

DECISIONS RELATING TO THE SPS AGREEMENT TAKEN BY
THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE OIE
AT ITS 64th GENERAL SESSION

The 64th General Session of the International Committee of the Office International des Epizooties (OIE) was held at the headquarters of the Organisation in Paris (France) from 20 to 24 May 1996.

The decisions taken by the International Committee of the OIE during this Session having implications for the SPS Agreement are as follows:

Adoption of a Resolution on a technical item

A Resolution was adopted after study of the technical item entitled: "The use of OIE recommendations and procedures by Member Countries for international trade in relation to the World Trade Organization".

This Resolution commits the OIE to maintaining its efforts to assist its Member Countries to appreciate their roles and responsibilities in the context of the SPS Agreement, and instructs the OIE Central Bureau to continue to collaborate with the WTO Secretariat. It also recommends that countries settle their differences rapidly by means of the procedure provided in the OIE *International Animal Health Code*.

Adoption of new measures for the *International Animal Health Code*

Additions and amendments were made to the *International Animal Health Code* (the *Code*) on the following subjects:

1. Definition of a laboratory
2. Principles of certification
3. Foot and mouth disease
4. Contagious bovine pleuropneumonia
5. Equine viral arteritis
6. Enzootic bovine leukosis
7. Protection of animals during international transport
8. Disinfection of aircraft
9. Laboratory rodent and rabbit embryos/ova
10. Artificial insemination centres - small ruminant semen
11. Trichinellosis
12. Infectious bovine rhinotracheitis (IBR/IPV).

The International Committee also paid particular attention to the problem of bovine spongiform encephalopathy, and made substantial amendments to the *Code* chapter relating to this disease, with a view to improving the text by taking into account the latest scientific research.

Adoption of the *Manual of Standards for Diagnostic Tests and Vaccines*

The third edition of the *Manual of Standards for Diagnostic Tests and Vaccines* (the *Manual*) has been considerably expanded by the addition of introductory chapters and chapters for individual animal diseases. It also incorporates a preliminary chapter on biotechnology. The contents of the *Manual* have been studied by reviewers, OIE experts and specialists in Member Countries.

The OIE International Committee adopted the third edition of the *Manual* by means of a Resolution.

Recognition of the FMD status of Member Countries

The OIE Foot and Mouth Disease and Other Epizootics Commission, during its meetings in September 1995 and January 1996, compiled a list of countries that it considers to be completely or in part FMD free without vaccination, in accordance with the conditions laid down in Chapter 2.1.1 of the *Code*. This list was sent to all Member Countries, who were given a period of 60 days in which to submit written responses. No such comments were received by the Central Bureau from any Member Countries.

The OIE International Committee adopted this list in the form of a Resolution.

Amendments to the *International Aquatic Animal Health Code* and *Diagnostic Manual for Aquatic Animal Diseases*

Due to delays in receipt of comments from Member Countries on a certain number of proposed amendments to the *International Aquatic Animal Health Code* and *Diagnostic Manual for Aquatic Animal Diseases* prepared by the OIE Fish Diseases Commission, the Commission decided that it was preferable to defer any decision until the following year.

A Resolution was nonetheless adopted relating to some additions to the two works referred to above on the subject of gyrodactylosis (salmonid disease) and white spot disease.

Strategic planning

At the initiative of the Director General of the OIE, a Second Strategic Planning Group met in December 1995 and January 1996 to verify that the activities of the OIE are fully in accord with its missions and to define the areas in which efforts should be maintained, intensified or, on the contrary, abandoned.

The Group summarised its recommendations as follows:

- "(a) The plan does not present a radical departure from the OIE's current course or call for expansion of activities into new areas.
- (b) The OIE should intensify its actions in fewer rather than more areas.
- (c) The OIE should give priority to its information strategy and the development of standards. This is largely in response to its new role as a scientific reference organisation for animal health decisions in regard to world trade.
- (d) The OIE should also assume responsibility for setting standards for epidemiological surveillance, disease control and eradication.

(e) The OIE should continue to work with National Veterinary Services around those priorities and continue its strong network for scientific and research work. "

These recommendations should be implemented by an intensification of the normative activities (frequency of meetings, consultation of experts, etc.) of the four Specialist Commissions of the OIE, strengthening of the dissemination of information (animal health data, standards, etc.), and the provision of scientific and technical assistance for animal disease control programmes set up by Member Countries on a regional basis (Asia: foot and mouth disease; Middle East: brucellosis; Africa: contagious bovine pleuropneumonia and bovine tuberculosis).

The complete texts of the Resolutions referred to in the present document and the report prepared on the technical item relating to international trade were transmitted to the WTO Secretariat on 29 May 1996.