
Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures

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**ISSUES OF INTEREST TO THE SPS COMMITTEE
DISCUSSED BY THE OIE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE
AT THE 72ND GENERAL SESSION**

Communication from World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE)

The following communication, dated 17 June 2004, is being circulated at the request of the OIE.

1. The 72nd General Session of the International Committee of the OIE, the World Organisation for Animal Health, was held at the OIE headquarters (Paris, France) from 23-28 May 2004. Of the OIE membership of 167 Member Countries, 139 countries or territories were represented by their delegates, and 36 international organizations and institutions also participated. Issues relevant to the work of the SPS Committee discussed by the OIE International Committee during the General Session were as follows:

2. The President noted that the OIE has started preparing its 4th Strategic Plan (2005-2010) which will be submitted for adoption in May 2005.

3. Two major technical items were presented and discussed – "Emerging and Re-emerging Zoonotic Diseases: Challenges and Opportunities", and "Animal Identification and Traceability".

4. International Organisations which had signed a Cooperation Agreement with the OIE (including the WTO, Codex Alimentarius Commission, WHO, World Bank, International Association for Biologicals FAO, and the World Veterinary Association (WVA)) made presentations on their work programmes, stressing their close relationship with the OIE. The OIE noted that it had now two agreements with the FAO – a general agreement which had already been signed and a new agreement on the GF-TADs (FAO/OIE Global Framework for the Progressive Control of FMD and Other Transboundary Animal Diseases) programme.

Report on the Animal Production Food Safety work programme

5. The Chairman of the Working Group on Animal Production Food Safety (Dr A McKenzie) made a presentation on the Working Group's work programme, and on its achievements over the previous 12 months. These included:

- OIE input into the work of the Codex Committees on Meat Hygiene and on Milk and Milk Products, and the Codex Task Force on Animal Feeding;

- review of the *Terrestrial Code* chapter on bovine tuberculosis to better incorporate public health aspects;
- development of guidelines on "good farming practices" which adopt a farm-level animal production approach to address public health risks at the farm;
- development of a guidance document for the Director General on the role and functionality of Veterinary Services in food safety throughout the food chain; and
- drafting of a paper to provide more detailed guidance on the use and development of a risk-based approach in ante- and post-mortem inspection.

6. Dr McKenzie indicated that the following priorities had been identified by the Working Group for the short term:

- animal traceability;
- review of international standards on testing, inspection and certification, with a view to maximizing harmonization, through coordination with the Codex Alimentarius Commission and other relevant international organisations;
- salmonellosis;
- OIE input into upcoming Codex meetings on animal feeding, residues of veterinary drugs in food, and milk and milk products;
- improvement of the current level of OIE input into Codex texts and development of a method for the most effective utilization of Codex and WHO expertise in the work of OIE Ad hoc Groups and vice versa; and
- antimicrobial resistance.

Report on the Animal Welfare work programme

7. The Chair of the Animal Welfare Working Group (Dr D Bayvel) made a presentation on its achievements to date, the outcomes of the Global Animal Welfare Conference and the animal welfare work programme for 2004-2005. Dr Bayvel believed that the Conference had been very successful and OIE had been strongly supported in its international animal welfare leadership role by representatives of Member Countries, industry and farmers' organisations, non-governmental organisations and the scientific community. The conference also provided the OIE with the opportunity to emphasize its commitment to consultation and communication.

8. Dr Bayvel indicated that the work of the existing four expert groups would continue and that a fifth group had been established to address aquatic animal welfare issues. The OIE's close liaison with the WVA, the International Air Transport Association (IATA) and other relevant international organisations would continue. Specific guidelines on animal welfare (addressing land and sea transport, killing for disease control purposes and slaughter for human consumption) would be presented for adoption in 2005. There was strong support for the OIE's animal welfare initiative from the International Committee.

Report of the Scientific Commission for Animal Diseases

9. The Scientific Commission for Animal Diseases reviewed the international disease prevalence situation with respect to foot and mouth disease (FMD) and other major transboundary diseases, and

made detailed summaries of the situation in various regions of the world for the benefit of Member Countries.

10. The Commission reviewed further the FMD guidelines for surveillance to replace the existing "Preliminary Guidelines for the establishment or the regaining of recognition for an FMD free country or zone". The Commission proposed modifications to the FMD chapter in the *Terrestrial Code* to take into account the concept of demonstrating the absence of virus circulation in FMD-free countries where vaccination is practised. The Commission also updated the FMD surveillance guidelines to address targeted surveillance, the complexities of vaccination and the use of certain tests.

11. The Commission also proposed a new appendix on the general principles on animal health surveillance, with guidelines for specific disease surveillance, e.g. FMD, avian influenza, classical swine fever, and bluetongue, being developed in line with these principles.

Report of the Terrestrial Animal Health Standards Commission - adoption of new provisions in the OIE *Terrestrial Animal Health Code*

12. The Chair of the Code Commission recalled the extensive work programme for the Commission as a result of discussions at the 2003 General Session, with priorities including a further revision of the avian influenza chapter, a simplified approach to country categorisation in the bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) chapter, a revision of the BSE surveillance appendix, further revision of the FMD surveillance guidelines, a revision of the bovine tuberculosis chapter to explicitly distinguish animal health and public health measures, and incorporation of the new approach to disease notification. He believed that 2003 had been another productive year, with 28 new or revised chapters submitted for adoption and several others in preparation.

13. The OIE International Committee adopted almost all of the proposed amendments to the *Terrestrial Code*, including on the following subjects:

- general definitions – including revised definitions for "zone/region" and "compartment";
- obligations and ethics in international trade;
- evaluation of veterinary services – *inter alia*, to address the roles and responsibilities of private veterinarians and veterinary para-professionals in the provision of animal health services;
- guidelines for reaching a judgement of equivalence of sanitary measures;
- new criteria for OIE-listed diseases and the animal disease notification obligations of Member Countries;
- revised FMD chapter and appendix on FMD surveillance – to address the concept of virus circulation in FMD-free countries which vaccinate for the disease;
- revised BSE chapter and guidelines on risk assessment for BSE (both of which generated significant discussion) - in the interest of clarity, recommendations on the safety of certain commodities were moved to the front of the chapter; some changes were made to the recommendations on SRMs; and the risk assessment process was better harmonized with the guidelines for risk analysis;
- after significant debate, the current BSE surveillance appendix was not updated, pending new proposals in 2005 based on the EU data;
- rinderpest;

- contagious bovine pleuropneumonia;
- equine influenza;
- guidelines for risk analysis for antimicrobial resistance, to complement the three chapters on antimicrobial resistance adopted in 2003;
- diseases of honey bees; and
- avian influenza - following the discussions held during the 2003 General Session on a significantly revised chapter, the Code Commission had proposed revised categories of country/zone/compartiment status for notifiable avian influenza, measures to better differentiate the risks associated with the different commodities traded, and recommendations to encourage surveillance and notification for both low pathogenic and highly pathogenic strains to maximize transparency and minimize unjustified trade restrictions; the importance of the OIE making progress on this chapter, due to concerns over the zoonosis risks and the large outbreaks in Asia and other parts of the world, was noted; Delegates generally welcomed the further development of the chapter but recognised that further work was needed on compartmentalization, vaccination, the recommendations for trade and the proposals for surveillance; accordingly, the revised chapter was adopted for inclusion into the Code as an "under study" adjunct to the present chapter.

14. Regarding a simplified categorization system for BSE status, the Code Commission had recommended a revised categorization system which would group countries into the following three categories, based on the outcome of a risk assessment and only when supported by a strong surveillance system – negligible risk of BSE, controlled BSE risk, undetermined risk of BSE. Member countries were requested to give the Code Commission detailed comments as to the direction in which it should be heading on this issue. The approach was accepted without further discussion by the Delegates.

Report of the Biological Standards Commission

15. The finalization of the texts for the fifth edition of *OIE Manual of Diagnostic Tests and Vaccines for Terrestrial Animals* was a major activity for the Commission. As well as the printed version, a web-based version will be made available on the OIE website. The new edition significantly updated its work on the standardization of diagnostic tests and vaccines for international trade.

16. The Chair of the Commission noted the pivotal role played by OIE Reference Laboratories and Collaborating Centres in the international network of scientific expertise that supports the objectives of the OIE. The Commission was keen to identify laboratories within developing countries that can fulfil the role of providing services within their region, and to strengthen their operations by encouraging twinning of such laboratories with those in developed countries. The Commission recommended various applications for Reference Laboratory and Collaborating Centre status, which the International Committee approved.

17. A Resolution was adopted to amend the mandate of OIE Reference Laboratories, to ask them to also inform the OIE of results that are confirmed positive for diseases that are reportable to OIE. The results forwarded to the OIE would only be published by the OIE in agreement with the Delegate of the country concerned and after precise identification of the origin of the samples.

Adoption of new provisions in the OIE *Aquatic Animal Health Code* and topics

18. The OIE International Committee approved the 7th edition of the *Aquatic Animal Health Code* and the 4th edition of the *OIE Manual of Diagnostic Tests for Aquatic Animals*. Additions or amendments to the *Aquatic Code* were made on the following subjects:

- general definitions;
- disease listing and notification criteria;
- aquatic animal health measures applicable on departure and arrival; and
- general recommendations on disinfection.

19. The Aquatic Animals Commission produced several templates for disease chapters in the Aquatic Code, taking better account of issues such as disease free aquaculture establishments, disease surveillance, compartmentalization and "safe" commodities. *Ad hoc* Groups will be convened to develop specific disease chapters.

20. As well, the Commission was working closely with the Terrestrial Animal Health Standards Commission to ensure that approaches being taken by both Commissions in their work was closely harmonized, for example on criteria on disease notification.

Recognition of the status of Member Countries in regard to rinderpest, FMD, BSE and CBPP

21. The OIE International Committee asked the Director General of the OIE to publish the list of Member Countries recognised as FMD free (see appendix 1), the list of Member Countries newly recognised as BSE provisionally free (see appendix 2) and the list of Member Countries recognised as free from rinderpest infection (see appendix 3) .

RESOLUTION No. XX

Recognition of the Foot and Mouth Disease Status of Member Countries

CONSIDERING THAT

1. During the 63rd General Session, the International Committee adopted Resolutions XI and XII, "Establishment of a list of foot and mouth disease (FMD) free countries where vaccination is not practised", and "Procedure for the recognition of the foot and mouth disease status of Member Countries", respectively;
2. During the 64th General Session, the International Committee adopted Resolution XII, which asks that the Director General publish a list of the countries or zones within national territories that fulfil the criteria of one of the FMD free categories described in Chapter 2.1.1. of the *Terrestrial Animal Health Code* (the *Terrestrial Code*);
3. The Scientific Commission for Animal Diseases (the Scientific Commission) has continued to apply the procedure approved by the International Committee, and has supported the recognition of the FMD free status of additional countries and zones within national territories for annual adoption of the list by the International Committee;
4. Recommendations of the Scientific Commission regarding the evaluation of countries as being free from foot and mouth disease have been submitted to Member Countries for comments as outlined in Resolution XVI, which was adopted during the 67th General Session of the International Committee;
5. The Scientific Commission proposed that an updated list of countries and zones previously recognised as free from foot and mouth disease and those newly proposed by the Scientific Commission in consultation with Member Countries be annually adopted by resolution;
6. During the 65th General Session, the International Committee adopted Resolution XII, which stated that the Delegates of Member Countries where countries or zones within their national territories are recognised as FMD free annually confirm by letter each November both their status and that the criteria by which their status was recognized remain unchanged;
7. During the 65th General Session, the International Committee adopted Resolution XVII delegating to the Scientific Commission the authority to recognize, without further International Committee consultation, that a Member Country or zone within its territory has regained its previously recognized FMD free status following outbreaks that are eradicated in accordance with the relevant provisions of Chapter 2.1.1. of the *Terrestrial Code*;
8. During the 71st General Session, the International Committee adopted Resolution XXI delegating to the Scientific Commission the authority to recognize, without further International Committee consultation, an FMD free zone created following outbreaks within a Member Country or its territory in accordance with the relevant provisions of Chapters 1.3.5. and 2.1.1. of the *Terrestrial Animal Health Code*;
9. During the 70th General Session, the International Committee adopted Resolution XVIII asking Member Countries applying for evaluation for freedom from FMD to meet part of the costs sustained by the OIE Central Bureau in the evaluation process;

10. Information published by the OIE is derived from declarations made by the official Veterinary Services of Member Countries. The OIE is not responsible for inaccurate publication of country disease status based on inaccurate information or changes in epidemiological status or other significant events that were not promptly reported to the Central Bureau subsequent to the time of declaration of freedom.

THE COMMITTEE

RESOLVES

That the Director General publish the following list of Member Countries recognized as FMD free countries where vaccination is not practised, according to the provisions of Chapter 2.1.1. of the *Terrestrial Code*¹:

Albania	Germany	Netherlands
Australia	Greece	New Caledonia
Austria	Guatemala	New Zealand
Belgium	Guyana	Nicaragua
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Honduras	Norway
Bulgaria	Hungary	Panama
Canada	Iceland	Poland
Chile	Indonesia	Portugal
Costa Rica	Ireland	Romania
Croatia	Italy	Singapore
Cuba	Japan	Slovakia
Cyprus	Korea (Rep. of)	Slovenia
Czech Rep.	Latvia	Spain
Denmark	Lithuania	Sweden
El Salvador	Luxembourg	Switzerland
Estonia	Madagascar	Ukraine
Finland	Malta	United Kingdom
Former Yug. Rep. of Macedonia	Mauritius	United States of America
France	Mexico	Vanuatu

AND

That the Director General publish the following list of Member Countries recognised as FMD free countries where vaccination is practised, according to the provisions of Chapter 2.1.1. of the *Terrestrial Code*¹:

Taipei China and Uruguay

AND

That the Director General publish the following list of Member Countries as having an FMD free zone where vaccination is not practised, according to the provisions of Chapter 2.1.1. of the *Terrestrial Code*:

Argentina: zone situated south of the 42° parallel;

¹ For information on the status of non-contiguous territories of Member Countries recognised as FMD free, please address enquiries to that country's Delegate or to the Director General

Botswana: zone designated by the Delegate of Botswana in documents addressed to the Director General on 24 July 2003;

Colombia: Northwest region of Choco Department;

Malaysia: zones of Sabah and Sarawak designated by the Delegate of Malaysia in a document addressed to the Director General on 15 December 2003;

Namibia: zone designated by the Delegate of Namibia in a document addressed to the Director General on 6 February 1997;

Philippines: Mindanao, Visayas, Palawan and Masbate;

South Africa: zone designated by the Delegate of South Africa in a document addressed to the Director General in May 2002;

AND

That the Director General publish the following list of Member Countries as having FMD free zones where vaccination is practised, according to the provisions of Chapter 2.1.1. of the *Terrestrial Code*:

Bolivia: zone of Chiquitania designated by the Delegate of Bolivia in documents addressed to the Director General on January 2003;

Brazil: States of Bahia, Espírito Santo, Goiás, Mato Grosso, Mato Grosso do Sul, Minas Gerais, Paraná, Rio de Janeiro, Rio Grande do Sul, Santa Catarina, São Paulo, Sergipe, Tocantins, the Federal District, and Rondonia;

Colombia: zone designated by the Delegate of Colombia in documents addressed to the Director General on January 2003.

(Adopted by the International Committee of the OIE on 25 May 2004)

Appendix 2

RESOLUTION No. XXI

Recognition of the Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy Status of Member Countries

CONSIDERING THAT

1. During the 69th General Session, the International Committee adopted Resolution No. XV, asking Member Countries that wish to be evaluated for conformation with the requirements of the OIE *Terrestrial Animal Health Code* (the *Terrestrial Code*) for bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) free status to submit a formal application to the Director General of the OIE for consideration by the Scientific Commission for Animal Diseases (Scientific Commission);
2. An Ad hoc Group of experts on BSE (OIE Ad hoc Group for Evaluation of Country Submissions for Recognition as Complying with the *Terrestrial Code* as Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy Free) has been set up by the OIE and the Group has developed guidelines to facilitate the submission of data by Member Countries in accordance with the requirements in the current edition of the *Terrestrial Code*;
3. During the 70th General Session, the International Committee adopted Resolution XVIII asking Member Countries applying for this evaluation to meet part of the costs sustained by the OIE Central Bureau in the evaluation process;
4. During the 71st General Session, the International Committee adopted Resolution XXII authorising the Scientific Commission to also evaluate submissions for provisional freedom from BSE in accordance with Article 2.3.13.4 of the *Terrestrial Code*;
5. The Ad hoc Group has already examined submissions from several countries and made appropriate recommendations that have been endorsed by the Scientific Commission;
6. These recommendations have been submitted to Member Countries for comments as outlined in Resolution No. XVI, which was adopted during the 67th General Session of the International Committee for foot and mouth disease (FMD);
7. Information published by the OIE is derived from appropriate declarations made by the official Veterinary Services of Member Countries. The OIE is not responsible for inaccurate publication of country disease status based on inaccurate information or changes in epidemiological status or other significant events that were not promptly reported to the Central Bureau;

THE COMMITTEE

RESOLVES THAT

1. The Director General establish a list of countries or zones recognised by the OIE as BSE "free" and "provisionally free" in accordance with Chapter 2.3.13 of the *Terrestrial Code*. This list should be updated as and when new countries are approved by the International Committee and shall be adopted annually by resolution.
2. The Director General publish that Argentina, Iceland, Singapore and Uruguay be recognized as "provisionally free" from BSE in accordance with the provisions of Article 2.3.13.4 of the *Terrestrial Code*.

3. The Director General inform Delegates of Member Countries whose countries or zones within their national territories are recognised as "free" or "provisionally free" from BSE that they should annually confirm by letter each November both their status and that the criteria by which their status was recognised remain unchanged. The list of countries or zones will be published free of charge by the OIE.

(Adopted by the International Committee of the OIE on 25 May 2004)

Appendix 3

RESOLUTION No. XXII

Recognition of Member Countries Free from Rinderpest Infection and Rinderpest Disease

CONSIDERING THAT

1. During the 63rd General Session, the International Committee adopted Resolution XIV "Establishment of a list of countries that are free of rinderpest";
2. During the 68th General Session, the International Committee adopted Resolution XIII designating a baseline list of Member Countries that were free from rinderpest infection. The countries included in the list certified that they meet the requirements specified in Chapter 2.1.4. of the *Terrestrial Animal Health Code* (the *Terrestrial Code*);
3. The OIE has also developed a list of countries that are considered to be free from rinderpest disease in accordance with Chapter 2.1.4. of the *Terrestrial Code*;
4. Recommendations of the Scientific Commission for Animal Diseases (the Scientific Commission) regarding countries that are evaluated as free from rinderpest disease and from rinderpest infection have been submitted to Member Countries for comments as outlined in Resolution XVI which was adopted during the 67th General Session of the International Committee;
5. The Scientific Commission has continued to apply the procedure approved by the International committee and has supported the recognition of countries and zones as free from rinderpest disease and rinderpest infection for annual adoption of the list by the international Committee;
6. During the 71st General Session, the Scientific Commission proposed that Member Countries so recognised reconfirm annually that their rinderpest status remains unchanged and that this annual reconfirmation would be a requirement for maintaining OIE recognition;
7. During the 70th General Session, the International Committee adopted Resolution XVIII resolving that most of the costs incurred by the OIE Central Bureau in the evaluation of country applications for obtaining the free status with respect to rinderpest disease or rinderpest infection would be recovered whenever possible from sources other than the applicant countries;
8. Information published by the OIE is derived from appropriate declarations made by the official Veterinary Services of Member Countries. The OIE is not responsible for inaccurate publication of country disease status based on inaccurate information or changes in epidemiological status or other significant events that were not promptly reported to the Central Bureau subsequent to the time of declaration of freedom from disease or infection.

THE COMMITTEE

RESOLVES

That the Director General publish the following list of Member Countries recognised as free from rinderpest infection, according to the provisions of Chapter 2.1.4. of the *Terrestrial Code*:

Albania	Germany	New Caledonia
Algeria	Greece	New Zealand
Andorra	Guatemala	Norway
Argentina	Guyana	Panama
Australia	Honduras	Paraguay
Austria	Hungary	Peru
Barbados	Iceland	Philippines
Belgium	Indonesia	Poland
Bolivia	Ireland	Portugal
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Italy	Romania
Botswana	Jamaica	Singapore
Brazil	Japan	Slovakia
Bulgaria	Korea (Rep. of)	Slovenia
Canada	Laos	South Africa
Chile	Latvia	Spain
Colombia	Lesotho	Swaziland
Costa Rica	Lithuania	Sweden
Croatia	Luxembourg	Switzerland
Cuba	Madagascar	Thailand
Cyprus	Malawi	Taipei China
Czech Rep.	Malaysia	Trinidad and Tobago
Denmark	Malta	Tunisia
Ecuador	Mauritius	Ukraine
El Salvador	Mexico	United Kingdom
Estonia	Moldavia	United States of America
Finland	Morocco	Uruguay
Former Yug. Rep. of Macedonia	<i>Namibia</i>	Vanuatu
France		Venezuela
	Nepal	Vietnam
	Netherlands	Zimbabwe

AND

That the Director General publish the following list of Member Countries or zones as being free from rinderpest disease according to the provisions of Chapter 2.1.4. of the *Terrestrial Code*:

Benin	Egypt	Mali	Niger
Bhutan	Erithrea	Mauritania	Senegal
Burkina Faso	Ghana	Mongolia	Togo
Chad ²	Guinea	Myanmar	Turkey
Cote d'Ivoire	India		

AND

That the Delegates of Member Countries whose countries or zones within their national territories are recognised as rinderpest infection or rinderpest disease free, annually reconfirm by letter in November of each year that both their status and the criteria by which their status was recognised remain unchanged. It is understood that these Delegates will immediately notify the Central Bureau if rinderpest infection or disease occur in these countries or zones.

(Adopted by the International Committee of the OIE on 25 May 2004)

² Zone designated by the Delegate of Chad in documents addressed to the Director General on December 2003