



16 October 2019

(19-6699)

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Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures

Original: English/French/Spanish

76TH MEETING OF THE SPS COMMITTEE

COMMUNICATION FROM THE WORLD ORGANISATION FOR ANIMAL HEALTH (OIE)

The following communication, received on 15 October 2019, 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 76th meeting of the SPS Committee.

The report summarises key activities in the OIE's standard-setting work programme, along with updates on OIE capacity building activities.

1 DEVELOPMENTS IN THE OIE STANDARDS FOR TERRESTRIAL AND AQUATIC ANIMALS

1.1. The four OIE Specialist Commissions met during September 2019 at the OIE Headquarters to continue work to review existing, and develop new OIE international standards in the Terrestrial Animal Health Code, the Aquatic Animal Health Code, the Manual of Diagnostic Tests and Vaccines for Terrestrial Animals and the Manual of Diagnostic Tests for Aquatic Animals, along with other activities relevant to each Commission's terms of reference.

1.2. As the outcomes of these meetings were not available at the time this report was compiled, a verbal update will be provided to the Committee on key outcomes.

1.3. The reports of these four meetings, including new and revised standards to be proposed for adoption at the 88th OIE General Session in May 2020 or circulated for member comment, will be available on the OIE website during November 2019. The links to these reports, once available, are provided below:

- [Biological Standards Commission](#), September 2019 meeting report;
- [Scientific Commission for Animal Diseases](#), September 2019 meeting report;
- [Aquatic Animal Health Standards Commission](#), September 2019 meeting report;
- [Terrestrial Animal Health Commission](#), September 2019 meeting report.

1.4. The OIE would like to highlight to the Committee the following work:

1.5. Bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE). A revised draft Chapter 11.4. Bovine spongiform encephalopathy of the Terrestrial Code was considered by the Scientific Commission and the Code Commission and will be included in the September 2019 report of the Code Commission for member comments. Commencing in 2017, an in-depth review of the existing BSE chapter is aimed at updating the provisions on the categorisation of official BSE risk status to reflect the latest scientific evidence, appropriate to the current BSE risk as well as the provisions on BSE risk assessment and surveillance.

1.6. Infection with avian influenza viruses. The revision of Chapter 10.4 Infection with avian influenza viruses of the Terrestrial Code has been ongoing since 2017. The revision seeks to take into account the differences among members when responding to either LPAI or HPAI outbreaks and the appropriate sanitary measures to be applied. The latest revised chapter will be included in the September 2019 report of Code Commission for member comments with a proposal for adoption during the OIE General Session in May 2020.

1.7. The Code Commission has developed a new draft chapter on Official control programmes for listed and emerging diseases (Chapter 4.Y.) for the Terrestrial Code which will be circulated for member comments in the Code Commission's September 2019 report and will be proposed for adoption at the OIE General Session in May 2020.

1.8. The Aquatic Animals Commission has developed a new draft chapter on Biosecurity for Aquaculture Establishments (Chapter 4.X.) for the Aquatic Code which will be circulated for member comments in the Aquatic Animals Commission's September 2019 report will be proposed for adoption at the OIE General Session in May 2020.

1.1 Global initiative for the global control of African swine fever

1.9. The OIE launched a global initiative for the control of African swine fever (ASF) at the OIE General Session in May 2019, which will use the OIE/FAO Global Framework for the Progressive Control of Transboundary Animal Diseases (GF-TADs) mechanism to develop, improve and harmonise partnerships and coordination at national, regional and international levels. The goal of this initiative is to achieve global control of ASF by improving countries' capability to control the disease, preventing national and international spread through effective coordination and cooperation, and minimising adverse impact through business continuity.

1.10. The initiative includes the development of guidelines on the implementation of the OIE concept of zoning and compartmentalisation for ASF to support OIE members seeking to establish and maintain a swine population free from ASF within their territories for the purposes of national and international trade, and disease control.

2 PROVISION OF SCIENTIFIC ADVICE TO THE OIE AND ITS MEMBER COUNTRIES

2.1. The Director General establishes ad hoc Groups to provide specific technical and scientific advice required to support the work of the OIE and the OIE Specialist Commissions. The OIE publishes information on its website providing the dates and terms of reference of proposed ad hoc Groups as well as reports once these have been validated and considered by the relevant Specialist Commissions.

2.2. This information is available on the OIE website at: [ad hoc Groups information](#).

3 MONITORING THE USE OF OIE INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS

3.1. The OIE is still in the process of developing the OIE Observatory for monitoring the implementation of its standards. The OIE has been collaborating with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) who has conducted an analysis of the concept of "implementation" of OIE standards and a review of the existing mechanisms supporting the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of OIE standards. The OIE received the final draft report in September 2019 and has considered its recommendations to develop the objectives and key outputs of the Observatory and to define a pilot phase.

3.2. Further information regarding the OIE Observatory project is available on the [OIE website](#).

4 WORLD ANIMAL HEALTH INFORMATION SYSTEM

4.1. The World Animal Health Information System (WAHIS) is an intrinsic and fundamental part of the OIE's mandate and a vital tool for the 182 OIE members to continue 'Ensuring Trust through Transparency and Communication' of the global animal disease situation in a timely manner. It enables the collection and dissemination of data on animal diseases, including zoonotic pathogens, of epidemiological significance in terrestrial and aquatic animals of both domestic wild species.

4.2. Since 2016 the OIE has embarked on a ten-year process of modernising its existing animal health information system (WAHIS). The new system will be called OIE-WAHIS and will be launched in the first semester of 2020.

4.3. OIE-WAHIS will constitute a completely redesigned platform and will incorporate a transdisciplinary and holistic approach to data collection, analysis and dissemination – not only

addressing animal diseases – but also public health. Moreover, as OIE-WAHIS moves forward, it will progressively incorporate climate and environmental data sources. OIE-WAHIS will have a faster and more intuitive user-friendly system with new features, which will include extended data analytics, customisable data queries and enhanced mapping and data visualisation capabilities. The dynamic, interactive, ergonomic national dashboards will have integrated analytical capabilities and enable data to be extracted and uploaded in a wide range of formats (e.g. PDF, Excel, CSV and as an image). Building bridges between OIE-WAHIS and national/regional databases will support this endeavour and regional initiatives are already underway.

5 CAPACITY BUILDING ACTIVITIES

5.1 Performance of Veterinary Services Pathway for the sustainable improvement of national Veterinary Services (PVS Pathway)

5.1. The OIE has developed the Performance of Veterinary Services Pathway for the sustainable improvement of national Veterinary Services (PVS Pathway) which aims to provide Veterinary Services with a comprehensive understanding of their strengths and weaknesses through a consistent methodology, and to support them to improve their animal health system. The process was launched in 2007 and progressively evolved from the 'PVS Evaluation Tool' to a comprehensive staged approach providing a series of sequential capacity-building activities. In 2018, ten years after its creation, the OIE through a 'think tank' involving numerous stakeholders, reflected on the outcomes of the work to date and affirmed the relevance of the PVS Pathway and existing processes and identified new activities to ensure countries' engagement and benefits. Newer PVS Pathway engagement options have been designed to increase country ownership, positive impacts and sustainable change. They include: PVS Orientation Training, PVS Self-Evaluation, PVS specific content, PVS strategic planning support and PVS/IHR National Bridging Workshops, all of which are described in the [OIE website](#).

5.2 Regional workshops

5.2. A series of regional workshops have been implemented throughout the five OIE regions during 2018/2019 to improve members' understanding and use of OIE standards to facilitate safe international trade. These seminars targeted representatives from OIE member countries who work in the area of risk management related to the import or export of animals and animal products. The objectives was to provide participants with an understanding of the OIE standards and how they relate to the WTO framework; how to implement OIE standards to ensure safe trade, while avoiding unjustified sanitary barriers to trade; understanding their rights and obligations when developing import and export certification requirements and undertaking border clearance processes; and an understanding of, and how to, effectively participate in the OIE standard setting process.

5.3. The OIE also conducts 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). 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 discussions about implementation of OIE international standards.
