recently adopted by Codex ensure an integrated food chain approach to the control of this pathogen.

- Tuberculosis: A new chapter on infection with *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* complex was developed by merging two existing chapters on bovine tuberculosis and on bovine tuberculosis of farmed cervidae into a single multispecies chapter including *M. tuberculosis* to manage the human and animal health risks associated with the disease.

### 1.1.2 Aquatic Animal Health

1.7. Amendments were made to a number of the chapters in the *Aquatic Code* and *Aquatic Manual*. Some notable amendments included: Amendments to the list of susceptible species in seven of the disease-specific crustacean chapters. These changes are part of ongoing work to apply the criteria for listing a species as susceptible to infection with a specific pathogen (Chapter 1.5.) to all OIE listed diseases ensuring that the susceptible species listed have been assessed in light of the most recent scientific information. This knowledge contributes to facilitating safe international trade. Acute hepatopancreatic necrosis disease (AHPND), listed in 2015, now has a specific chapter in both the *Aquatic Code* and *Manual*.

1.8. A new disease affecting amphibians, *Batrachochytrium* salamandrivorans, was added to the OIE list of aquatic animal diseases, which now totals 28. This disease, originally from South-East Asia, was recently introduced to Europe as a result of international trade in salamanders and has caused serious declines in salamander and newt populations.

1.9. The online versions of the 26<sup>th</sup> edition (2017) of the *Terrestrial Code* and the 20<sup>th</sup> edition (2017) of the *Aquatic Code* will soon be available and can be accessed from the OIE public web site at: <http://www.oie.int/en/international-standard-setting/terrestrial-code/access-online/> and <http://www.oie.int/en/international-standard-setting/aquatic-code/access-online/> respectively.

### 1.2 OIE Global Strategy on Animal Welfare

1.10. The mandate of the OIE includes the improvement of terrestrial and aquatic animal health and welfare worldwide, health being a key component of animal welfare. The first OIE Global Strategy on Animal Welfare was adopted by the 85<sup>th</sup> General Session. Built on experiences and outcomes of regional animal welfare strategies and platforms already implemented across the world, it aims to provide continuing direction and coordination of OIE's actions to achieve sustained improvements in this field.  
[http://www.oie.int/fileadmin/home/eng/Media\\_Center/docs/pdf/85SG/AW/EN\\_OIE\\_AW\\_Strategy.pdf](http://www.oie.int/fileadmin/home/eng/Media_Center/docs/pdf/85SG/AW/EN_OIE_AW_Strategy.pdf)

1.11. To support the implementation of the strategy and to provide the opportunity for stakeholder engagement on new and emerging issues in relation to animal welfare and the implementation of animal welfare standards the Director General will establish the OIE Global Animal Welfare Forum that is proposed to meet in the first quarter of 2018.

### 1.3 Review of the mandates of permanent working groups on animal welfare and animal production food safety

1.12. The OIE Council, as part of its work to ensure the OIE's roadmap is in line with the 6<sup>th</sup> Strategic Plan, reviewed the mandate of the Animal Welfare and Animal Production Food Safety Working Groups. The Council considered that the OIE's work in animal welfare and animal production food safety is now integrated into the work of the OIE and therefore proposed that the mandate for these Working Groups not be renewed. The Assembly unanimously adopted Resolution Nos. 32 and 33 to disband these two Working Groups: <http://www.oie.int/en/about-us/key-texts/resolutions-and-recommendations/resolutions-adopted-by-the-oie-international-committee/>

1.13. This decision in no way indicates a lesser commitment by the OIE to these important areas of work which the OIE will continue to address. In particular, in relation to Animal Production Food Safety the collaboration with Codex will continue under the Tripartite agreement with FAO and

WHO where strategic issues relevant to animal production food safety would be addressed, through the ongoing work of the Code Commission, and the OIE continuing to actively engage in Codex fora in relation to the development of standards related to animal production food safety.

1.14. In regards to animal welfare, the work will continue to be supported through the establishment of the Global Animal Welfare Forum and the convening of ad hoc Groups to address specific issues and present new and revised Chapters to the Code and Aquatic Commissions for their consideration.

#### **1.4 Official OIE recognition of disease status and control programmes of member countries**

1.15. OIE member countries can apply to be included in the list of countries with an officially recognised status with regard to the following six priority diseases: bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE), foot and mouth disease (FMD), contagious bovine pleuropneumonia (CBPP), African horse sickness (AHS), peste des petits ruminants (PPR) and classical swine fever (CSF).

1.16. At the 85<sup>th</sup> General Session, a number of new countries or zones of countries obtained official recognition of their status:

- Two new countries (Paraguay and Romania) and a zone of Colombia were recognised as "free from CSF" in Europe, and the Americas;
- Botswana was recognised as "free from PPR";
- No new countries were recognised as "free from AHS";
- One new country, Poland in Europe, was recognised as having a "negligible BSE risk"; and two zones (Scotland and Northern Ireland) within the United Kingdom were recognised as having "negligible BSE risk";
- Two new countries (Brazil and South Africa) were recognised as "free from CBPP" in the Americas, and Africa;
- One country (Paraguay) was recognised as "FMD free where vaccination is practiced" in the Americas;
- One new zone was recognised as a "FMD free zones where vaccination is not practiced"; in Botswana;
- Six new zones were recognised as "FMD free zones where vaccination is practiced"; one in Chinese Taipei and five in Kazakhstan.

1.17. Member countries can also apply for official OIE endorsement of their national control programme for FMD, PPR and CBPP. This year the OIE did not endorse any additional official control programmes.

1.18. In total, 17 national applications for official recognition of a given status were adopted by the Assembly.

1.19. The full list of countries and their recognised disease status for AHS, BSE, CBPP, CSF, FMD, and PPR can be accessed online <http://www.oie.int/en/animal-health-in-the-world/official-disease-status/>.

#### **1.5 Global animal health situation**

1.20. The General Session also serves as an opportunity for member countries to discuss their national concerns and share information about the global animal health situation, including zoonoses. Particular attention was paid to various diseases, including:

- The global epizootic of highly pathogenic avian influenza in birds with a special focus on H5N8, for which countries must continue their surveillance efforts, both in domesticated birds and in wild birds;

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- Lumpy skin disease, as a vector-borne diseases with an important impact in term of spread especially in Europe in 2016 and 2017;
  - Infection with peste des petits ruminants virus (PPR), that had gradually spread out of the traditionally affected areas during the last 12 years. The analysis demonstrated that regulated international trade in live small ruminants has played a less important role than unregulated trade in the spread of the disease to newly affected countries;
  - Infection with rabies virus, that showed strong regional differences concerning the occurrence and impact of the disease in humans and animals in the last 12 years. An improvement of the global situation of rabies in dogs was observed, largely due to the eradication programmes implemented by several countries;
  - Foot and mouth disease, that showed also very different regional epidemiological situations, with some regions having eradicated the disease while other areas having experienced a stabilisation or deterioration of their situation. There were still challenges in characterisation of circulating FMD viruses, important for implementation of appropriate disease preventive and control measures;
  - The introduction of the OIE's new e-learning platform on the World Animal Health Information System (WAHIS), for focal points was announced. The main objective of the platform is to provide OIE Focal Points with an easy access to updated training material on WAHIS and to facilitate the process of notification.

#### **1.6 Discussion about the threat of antimicrobial resistance: progress and opportunities for future activities under the 'One Health' initiative**

1.21. The OIE is actively working on the topic of antimicrobial resistance (AMR) and has developed a coherent strategy for its activities in this field. As AMR is both an animal health and human health issue, the OIE works closely with its member countries, the WHO, the FAO and the Codex Alimentarius Commission. One of the Technical Items this year was titled "global action to alleviate the threat of antimicrobial resistance: progress and opportunities for future activities under the 'one health' initiative". Noting the need to introduce new recommendations rather than repeat past work, the Assembly adopted a resolution endorsing eleven recommendations for future activities under the 'One Health' initiative. These activities include but are not limited to:

- OIE member countries fulfilling their commitment to apply OIE standards and guidelines. In particular those on responsible and prudent use of antimicrobial agents, which include specific recommendations on antimicrobials of critical importance, and the phasing out of the use of antibiotics for growth promotion in the absence of risk analysis;
- Continue efforts to collect data on the use of antimicrobial agents in animals;
- Interaction at the national level between OIE and Codex Alimentarius delegates to ensure sustainable collaboration and coordination on the development of international standards;
- Continued collaboration between the Tripartite partners to implement its work programme according to the four objectives of the OIE Strategy on Antimicrobial Resistance and the Prudent Use of Antimicrobials;
- Strengthening teaching on the risks related to AMR and measures to be taken to control AMR in the core training curriculum for veterinarians and veterinary paraprofessionals;
- Continue to organise training for National Focal Points for Veterinary Products;
- Complement the specific standards and recommendations on laboratory methodologies for antimicrobial susceptibility testing to determine bacterial resistance and interpret the test results in the context of AMR;
- That the OIE put in place tools to monitor the actions undertaken to implement its strategy on AMR, while taking into account the evaluations developed in collaboration with its Tripartite partners and the future work of the UN interagency group.

#### **1.7 Discussion about public-private partnerships**

1.22. The second Technical Item was called 'Expectations of private sector partners for international animal health and livestock sector development programmes and the implications for

the OIE'. The presentation highlighted that the roles and responsibilities of Veterinary Services is continuing to expand, triggered by multiple global trends, including: the increased demand for animal protein, the (re-) emergence of zoonotic pathogens and public health risks such as antimicrobial resistance. It further highlighted that the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals provide an opportunity for Veterinary Services to contribute significantly to the achievement of these goals. Together these pressures exert an unprecedented responsibility on the veterinary profession to ensure a safer and healthier global community. Hindered by the scarcity of resources and capacities within the public or private spheres of Veterinary Services, the discussion acknowledged that Public-Private Partnerships offer a tangible and timely solution to address this complex environment and fulfil societal demands. The Assembly adopted a resolution endorsing eight recommendations for future initiatives related to promotion of Public-Private Partnerships. In particular, the emphasis is put on the need for countries to promote, develop and implement policies and legislation to incentivise sustainable collaborations with the private sector to improve animal health and the livestock sector development.

1.23. The Resolutions of the 85<sup>th</sup> General Session are available on the OIE website [http://www.oie.int/fileadmin/Home/eng/About\\_us/docs/pdf/Session/2017/A\\_RESO\\_2017\\_Public.pdf](http://www.oie.int/fileadmin/Home/eng/About_us/docs/pdf/Session/2017/A_RESO_2017_Public.pdf).

## **1.8 OIE scientific network**

1.24. The worldwide scientific network of the OIE has grown considerably, with new Reference Laboratories and Collaborating Centres approved by the Assembly, bringing the number of official OIE Centres of scientific excellence to more than 320, spread among nearly 50 countries on five continents.

1.25. Sharing of information among these various institutes has proved vital to our achievements in animal health and disease control throughout the world. The updated lists of Reference Laboratories and Collaborating Centres are at <http://www.oie.int/en/our-scientific-expertise/reference-laboratories/list-of-laboratories/> and <http://www.oie.int/en/our-scientific-expertise/collaborating-centres/list-of-centres/> respectively.

## **2 CAPACITY BUILDING ACTIVITIES**

### **2.1 OIE PVS Pathway**

2.1. At the occasion of the 85<sup>th</sup> General Session of the Assembly, celebrated the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the PVS Pathway. The PVS Pathway has demonstrated its major global impact on strengthening national animal health systems in areas as diverse as resourcing, governance structures and national coordination, or intersectoral collaboration. It has allowed worldwide improvements regarding animal and veterinary public health surveillance, disease control, emergency response, food safety, and animal welfare.

2.2. The ten year mark gives occasion to pause, to reflect and to set directions for the future. After the experience of approximately 350 PVS Pathway missions, the major challenges to PVS Pathway success are well understood. Along with this awareness, a PVS Think Tank Forum was held at OIE Headquarters in Paris, 4-6 April 2017. The purpose of the 3-day meeting was to work together, OIE Delegates and Members' representatives, partners, experts and staff, to review and plan for the strategic evolution of the PVS Pathway.

### **2.2 OIE Focal Point Seminars**

2.3. OIE capacity-building activities also includes Information Seminars for Recently Appointed OIE Delegates and Regional Seminars for the OIE National Focal Points appointed for eight different areas (Animal Disease Notification to the OIE, Veterinary Products, Communication, Animal Production Food Safety, Animal Welfare, Veterinary Laboratories, Wildlife and Aquatic Animals). The aim of this programme is to provide good governance concepts for improving animal health, animal welfare and food safety of animal-origin products at the national, regional and international level, and to explain and clarify the role and responsibilities of newly-appointed OIE Delegates and of OIE National Focal Points with respect to OIE activities.

2.4. These seminars provide participants with knowledge about the rights, commitments and responsibilities of OIE Delegates and OIE National Focal Points in the OIE standard-setting process and provide a forum for discussion of implementation and compliance with the OIE international standards. They allow the participants to acquire knowledge about the roles and responsibilities of Veterinary Services and other relevant competent authorities, about relevant OIE international standards and about the specific tasks expected of National Focal Points in their respective areas. These training sessions are also fora for experience sharing and discussion among countries within a region.

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