



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

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

The following communication, received on 3 March 2021, 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 79<sup>th</sup> meeting of the SPS Committee.

The report summarises key activities in the OIE's standard-setting work programme, animal health information, capacity building activities and other relevant topics.

#### 1 COVID ACTIVITIES – OIE'S RESPONSE

1.1. The OIE continues to work with its network of experts, and liaises closely with WHO and FAO, as well as its members to better understand the virus and its emergence and to enhance the capacity of countries to respond to this multifaceted crisis. The activities of Veterinary Services contribute to addressing critical needs, such as food supply, which are heavily challenged in the current circumstances. In these times where solidarity is more important than ever, Veterinary Services have also been supporting the response capacity of human health services in various ways.

1.2. All relevant information about OIE's response to this pandemic is available on the OIE COVID-19 Portal at: OIE's response: OIE - World Organisation for Animal Health (<https://www.oie.int/en/scientific-expertise/specific-information-and-recommendations/questions-and-answers-on-2019novel-coronavirus/oies-response/>).

1.3. In the context of COVID-19, the question of whether international trade in live animals and animal products may pose a risk to the health of humans or animals has been addressed by the OIE to ensure that trade-related decisions are fully informed by science, are no more restrictive than is necessary to provide adequate sanitary protection, and consider other strategic imperatives and needs such as food security.

1.4. The OIE "Considerations on the application of sanitary measures for international trade related to COVID-19" document last update on 16 December 2020 is available on the OIE COVID-19 Portal at: [https://www.oie.int/fileadmin/Home/eng/Our\\_scientific\\_expertise/docs/pdf/COV-19/A\\_COVID-19\\_Considerations\\_OIE\\_Sanitary\\_Measures.pdf](https://www.oie.int/fileadmin/Home/eng/Our_scientific_expertise/docs/pdf/COV-19/A_COVID-19_Considerations_OIE_Sanitary_Measures.pdf).

#### 2 OIE 88<sup>TH</sup> GENERAL SESSION

2.1. For the first time ever, the 88<sup>th</sup> Annual General Session of the World Assembly of National Delegates to the OIE will be held virtually from Monday 24 to Friday 28 May 2021. The General Session will be conducted through a series of five virtual sessions of four hours each, from 12:00 to 16:00 p.m. CEST (Central European Summer Time, Paris time). This decision was taken by the OIE Council in coordination with the Director General in light of the ongoing COVID-19 global pandemic.

2.2. This General Session will include the adoption of administrative and technical resolutions as well as electing the OIE Director General, the members of the governing bodies of the OIE (members of the Council and of the Bureaux of the Regional Commissions), and the members of the Specialist Commissions.

### **3 OIE INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS FOR TERRESTRIAL AND AQUATIC ANIMALS**

3.1. The four Specialist Commissions met virtually during February 2021 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.

3.2. During the 88<sup>th</sup> OIE General Session new and revised chapters of the OIE International standards will be proposed for adoption. To facilitate this process, the February 2021 meeting report of the Terrestrial Animal Health Standards Commission, the Aquatic Animal Health Standards Commission and the Biological Standards Commission will be distributed in two parts: Part A (to be published during March 2021) will provide information about the new and revised texts that will be proposed for adoption; and Part B (to be published during April 2021) will provide information about other topics discussed at Commissions' February 2021 meetings including texts circulated for comment and other information. The report of the Scientific Commission for Animal Diseases will be published as one report during March 2021 because it does not include any draft standards for adoption.

3.3. The reports of these four Commission meetings will be available on the OIE website once finalised. The links to these reports, once available, are provided below:

- Biological Standards Commission (<http://www.oie.int/en/standard-setting/specialists-commissions-working-ad-hoc-groups/laboratories-commission-reports/meetings-reports/>) February 2021 meeting report;
- Scientific Commission for Animal Diseases (<http://www.oie.int/en/standard-setting/specialists-commissions-working-ad-hoc-groups/scientific-commission-reports/meetings-reports/>) February 2021 meeting report;
- Aquatic Animal Health Standards Commission (<http://www.oie.int/en/standard-setting/specialists-commissions-working-ad-hoc-groups/aquatic-animals-commission-reports/meeting-reports/>) February 2021 meeting report;
- Terrestrial Animal Health Standards Commission (<http://www.oie.int/en/standard-setting/specialists-commissions-working-ad-hoc-groups/code-commission-reports/meetings-reports/>) February 2021 meeting report.

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

### **4 PROVISION OF SCIENTIFIC ADVICE TO THE OIE AND ITS MEMBER COUNTRIES**

4.1. Two permanent OIE Working Groups (Wildlife and AMR) and ad hoc Groups provide specific technical and scientific advice required to support the work of the OIE and the OIE Specialist Commissions. Information and reports of these Working Groups as well OIE ad hoc Groups is available on the OIE website at: Working Groups & Reports (<https://www.oie.int/en/standard-setting/specialists-commissions-working-ad-hoc-groups/working-groups-reports/>) and ad hoc Groups information (<http://www.oie.int/en/standard-setting/specialists-commissions-working-groups/scientific-commission-reports/ad-hoc-groups-reports/>).

### **5 MONITORING IMPLEMENTATION OF OIE INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS – THE OIE OBSERVATORY**

5.1. The OIE Observatory is a continuous and systematic mechanism of observation and analysis of members' practices in implementing OIE standards. The OIE Observatory has two objectives:

- to identify members' capacity building needs and identify successful practices;
- to strengthen the quality and relevance of OIE standards.

5.2. The OIE Observatory will deliver two types of analytical reports with aggregated data:

- Implementation review reports: issued on an annual basis, will provide a high-level summary regarding the implementation of OIE standards;
- Thematic analysis reports: published on a pluriannual basis, will provide a more comprehensive and focused analysis on priority topics.

5.3. Given that the Observatory scope is to monitor all OIE standards, a gradual approach has been adopted starting with the implementation of a pilot phase launched in 2020. During this pilot phase, small scale preliminary studies called "prototypes" are being developed. These prototypes focus on a subset of OIE standards and members with the aim of learning more about how we can explore data accessible to the OIE, to understand the processes of implementation developed by members, and to investigate the various challenges members have in implementing OIE standards.

5.4. For more information, refer to the OIE website at: <https://www.oie.int/en/standard-setting/overview/oie-observatory/>.

## **6 THE OIE WORLD ANIMAL HEALTH INFORMATION SYSTEM (OIE-WAHIS)**

6.1. The World Animal Health Information System (WAHIS) is an intrinsic and fundamental part of the OIE's mandate and a vital tool for its 182 members. WAHIS enables the collection and the dissemination of data on animal diseases of epidemiological significance in both domestic species of terrestrial and aquatic animals, and wildlife and is vital for the global dissemination of information on animal disease events, including zoonotic pathogens. Since 2016 the OIE has embarked on a ten-year process of modernising its existing animal health information system. The modernisation will constitute a complete redesign of the platform and will incorporate a transdisciplinary and holistic approach to data collection, analysis and dissemination – not only addressing animal diseases – but also public health. The new platform will be called OIE-WAHIS.

6.2. 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.

6.3. The new system will be launched in two Releases. Release 1 will be delivered in March 2021, covering App Configuration, Immediate Notification and Follow Up Reports, User Management, Home Page and Online Help, Reports Management, Alerts App, Dashboards, Public Interface, Lifecycle, Interoperability, Six-monthly reports, GIS and mapping; Release 2 is anticipated for the second semester of 2021, covering Annual Reports, Wild Annual Reports, Local Reports, Wild Public Interface and Usage Statistics.

6.4. For more information on the OIE-WAHIS Project see <https://www.oie.int/animal-health-in-the-world/the-oie-wahis-project/>.

## **7 GLOBAL CONTROL OF AFRICAN SWINE FEVER**

7.1. The OIE, in collaboration with the FAO, launched a joint initiative for the global control of African swine fever (ASF) in July 2020, as a call to countries and partners to join forces in controlling the disease. The initiative is part of the joint Global Framework for the Progressive Control of Transboundary Animal Diseases (GF-TADs) and aims to foster national, regional and global partnerships to strengthen control measures and minimise the impact of the disease.

7.2. A GF-TADs ASF Working Group has been established to coordinate, monitor and evaluate the implementation of the initiative, and to contribute to the development and support of ASF control strategies at the global and regional levels.

7.3. Detailed information is available on the GF-TADs website (<http://www.gf-tads.org/asf/asf/en/>) and includes the operational plans listing the activities under this initiative.

7.4. Key activities in 2020 included the organisation of meeting of the regional Standing Group of Experts in Europe, Asia/Pacific and the Americas, and the joint OIE and FAO global call for action event held in October 2020. In addition, the new Guidelines on compartmentalisation for ASF

([https://www.oie.int/fileadmin/Home/eng/Animal\\_Health\\_in\\_the\\_World/docs/pdf/ASF/ASF-CompartmentalisationGuidelines\\_EN.pdf](https://www.oie.int/fileadmin/Home/eng/Animal_Health_in_the_World/docs/pdf/ASF/ASF-CompartmentalisationGuidelines_EN.pdf)) were published in February 2021, which are based on the general principles of relevant OIE standards and will assist OIE members in the application and validation of compartmentalisation, to minimise the impact of ASF through ensuring business continuity.

## **8 OIE ENDORSEMENT OF OFFICIAL CONTROL PROGRAMMES FOR DOG-MEDIATED RABIES**

8.1. In May 2019, a new Article 8.14.11, OIE endorsed official control programme for dog-mediated rabies, in Chapter 8.14, Infection with rabies infection, was adopted and included in the 2019 edition of the Terrestrial Code. The overall objective of an OIE endorsed official control programme for dog-mediated rabies is to progressively improve a countries' dog-mediated rabies situation with the goal of country freedom.

8.2. Following adoption of Article 8.14.11, the OIE developed a process for applicants seeking endorsement by the OIE of an official control programme for dog-mediated rabies, and are pleased to report that the OIE has received, first the first time, applications from OIE members for evaluation. The OIE convened an ad hoc Group in November 2020 to evaluate these applications. The first list of countries having an OIE endorsed official control programme will be presented for adoption during the 88<sup>th</sup> OIE General Session in May 2021.

8.3. The ability of OIE members to achieve OIE endorsement of official control programmes for dog-mediated rabies will greatly contribute to the global strategic plan to progressively end human deaths from dog-mediated rabies by 2030.

8.4. Detailed information is available on the Rabies Portal on the OIE website (<https://www.oie.int/en/animal-health-in-the-world/rabies-portal/controlling-rabies/>).

## **9 ZONOTIC TUBERCULOSIS**

9.1. The OIE, together with the WHO, FAO and the International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease, is engaged in the fight against zoonotic tuberculosis (zTB). They have developed a Roadmap that outlines a plan for eliminating zTB in humans including the control of tuberculosis in livestock.

9.2. The reduction of tuberculosis in livestock, and consequently the reduction of zTB in humans, has been accomplished in economically developed countries through measures such as test-and-slaughter of infected animals. In this Roadmap, it is recommended that livestock are periodically screened using the tuberculin skin test, and reactors are slaughtered. However, for cultural and socio-economic reasons, this strategy is not acceptable in rural India and Africa, where the greatest burden of zTB is borne by the least privileged.

9.3. The OIE convened an ad hoc Group in September 2020 to develop recommendations on tuberculosis control strategies in livestock other than test-and-slaughter, which could lead to a revision of international TB requirements for trade in livestock in the future. The ad hoc Group prepared a set of questions to elicit expert opinion on current, novel and potential TB control strategies by means of interviews and focus groups with other external experts. Interviews will be conducted in the first half of 2021 and results will be discussed with the ad hoc Group in a follow-up meeting.

9.4. For further information on the zTB roadmap refer to: [https://www.oie.int/fileadmin/Home/eng/Our\\_scientific\\_expertise/docs/pdf/Tuberculosis/Roadmap\\_zoonotic\\_TB.pdf](https://www.oie.int/fileadmin/Home/eng/Our_scientific_expertise/docs/pdf/Tuberculosis/Roadmap_zoonotic_TB.pdf).

## **10 OIE DATA COLLECTION ON ANTIMICROBIAL AGENTS INTENDED FOR USE IN ANIMALS**

10.1. The Fifth OIE Annual Report on the use of antimicrobial agents intended for use in animals will be published in the second quarter of 2021 and will present findings following an annual round of data collection from OIE members, and provide both a global and a regional analysis.

10.2. OIE members reporting data has grown from 130 members for the first annual report to 160 members for this fifth report. The fifth report will also include evidence on the barriers that some countries experienced in reporting quantitative data on antimicrobial agents intended for use in animals. Additionally, the report will also provide calculations of animal biomass for food-producing species from 102 members reporting quantitative data for the year 2017.

10.3. The sixth data collection round of the OIE Global Database has also commenced.

10.4. The OIE remains strongly committed to supporting its members with the development of a Phase 2 OIE Global Database which seeks to deliver a software scenario where OIE members are able to complete the data entry requirements, calculate the antimicrobial quantities, and have their animal biomass estimated through confidential access to a central database.

10.5. Information about OIE activities in AMR (<https://www.oie.int/en/for-the-media/amr/oie-amr-standards/>) including the Fourth OIE Annual report ([https://www.oie.int/fileadmin/Home/eng/Our\\_scientific\\_expertise/docs/pdf/AMR/A\\_Fourth\\_Annual\\_Report\\_AMR.pdf](https://www.oie.int/fileadmin/Home/eng/Our_scientific_expertise/docs/pdf/AMR/A_Fourth_Annual_Report_AMR.pdf)) are available on the OIE website.

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