

HEALTH STATUS REPORT

Communication from Paraguay

The following communication, received on 31 March 2006, is being circulated at the request of the delegation of Paraguay.

I. BOVINE SPONGIFORM ENCEPHALOPATHY

1. Since 1996 Paraguay has maintained a preventive epidemiological surveillance programme in accordance with OIE standards to prevent the entry of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE). Continued surveillance enabled us, in the year 2000, to gain the status of Geographical BSE Risk 1 Country, granted by the Scientific Committee of the European Communities and renewed in subsequent years.
2. In February 2005, the National Animal Quality and Health Service (SENACSA) submitted to the OIE the relevant documentation to request recognition as a BSE free country.
3. On 27 February of this year, the OIE informed the Official Service that the OIE Scientific Commission for Animal Diseases, during its meeting of 16 – 20 January, had accepted the Ad Hoc Group's recommendation and proposed to the International Committee that it grant Paraguay the status of "BSE Provisionally Free Country" in accordance with Article 2.3.13.4 of the Terrestrial Animal Health Code.
4. This proposal will be submitted to the next OIE meeting in May of this year, for approval.

II. AVIAN INFLUENZA

5. Paraguay's SENACSA has implemented the National and Surveillance and Prevention Plan for avian influenza, taking as its reference the project presented by the Permanent Veterinary Committee on regional strategies for this disease, and following the guidelines provided by international bodies.
6. To that end, diagnostic techniques were developed in the SENACSA laboratory and serological checks are being carried out to confirm the absence of the disease in the country.
7. As part of this programme, a national sampling was carried out in 2005, involving a total of 5,397 samples, belonging to 394 owners. All the samples tested negative to avian influenza.

8. Moreover, restrictions have been placed on bird imports and products at risk from avian influenza from countries affected by the disease.

III. FOOT AND MOUTH DISEASE

9. The National Programme for the Eradication of Foot and Mouth Disease began in 1992. In 1997 Paraguay obtained from the OIE the certification of "foot and mouth disease free country with vaccination", a status that was renewed annually until 2002, when it was suspended following the reintroduction of the disease into the Corpus Christi district of the Department of Canindeyú.

10. In May 2005, Paraguay regained from the OIE the status of "foot and mouth disease free country with vaccination" that it had lost after the events in Canindeyú and Pozo Hondo in July 2003.

11. Paraguay's health status has remained stable, thanks to the timely and efficient implementation of the "Animal Health Warning and Emergency Programme", coupled with the "Emergency Strategic Vaccination Plans" in the wake of the events that occurred in the border areas, Matto Grosso do Sul and Parana, Brazil (October 2005) and Corrientes, Argentina (February 2006).

12. Serology is being carried out on cattle aged under 18 months in the perifocal area, in Paraguayan territory adjoining the area of the outbreak in Matto Grosso do Sul, Brazil, in order to technically rule out the possibility of viral circulation.

IV. TRACEABILITY

13. In January of this year the Traceability System of Paraguay (SITRAP) was introduced, incorporating the registration of livestock establishments and the control of the movement of animals and products. This will help to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of traceability and thus make it easier to respond to health emergencies and to deal with disease control and the certification of exports.
