

**RECENT DISCUSSION AND PROGRESS ON OIE STANDARDS**

Communication from the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE)

The following communication, received on 19 January 2005, is being circulated at the request of the OIE.

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**Terrestrial Animal Health Code**

1. The OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Standards Commission (hereafter referred to as the Terrestrial Code Commission) met 19 to 30 September 2005 in Paris to address Member Countries' comments received prior to and following the 73rd General Session. The Commission examined various Terrestrial Code texts, and revised existing and developed new texts on the following subjects:

- General definitions

2. A set of definitions proposed by the Working Group of Animal Welfare was reviewed and endorsed by the Terrestrial Code Commission with some minor modifications.

- Evaluation of veterinary services

3. The Terrestrial Code Commission received from the President of the ad hoc Group a draft revised text of Chapters 1.3.3 and 1.3.4 on the evaluation of Veterinary Services. This revision included recommendations on the evaluation of the Veterinary Statutory Body and on a procedure whereby a Member Country can request the OIE to organise an evaluation of its Veterinary Services.

- Zoning and compartmentalization

4. The Terrestrial Code Commission clarified the commitment of the Veterinary Administration by modifying an Article.

5. The Terrestrial Code Commission was concerned that the concept of compartmentalisation was not yet well understood. It noted that the application of compartmentalisation was not mandatory and it should be used in a similar manner to zoning, depending on the epidemiology of the disease. While the primary criteria for zoning are related to geography, those for compartments relate to biosecurity management measures; however, the application of zoning includes some biosecurity elements and compartmentalisation will involve a spatial element for some diseases.

- Criteria for listing diseases
- Foot and mouth disease
- Bluetongue

6. The newly developed surveillance appendix was received from the Scientific Commission and is presented unchanged to Member Countries.

- BSE

7. The Terrestrial Code Commission recalled the discussion at the 73rd General Session where some Member Countries were opposed to inclusion of muscle meat and blood products in the list of commodities which can be traded safely. However, arguments were largely based on studies using laboratory strains of transmissible spongiform encephalopathy (TSE) in laboratory animals, and many scientific papers have confirmed that different TSEs behave differently in various animal models. With respect to BSE, cattle provide the appropriate model to study the distribution of the agent in cattle. A number of studies have failed to demonstrate the presence of BSE in muscle meat or in the blood of experimentally infected cattle not showing clinical signs of BSE.

8. The Terrestrial Code Commission also took into account information arising from a recent World Health Organization (WHO) Consultation on Tissue Infectivity Distribution in Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies, but noted that, in many cases, this was preliminary information requiring further validation. The meeting also referred to an equivocal result for muscle meat (semitendinosus muscle) arising from a clinically affected cow. The Terrestrial Code Commission did not believe that any changes in this regard were required to the current text, but it would continue to monitor the progress in the research.

9. The Terrestrial Code Commission has been concerned for some time that up-to-date recommendations needed to be developed for other commodities, and will ask the Director-General to convene an expert group to examine the safety of gelatine and tallow.

10. The revised Surveillance Appendix proposed by the OIE experts was endorsed with minor changes.

- Classical swine fever
- Avian influenza

11. The Terrestrial Code Commission drafted a new appendix on procedures for the inactivation of highly pathogenic notifiable avian influenza (HPNAI) virus. The information in the appendix was compiled from a published paper and from a manuscript in press, provided by an expert.

- Semen and embryo related matters
- Animal welfare
- Control of hazards through ante- and post-mortem inspection
- Animal identification and traceability
- Equine diseases

12. The report of the Terrestrial Animal Health Standards Commission may be accessed at <http://www.oie.int>.

#### **New edition of Terrestrial Code**

13. The 2005 edition of the Terrestrial Code in English, French and Spanish, updated according to these decisions, was published in August 2005, sent to delegates of Member Countries and made available on the OIE Website. A Russian version was also produced. Work continued with the development of the Terrestrial Code in XML format which will facilitate updating and allow greater interactivity by users.

#### **Aquatic Animal Health Code (*Aquatic Code*)**

14. During 2005, the Aquatic Animal Health Standards Commission met in January and in August; the Bureau of the Commission met in May (just prior to the 73<sup>rd</sup> General Session).

15. The OIE organized meetings of four Ad hoc Groups to revise *Aquatic Code* chapters for fish, crustacean and mollusc diseases based on the adopted new template and for the revision of the OIE list of aquatic animal diseases. It also organized meetings of two Ad hoc Groups on aquatic animal welfare.

#### **Meetings of the Commission: 13–19 January and 1–5 August 2005**

16. The subjects examined by the Commission during the meetings included the following:
- updates to the *Aquatic Animal Health Code* and the *Manual of Diagnostic Tests for Aquatic Animals*;
  - harmonization between the *Aquatic Animal Health Code* and the *Terrestrial Animal Health Code*;
  - amphibian disease issues;
  - role and activities of the OIE in the field of aquatic animals;
  - meetings with the Terrestrial Animal Health Standards Commission and the Animal Health Information Department;
  - role and functions of OIE Reference Laboratories;
  - OIE Aquatic Animal Disease Information System;
  - cooperation and partnership with other international organizations and regional organizations;
  - Aquatic Animals Commission Web page.

#### **New edition of the *Aquatic Code***

17. The 2005 edition of the *Aquatic Code* in English, French and Spanish was published, sent to delegates of Member Countries and made available on the OIE Website.

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