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Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures

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84TH MEETING OF THE SPS COMMITTEE

COMMUNICATION FROM THE WORLD ORGANISATION FOR ANIMAL HEALTH (WOAH)

The following communication, received on 21 October 2022, is being circulated at the request of the WOAH.

The World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH, formerly OIE) is pleased to provide this report for the information of WTO Members attending the 84th meeting of the SPS Committee.

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

1 DEVELOPMENTS IN THE OIE STANDARDS FOR TERRESTRIAL AND AQUATIC ANIMALS

1.1. The four OIE Specialist Commission met virtually during September 2022 to continue work to review existing, and develop new WOA 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. Reports of these four meetings, including new and revised standards circulated for member comments, will be available on the WOA website during November 2022. The links to these reports, once available, are provided below:

- [Biological Standards Commission](#), September 2022 meeting report
- [Scientific Commission for Animal Diseases](#), September 2022 meeting report
- [Aquatic Animal Health Standards Commission](#), September 2022 meeting report
- [Terrestrial Animal Health Commission](#), September 2022 meeting report

1.4. WOA would like to highlight to the Committee the following work undertaken during these meetings.

- **Bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE)**. The Terrestrial Animal Health Standards Commission (Code Commission) in collaboration with the Scientific Commission for Animal Diseases (Scientific Commission), together with the recommendations from several WOA ad hoc Groups, has undertaken an in-depth review of Chapter 11.4. Bovine spongiform encephalopathy of the Terrestrial Code. Amendments include updated provisions on the categorisation of official BSE risk status as well as revised provisions on BSE risk assessment and surveillance. At the 89th General Session in May 2022, the President of the Code Commission proposed that the proposed revised Chapter 11.4. not be presented for adoption given the large number of comments received and that the Code Commission, at its September 2022 meeting, would consider comments received. The revised chapter was circulated for comments in the Code Commission September 2022 report and will be proposed for adoption at the 90th General Session in May 2023.

- **Foot and mouth disease.** The Code Commission, in collaboration with the Scientific Commission, progressed the revision of Chapter 8.8. Infection with foot and mouth disease virus of the Terrestrial Code. The revised chapter addresses several long-standing issues and was circulated for comments in the Code Commission September 2022 report. The revised chapter will be proposed for adoption at the 90th General Session in May 2023.
- **Rabies.** The Code Commission, in collaboration with the Scientific Commission, revised Chapter 8.14. Infection with rabies virus of the Terrestrial Code, to address recommendations for the provisions for vaccination, testing and the shipment of animals. The revised new Article 8.14.6bis., Article 8.14.7., and the new Article 8.14.11bis. were circulated for member comments in the Code Commission September 2022 report and will be proposed for adoption at the 90th General Session in May 2023. The corresponding Chapter 3.1.18. Rabies (infection with rabies virus and other lyssaviruses) of the Terrestrial Manual was also circulated for comments in the Biological Standards Commission September 2022 report and will be proposed for adoption at the 90th General Session in May 2023.
- **Rift Valley fever.** The Code Commission, in collaboration with the Scientific Commission, revised Chapter 8.15. Infection with Rift Valley fever virus of the Terrestrial Code to clarify the obligations of members to notify when there is an epidemic of the disease in an endemic country or zone and addresses some other issues. The revised chapter was circulated for member comments in the Code Commission September 2022 report and will be proposed for adoption at the 90th General Session in May 2023. The corresponding Chapter 3.1.19. Rift Valley fever (infection with Rift Valley fever virus) of the Terrestrial Manual was also circulated for comments in the Biological Standards Commission September 2022 report and will be proposed for adoption at the 90th General Session in May 2023.
- **Equine diseases.** The Code Commission, in collaboration with the Scientific Commission and the Biological Standards Commission, revised Chapter 12.2. Contagious equine metritis, Chapter 12.6. Infection with equine influenza virus and Chapter 12.7. Equine piroplasmiasis of the Terrestrial Code. The revised chapters were circulated for member comments in the Code Commission September 2022 report and will be proposed for adoption at the 90th General Session in May 2023.
- **Responsible and prudent use of antimicrobial agents in veterinary medicine.** The Code Commission considered the revised Chapter 6.10. Responsible and prudent use of antimicrobial agents in veterinary medicine of the Terrestrial Code drafted by the WOAHP Working Group on Antimicrobial Resistance and made a few additional amendments. The revised chapter was circulated for member comments in the Code Commission September 2022 report.
- **Assessment of susceptible species to infection with an OIE listed aquatic animal disease.** The Aquatic Animals Commission continued its work to review the susceptible species for OIE listed aquatic animal diseases by applying the criteria for susceptibility in accordance with Chapter 1.5. of the Aquatic Code. The Commission reviewed the assessments for susceptible species to infection with spring viraemia of carp virus and infection with *Marteilia refringens* and circulated the revised Articles X.X.2 for member comments in its September 2022 report.
- **Aquatic Animals Commission work plan.** The Aquatic Animals Commission agreed to develop four new chapters for the Aquatic Code: Chapter 4.X. Emergency disease preparedness, Chapter 4.Y. Disease outbreak management, Chapter 5.X. Trade in ornamental aquatic animals and 5.Y. Trade in genetic materials; as well as the revision of Chapter 4.3. Application of Compartmentalisation.
- **Aquatic Manual.** The Aquatic Animals Commission continued its update and reformatting of the disease-specific chapters to ensure the most current guidance is provided to members. The Aquatic Animals Commission circulated seven revised crustacean disease-specific chapters, two revised fish disease-specific chapters, and one revised mollusc disease-specific chapters for member comments in its September 2022 report. In addition, it circulated for comment a fish and mollusc chapter with amended sections regarding susceptible species.

2 PROVISION OF SCIENTIFIC ADVICE TO WOAHP AND ITS MEMBERS

2.1. The Director General establishes ad hoc Groups to provide specific technical and scientific advice required to support the work of the WOAHP and the WOAHP Specialist Commissions. WOAHP 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 considered by the relevant Specialist Commissions and validated.

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

3 SELF-DECLARED DISEASE STATUS

3.1. In accordance with the provisions of the Terrestrial Code or the Aquatic Code, WOAHP members may wish to self-declare the freedom of their country, zone or compartment from an OIE listed disease. A member wishing to publish its self-declaration for disease-freedom, should provide the relevant documented evidence of compliance with the provisions of the relevant chapters of the Codes. The WOAHP screens any applications and considers them for publication in accordance with its [Standard Operating Procedure](#).

3.2. All published self-declarations are available on the WOAHP website at: [Self-declared Disease Status - WOAHP - World Organisation for Animal Health](#).

4 WOAHP OBSERVATORY

4.1. Building on the work carried out during the pilot phase, the WOAHP Observatory will publish its first Annual report in Dec 2022. The report will present a general overview of the level of implementation of some of the WOAHP International Standards and provide recommendations to WOAHP members and, internally, to various departments of the Organisation. The report will also include: (i) Executive summaries corresponding to each section of the report; and (ii) Dashboards that provide interactive access to information.

4.2. The Observatory wished to highlight that it has used information submitted through WTO mechanisms to develop the following indicators: the number of WTO notifications having an effect on trade that involve animal diseases; and the number of animal health-related disputes raised through the WTO.

5 ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE (AMR)

5.1. Following the adoption of Resolution 14 "OIE's engagement in the One Health Global Effort to Control Antimicrobial Resistance" by the World Assembly of WOAHP Delegates in May 2019, a Working Group on AMR was established to support the implementation of the OIE Global Strategy on AMR. The Working Group has met seven times, the 7th meeting in October 2022. All meeting reports are available at: [Working Group on Antimicrobial Resistance - OIE - World Organisation for Animal Health](#).

5.2. Major outputs of the Working Group have been the publication of the "Technical Reference Document Listing Antimicrobial Agents of Veterinary Importance for Swine", and the "Technical Reference Document Listing Antimicrobial Agents of Veterinary Importance for aquatic animals" both to complement the OIE List of Antimicrobial Agents of Veterinary Importance. Both documents are available as appendices of the October 2022 meeting report. Using the same methodology, the Working Group will soon start work on the development a Technical Reference Document for cattle, and dogs and cats.

5.3. The [ANIMUSE Global Database](#), the new WOAHP database on antimicrobials intended for use in animals was launched in September 2022. This is an interactive automated database that allows countries to have ownership of their data to report, consult, analyse and communicate to national stakeholders on AMU data, while having confidential access to the centralised IT system. Customised to respond to WOAHP Members' needs, it enables calculation of antimicrobial quantities, adjusting antimicrobial use by animal biomass (mg/kg). The system allows access to dashboards available for both the public and within the confidential country portals.

6 GLOBAL INITIATIVE FOR THE GLOBAL CONTROL OF AFRICAN SWINE FEVER

6.1. In July 2020, the OIE, in collaboration with FAO under the Global Framework for the Progressive Control of Transboundary Animal Diseases (GF-TADs) launched a joint initiative for the Global Control of African Swine Fever (ASF GI), which aimed at bringing stakeholders from multiple sectors together to improve coordination and galvanise the sustained effort and political will needed for the global control of ASF.

6.2. Important activities under the ASF GI include ongoing meetings of the regional Standing Group of Experts (SGE) in [Europe](#) and [the Americas](#), and the launch of the Standing Group of Experts on ASF for Africa in March 2022 to enhance regional coordination of ASF control activities. A regional expert meeting on ASF in Asia and the Pacific was also organised by the WOAHA in March 2022 where regional members presented their ASF situation.

6.3. In response to the outbreak of ASF in the Dominican Republic and Haiti, a series of activities have been held in the Americas to support activities in response to the outbreak of ASF, including the adoption of the [Regional Framework for the containment and prevention of African swine fever \(ASF\) spread in the Americas](#), delivery of surveys on needs and capacities of countries regarding diagnosis of ASF, and training programmes. In addition, there is ongoing collaboration with partners in the region to deliver webinars on themes such as emergency preparedness, compensation and legislation.

6.4. The WOAHA is also working with its partners to facilitate the development of internationally acceptable guidelines for the manufacturing and development of safe and effective ASF vaccines, and support the establishment of a genomic platform to share information on the genetics of circulating epidemic strains of ASFv.

6.5. The second Annual report of the ASF GI for 2021 highlighting progress and is available at: [Resources \(gf-tads.org\)](#).

7 EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

7.1. WOAHA has been working jointly with INTERPOL and FAO to build national, regional, and international capacity in emergency management against all hazards. Initial findings have found that many countries do not have access to adequate resources to implement emergency response plans; in many countries, cross government emergency management mechanisms do not include Veterinary Services; what is considered an emergency varies between countries depending on its level of development, livestock industry structure and if any export markets. The next phase of this project will include the development of an incident management system for WOAHA members.

7.2. WOAHA, together with INTERPOL and FAO will convene a Global Conference on Emergency Management in April 2023.

8 THE PERFORMANCE OF VETERINARY SERVICES PATHWAY (PVS PATHWAY) FOR THE SUSTAINABLE IMPROVEMENT OF NATIONAL VETERINARY SERVICES

8.1. WOAHA is in the process of digitisation of the PVS Pathway to offer greater flexibility and efficiency in terms of delivery. Presential missions with a virtual preparation phase are recommencing after the challenges posed during the COVID-19 pandemic. Regarding the different phases of the PVS Pathway:

- PVS Evaluation: A pilot using a blended format for PVS Evaluation and Follow-up missions is being tested, involving a presential mission by PVS experts working together with experts participating remotely.
- PVS Self-Evaluation Support Programme: A new four-step programme has been developed to assist members in conducting PVS self-evaluation missions that is aligned with an independent PVS Evaluation.
- PVS Gap Analysis: A remote PVS Gap Analysis mission methodology was tested, incorporating a greater focus on national priorities, training of national Veterinary Services, and facilitating more active inputs from the country. Missions took place in Kazakhstan in 2021 and Kenya in 2022.
- Targeted Support: PVS Sustainable Laboratories Support missions were conducted in Nigeria, Sierra Leone, UAE and Cambodia during 2022 and PVS Veterinary Legislation Support Programme Identification missions were successfully delivered in remote and blended formats in Mali and Pakistan during 2022.

9 WOAHP TRAINING PLATFORM: VETERINARY SERVICES COMPETENCIES FOR TRADE

9.1. As part of the reform of its training system initiated in 2018, WOAHP is developing its [Competency-based Training Framework](#) structured around 16 Competency Packages that form the architecture of WOAHP's future training programmes, both for distance and face-to-face delivery.

9.2. The objective of this Framework is to support the implementation of WOAHP standards by Veterinary Services worldwide. A Competence Package will be dedicated to trade and will be populated with approximately 30 e-modules, to address international and national trade frameworks, animal health status and regionalisation, export and import measures and control and import risk analysis.

9.3. [Guidelines on the production of e-modules](#) has been published on the WOAHP Training Portal and [guidelines on learning needs assessments](#) are under development and will assist members to conduct their own learning needs assessment, in particular on aspects of trade.

9.4. Since 2019, newly appointed Delegates and Focal Points have access to an e-training package on their rights and responsibilities of a WOAHP member, the WOAHP mandate, mission and main activities, WOAHP International Standards and the standard-setting process, and on the quality of Veterinary Services. These training packages will be soon be complemented by e-modules on Veterinary Services leadership including case studies that illustrate leadership during trade negotiations.
