

DECISIONS RELEVANT TO THE SPS AGREEMENT TAKEN BY
THE OIE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE AT
THE 65th GENERAL SESSION

Statement by the Office International des Epizooties (OIE)
at the Meeting of 1-2 July 1997

The 65th General Session of the OIE International Committee was held from 26 to 30 May 1997 at the headquarters of the Organisation (Paris, France). The decisions taken by the OIE International Committee during the Session, that are relevant to the SPS Agreement, are as follows:

Agreement between the Office International des Epizooties and the World Trade Organization

The OIE International Committee approved the terms of the draft Agreement, in the form of an exchange of letters, between the OIE and the WTO and empowered the Director-General to negotiate any possible minor adjustments and to sign the document on behalf of the OIE.

Election of members of the OIE Specialist Commissions

The statutory term of office of members of the Specialist Commissions is three years. As this period was due to expire, the International Committee conducted new elections. The list of members elected or reelected is given in an appendix to this document.

Adoption of a Resolution on a technical item

A Resolution was adopted following the examination of a technical item entitled "Quality control systems (such as the ISO 9000 system) for evaluating Veterinary Services within the context of international trade". This Resolution invites the Member Countries to examine the possibility of organising their Veterinary Services under quality assurance principles and establishing quality systems for these Services. It also recommends that the OIE contact ISO with a view to developing a reference system adapted to Veterinary Services, and that it study the possibility of applying principles of accreditation of Veterinary Services at the international level.

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

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

1. Definitions for poultry
2. Principles of certification
3. International transfer and laboratory containment of animal pathogens
4. Foot and mouth disease

5. Highly pathogenic avian influenza
6. Bovine spongiform encephalopathy
7. Contagious caprine pleuropneumonia
8. Equine influenza
9. Collection and processing of equine embryos/ova
10. Air transport of selected mammalian species

The International Committee continued to pay particular attention to bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE). The *Code* chapter on BSE now includes criteria for determining the health status of a country in regard to the disease.

Recognition of the foot and mouth disease status of Member Countries

The OIE Foot-and-Mouth Disease and Other Epizootics Commission, which met in September 1996 and January 1997, prepared a list of countries or zones within national territories which it considers are free from foot and mouth disease (FMD), within the terms laid down in Chapter 2.1.1 of the *Code*. This list was sent to the Member Countries, who were given a period of 60 days in which to respond in writing. Except for one country which had a general objection, the Central Bureau received no objections to the adoption of this list. The OIE International Committee adopted this list by means of a Resolution.

Through another Resolution, it was decided to delegate to the aforementioned Commission the authority to recognise that a Member Country has regained its previously recognised FMD status, following outbreaks that have been eradicated. This Resolution is designed to avoid the economic losses which a country might sustain as a result of a lengthy delay in regaining its free status if it were obliged to wait for a General Session to be held in order for a favourable opinion issued by the Commission to come into effect.

The International Committee retains its prerogative to approve annually an updated list of FMD free countries and zones.

Epidemiological surveillance systems for contagious bovine pleuropneumonia

At the 63rd General Session (May 1995), the OIE International Committee adopted the *Recommended Standards for Epidemiological Surveillance for Contagious Bovine Pleuropneumonia* developed by the Foot-and-Mouth Disease and Other Epizootics Commission, but at the same time asked the Commission to prepare an Annex to this text which would allow the time required before declaration of provisional freedom from the disease and from infection to be reduced to take into account the effectiveness of a country's surveillance system. After the Annex had been prepared, it was considered preferable to integrate these terms into a revised version of the standards. The OIE International Committee passed a Resolution adopting the suitably revised *Recommended Standards for Epidemiological Surveillance Systems for Contagious Bovine Pleuropneumonia*.

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

At the 64th General Session (May 1996), the OIE International Committee was unable to adopt the amendments to the *International Aquatic Animal Health Code* and *Diagnostic Manual for Aquatic Animal Diseases* proposed by the Fish Diseases Commission, due to delays in the receipt of comments from Member Countries. Meeting in November 1996, the Commission agreed to most of the suggestions

contained in these comments. In May 1997, the OIE International Committee was thus in a position to adopt, by means of a Resolution, the amendments to the aforementioned *Code* and *Manual* submitted by the Fish Diseases Commission. As a result, revised editions of these two works will be published by the end of 1997.

APPENDIX

Election of the Members of the Specialist Commissions

International Animal Health Code Commission

President: Dr. B. Vallat (France)
Vice-President: Dr. A.B. Thiermann (USA)
Secretary General: Dr. D. Wilson (Australia)
Members: Dr. R. Benaissa (Algeria)
Dr. P.P. Bosman (South Africa)
Dr. A.N. Panin (Russia)

Foot-and-Mouth Disease and Other Epizootics Commission

President: Dr. W.G. Sterritt (Canada)
Vice-President: Dr. G. Thomson (South Africa)
Secretary General: Prof. V. Caporale (Italy)

Standards Commission

President: Prof. M. Truszczyński (Poland)
Vice-President: Dr. J.E. Pearson (USA)
Secretary General: Dr. S. Edwards (United Kingdom)

Fish Diseases Commission

President: Prof. T. Hästein (Norway)
Vice-President: Dr. C. Michel (France)
Secretary General: Dr. B.J. Hill (United Kingdom)
Members: Dr. K. Nakajima (Japan)
Dr. J. Winton (USA)