



72ND MEETING OF THE SPS COMMITTEE

COMMUNICATION FROM THE WORLD ORGANISATION FOR ANIMAL HEALTH (OIE)

The following communication, received on 15 June 2018, is being circulated at the request of the OIE.

The World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) is pleased to provide this report for the information of WTO Members attending the 72nd meeting of the SPS Committee.

1 86TH GENERAL SESSION

1.1. On 20 to 25 May 2018, the OIE held its 86th 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 181 member countries, numerous scientists, and observers from some 62 international, intergovernmental, regional and national organizations took part in this event. The Final Reports of the 86th General Session are available on the OIE website at: <http://www.oie.int/en/about-us/key-texts/final-reports-of-the-general-session/>.

1.2. Thirty-four (34) Resolutions were adopted by the OIE Delegates including new and amended international standards aimed at protecting and improving animal health and welfare.

1.3. In addition, the World Assembly welcomed its 182nd member country to join the OIE, Saint Lucia, and proceeded to the election of the members of four OIE Specialist Commissions, of the Bureaus of the five Regional Commissions, as well as of the Council.

1.4. Dr. Mark Schipp, OIE Delegate for Australia, has been elected as new OIE President and will immediately start his mandate for a 3-year term.

1.1 Standard setting activities at the 86th General Session

1.5. The OIE Delegates adopted updated texts in its normative publications, including the Users' Guide, Glossary and 26 new or revised chapters in the *Terrestrial Animal Health Code (Terrestrial Code)* and the Glossary and 17 new or revised chapters in the *Aquatic Animal Health Code (Aquatic Code)*.

1.6. 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.

1.7. Issues relevant to the SPS Committee include:

1.2 *Terrestrial Code*

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

- The chapter on **zoning and compartmentalization** was updated and comprehensively revised to incorporate new concepts or revise existing concepts for zoning in the *Terrestrial Code*, along with the revision of related glossary definitions.
- The chapter on infection with **lumpy skin disease** was updated to reflect the current disease outbreak situations and provide the appropriate risk management options. In addition, a review of the chapters on **Burkholderia mallei (Glanders)** and **Bluetongue** have been made.
- A new chapter on vaccination was developed to provide guidance to Veterinary Services for the use of vaccination in support of disease prevention and control programmes. The recommendations in this chapter may be refined by the specific approaches described in the listed disease-specific chapters of the *Terrestrial Code*. Furthermore, the recommendations in this chapter may also be used for any diseases for which a vaccine exists.
- Six new chapters of the OIE *Terrestrial Code* pertaining to the relevant diseases were created to better assist member countries in compiling their dossiers for the official status recognition of these diseases.
- Other horizontal chapters of interest to the SPS Committee that have been revised include:
 - Import risk analysis;
 - Criteria applied for assessing safe commodities; and
 - The role of Veterinary Services in food safety.
- Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) – New and revised definitions of "veterinary medical use", "non veterinary medical use" of antimicrobials, as well as "growth promotion" were introduced into the *Terrestrial Code* section on AMR, to clarify the way countries should report on their use of antimicrobial agents in animals and thereby, contribute to the global effort to contain antimicrobial resistance. These definitions emphasize the essential role of the veterinary prescription which should be mandatory for any veterinary use. The necessary engagement towards phasing out the use of growth promoters was highlighted to member countries as a common message of the Tripartite Alliance (WHO/FAO/OIE).

1.3 Aquatic animal health

1.9. Amendments were made to a number of chapters in the *Aquatic Code* and *Manual*.

- The list of susceptible species in the chapters on **epizootic haematopoietic necrosis, infection with *Gyrodactylus salaris*** and infection with **infectious salmon anaemia virus** in the *Aquatic Code* and *Manual*, were amended after consideration of the work of the *ad hoc* Group on Susceptibility of fish species to infection with OIE listed diseases.
- Changes of a horizontal nature were done to all fish disease-specific chapters given that work related to susceptible species has commenced in these chapters. This work followed on from similar work already undertaken in all disease-specific crustacean chapters in the *Aquatic Code* that were adopted at the 2017 General Session.
- A new chapter for infection with ***Batrachochytrium salamandrivorans*** was developed following the listing of this amphibian disease in 2017. It provides recommendations to control the pathogenic agent and prevent its spread through international trade in amphibians and their products.

1.10. The online versions of the 27th edition (2018) of the *Terrestrial Code* and the 21st Edition (2018) 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.

1.4 New experts elected to the OIE Specialist Commissions

1.11. Before their proposal for adoption by OIE member countries, all new and revised standards are carefully addressed and studied by the experts of the four OIE Specialist Commissions (the Terrestrial Animal Health Standards Commission, Scientific Commission for Animal Diseases, Biological Standards Commission and Aquatic Animal Health Standards Commission), who are elected by the World Assembly of OIE Delegates for a period of three years. The composition of these Commissions is available online.

1.5 Official OIE recognition of disease status and control programmes of Member Countries

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

1.13. At the 86th General Session, several new countries or zones of countries obtained official recognition of their status:

- Argentina, Bulgaria and Costa Rica were recognized as being "free from CSF";
- Madagascar, Peru and Uruguay were recognized as being "free from PPR";
- Nicaragua was recognised as having a "negligible BSE risk";
- Peru and Surinam were officially recognised as "free from FMD without vaccination" and a zone in Brazil and one in Chinese Taipei were officially recognized as "FMD free with vaccination".

1.14. In addition to official status recognition, new procedures for self-declarations of disease freedom by countries were recently made available. Under the responsibility of OIE members, self-declarations provide a way to enhance transparency and to give visibility, in a timely manner, to the absence of diseases in countries.

1.15. 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.

1.16. The full list of countries and their recognized 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/>.

1.6 Global animal health situation

1.17. 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, specific diseases subject to global control or eradication efforts, or diseases of major interest, including: the global epizootic of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) in birds, peste des petits ruminants (PPR), foot and mouth disease (FMD), bovine tuberculosis, lumpy skin disease (LSD), African swine fever (ASF), the emerging disease caused by Tilapia lake virus. More information can be found on the OIE website.

1.7 Discussion about the threat of antimicrobial resistance: progress and opportunities for future activities under the "One Health" initiative

1.18. The OIE is actively working on the topic of AMR and on awareness raising on the crucial role of veterinarians in supervising the prudent use of antimicrobials in animals. In this framework, the campaign "WE NEED YOU to handle antibiotics with care" was launched at global level in 2017-2018 with the objective to support the related OIE Global Strategy published in 2016. The latter notably supports the annual collection of data from member countries to monitor trends in the use of antimicrobials, as well as the impact of national action plans.

1.19. To foster the effort made worldwide, the second OIE Global Conference on the topic, to be held in Marrakesh (Morocco) on 29-31 October 2018, will aim for better implementation of OIE International Standards on AMR.

1.8 Supporting the implementation of OIE International Standards to promote safe trade in animals and animal products and address specific capacity building needs

1.20. The OIE continues working to improve animal health and welfare and facilitate safe trade, notably by encouraging the implementation of its standards by members. The Technical Item presented aimed, through a questionnaire, to identify and analyse factors that limit implementation of the standards and make recommendations on how the OIE could help member countries to overcome these difficulties. Key challenges that were reported by a significant number of countries notably included a lack of technical expertise, outdated veterinary legislation and lack of trust and transparency.

1.21. The OIE reaffirmed its commitment to continue its role as an advocate for strengthened Veterinary Services and Aquatic Animal Health Services, notably through the deployment of capacity-building activities. In addition, the World Assembly adopted a Resolution mandating the OIE to design an Observatory intended to serve as a tool to monitor and evaluate the implementation of OIE International Standards. By evaluating progress and the constraints faced by members, this project will contribute to the on-going improvement of the OIE standards-setting process and related capacity building activities. The OIE will hold a side event on this work on Thursday 12 July 2018, from 2 to 3 pm in the margins of the SPS Committee.

1.9 OIE scientific network

1.22. The OIE has access to leading knowledge and skills thanks to its global network of Reference Centres composed of Reference Laboratories and Collaborating Centres. Sharing of information among these various institutes has proved vital to our achievements in animal health and disease control throughout the world. In order to guarantee the excellency of this network, new procedures for the designation of OIE Reference Laboratories were adopted in 2017. A similar document for OIE Collaborating Centres was adopted at this year's General Session. The document identifies several performance criteria to be met by these institutions to prove the quality of their management system, notably through ISO accreditation. Not meeting these criteria can result in temporary suspension. This has been the case for some of establishments in 2018, while new institutions have been approved by the Assembly of Delegates, bringing the number of official OIE Centres of scientific excellence to 301, located in nearly 50 countries on five OIE regions.

1.23. 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 Focal Point Seminars

2.1. OIE capacity-building activities also include 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.

2.2. 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.

2.3. These training sessions are also fora for experience sharing and discussion among countries within a region.

3 COOPERATION WITH FAO AND WHO

3.1. In a Memorandum of Understanding signed on 30 May 2018, OIE, FAO and WHO agreed to step up joint action to combat health threats associated with interactions between humans, animals and the environment. The signing of the MoU will strengthen this long-standing partnership, with a strong focus on tackling AMR.

3.2. AMR is a high priority for the three organizations, who are working together to develop global systems for AMR surveillance and use of antimicrobials, a global antimicrobial stewardship programme, and a monitoring and evaluation framework for the global action plan. A current comprehensive framework of international standards on responsible and prudent use of antimicrobials is regularly adapted to keep up with the development of scientific knowledge.

3.3. In addition to AMR, the new agreement will focus on improving disease forecasting capabilities for more informed and swifter responses to emerging and endemic zoonotic diseases (including foodborne diseases); helping countries strengthen their national health systems; and undertaking joint activities related to reduction of threats.
