

**MEASURES IMPLEMENTED IN THE FIELD  
OF VETERINARY MEDICINE**

Communication from Cuba

The following communication, received on 22 December 2005, is being circulated at the request of the delegation of Cuba.

A. INTRODUCTION

1. Since 1996, Cuba has been working on the adoption of sanitary measures to prevent the introduction and subsequent spread of Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) or "Mad Cow Disease" in the national territory.
2. An active and passive BSE surveillance programme was introduced at national level in 2002 in order to determine whether the disease is present in the country and, if detected, to monitor its development and adopt control and eradication measures. The Directive on collection and submission of samples for BSE testing (histopathological diagnosis) was drawn up and put into effect subsequently.
3. New recommendations by the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) Ad Hoc Group were later evaluated for BSE surveillance purposes and the existing Directive, following review, was updated and replaced by the "Procedure for collection and submission of samples and histopathological and immunohistochemical diagnosis of BSE", which was approved and instituted by Resolution No. 9/005 of 25 August 2005.
4. To date, all the brain samples subjected to histopathological and immunohistochemical analysis have tested negative. We can therefore affirm that the disease is not present in Cuba.

B. MEASURES IMPLEMENTED SINCE 1996

- Implementation of Resolution No. 6 of 19 August 1986 establishing strict regulations with regard to imports and the activation of the BSE surveillance system, and a nationwide ban on feeding ruminants with ruminant blood, meat, bone or offal meal and on using such meal as an agricultural fertilizer.
- Updating of Resolution No. 6/96 with the entry into effect of Resolution No. 5/001 of 1 March 2001.

- Issuance of Instruction No. 1/001 of 6 February 2001 prohibiting the entry into national territory of any animal feedstuffs containing meat and bone meal or meat and bone by-products (including animal fat).
- Implementation of Resolution No. 9/002 of 12 June 2002.
- Implementation at national level of the Directive on collection and submission of samples for BSE testing (histopathological diagnosis).
- Resolution No. 1/004 of 12 January 2004, currently in force, updated on the basis of new published scientific findings on BSE (G/SPS/N/CUB/8 and G/SPS/N/CUB/9).
- Preparation of veterinary health requirements for imports, taking into account the country's BSE risk level.
- An ongoing national training programme on the disease is designed to ensure that all the country's veterinary surgeons and technicians are kept up-to-date. The programme, which receives guidance from the Pan-American Foot and Mouth Disease Centre (PANAFTOSA), includes practical training in immunohistochemical techniques for pathologists working in provincial veterinary diagnostic laboratories.
- Implementation of Resolution No. 9/005 of 25 August 2005 approving and instituting the "Procedure for collection and submission of samples and histopathological and immunohistochemical diagnosis of BSE".

C. DESCRIPTION OF CONTENT OF THE "PROCEDURE FOR COLLECTION AND SUBMISSION OF SAMPLES AND HISTOPATHOLOGICAL AND IMMUNOHISTOCHEMICAL DIAGNOSIS OF BSE"

5. The document (available in Spanish, 17 pages) is divided into six sections:

- Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy. Brief introduction;
- Identification of four cattle subpopulations for active and passive BSE surveillance purposes;
- General criteria to be observed when conducting the histopathological and immunohistochemical analysis;
- Extraction, selection and submission of the brain;
- Processing of the brain for histopathological and immunohistochemical diagnosis;
- References; and
- Annexes.

D. DESCRIPTION OF CONTENT OF RESOLUTION NO. 9/005 OF 25 AUGUST 2005 (AVAILABLE IN SPANISH, 3 PAGES)

6. This Resolution approves and institutes the "Procedure for collection and submission of samples and histopathological and immunohistochemical diagnosis of BSE". It provides that statistical information on cases subject to active and passive surveillance, in accordance with the parameters established in Appendix 3.8.4 of the Terrestrial Animal Health Code, shall be sent to the National Directorate of Border Veterinary Services of the Institute of Veterinary Medicine, broken down in terms of the four subpopulations of cattle older than 30 months

duly identified in the procedure. The Resolution designates four Cuban laboratories to carry out the histopathological and immunohistochemical diagnosis of BSE. Each laboratory will be responsible for all the samples for analysis within a particular region. The Resolution also revokes the Directive on collection and submission of samples for BSE testing (histopathological diagnosis) issued in 2002.

E. NATIONAL ENQUIRY POINT

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