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Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures

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DECLARATION OF VELOGENIC NEWCASTLE DISEASE-FREE STATUS

COMMUNICATION FROM COSTA RICA

The following communication, dated 27 June 2017, is being circulated at the request of the delegation of Costa Rica.

1. Newcastle disease is a highly contagious and often serious infection affecting birds that is prevalent worldwide and caused by a virus from the Paramyxoviridae family; it has one of the highest rates of morbidity and mortality, can lead to heavy financial losses, and poses a threat to food security by reducing the availability of easily acquired animal protein with a high nutritional value.
2. Through Executive Decree No. 25088-MAG of 25 March 1996, the whole territory of the Republic of Costa Rica was declared free of velogenic Newcastle disease, thereby meeting the conditions for the export of poultry meat and its derivatives to other countries free of the disease.
3. On 22 April 2015, high mortality in backyard poultry in the village of Bella Vista (district of Santa Cecilia, canton of La Cruz) was reported to the National Animal Health Service (SENASA) of the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock. In response, SENASA authorities carried out an epidemiological investigation which confirmed on 26 April 2015 that the cause of mortality was velogenic Newcastle disease virus.
4. SENASA, exercising the powers set out in Law No. 8495 of 6 April 2006, declared a **minor state of emergency** through Resolutions Nos. SENASA-DG-R015-2015 and SENASA-DG-R016-2015, both of 27 April 2015, and ordered the implementation of a series of **general and compulsory sanitary measures** in order to control the disease.
5. In addition, through Executive Decree No. 39100-MAG of 18 May 2015, the Executive Power declared a **nationwide epidemic and health emergency** due to the presence of velogenic Newcastle disease in Costa Rican territory, and declared the prevention, control and eradication of the disease a matter of public policy and social interest.
6. The disease eradication strategy involved the slaughter of all domestic birds and wild birds in captivity that manifested the disease. Furthermore, quarantine was imposed in areas of the country where mortalities caused by the virus were detected, and other control measures, including disinfection, epidemiological surveillance, and control of the movement of risk goods and animals, were introduced.

7. Following the application of the measures to control the outbreak by SENASA and the implementation of the corresponding velogenic Newcastle disease epidemiological surveillance strategy in accordance with the international guidelines established by the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) in Chapter 10.9 of the Terrestrial Animal Health Code and Chapter 2.3.14 of the Manual of Diagnostic Tests and Vaccines for Terrestrial Animals, we are pleased to inform Members that all Costa Rican territory has been found free of Newcastle disease, as set out in Executive Decree No. 40301-MAG of 27 April 2017.

8. For further information on the measures applied by SENASA to enable the country to be declared free of this disease, please address enquiries to: bernardo.jaen@senasa.go.cr.
