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Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures

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75TH MEETING OF THE SPS COMMITTEE

COMMUNICATION FROM THE WORLD ORGANISATION FOR ANIMAL HEALTH (OIE)

The following communication, received on 28 June 2019, is being circulated at the request of the OIE.

The World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) is pleased to provide this report for the information of WTO Members attending the 75th meeting of the SPS Committee.

1 87TH GENERAL SESSION

1.1. The OIE held its 87th General Session from 26 to 31 May 2019. During this annual event OIE member countries discuss and adopt new intergovernmental standards and guidelines aimed at improving animal health and welfare throughout the world. Over 850 participants, representing 129 OIE member countries, representatives from international, intergovernmental, regional and national organisations and stakeholders took part in this event.

1.2. 33 Resolutions were adopted by the OIE Delegates, including new and amended international standards aimed at protecting and improving animal health and welfare.

1.3. The Final Report of the 87th General Session is available on the OIE website at <http://www.oie.int/en/about-us/key-texts/final-reports-of-the-general-session/>.

1.1 Standard setting activities at the 87th General Session

1.4. The OIE Delegates adopted updated texts in its normative publications: Terrestrial Animal Health Code (Terrestrial Code), Aquatic Animal Health Code (Aquatic Code), Manual of Diagnostic Tests and Vaccines for Terrestrial Animals (Terrestrial Manual), and Manual of Diagnostic Tests for Aquatic Animals (Aquatic Manual).

1.5. Amendments adopted at the General Session comprised eight revised chapters and two new chapters in the OIE Terrestrial Code; eleven revised chapters in the OIE Terrestrial Manual; nine revised chapters in the OIE Aquatic Code and four revised chapters in the Aquatic Manual. In addition to the adoption of new and revised chapters, some Glossary definitions were amended in the two Codes to ensure consistency and clarity.

1.6. Specific texts of interest to the SPS Committee included:

1.2 Terrestrial Code

- Chapter 1.4. **Animal health surveillance** was updated after a comprehensive review. By providing updated guidance on surveillance, this chapter will better assist countries in monitoring disease trends, facilitating disease control, and the demonstration of freedom from OIE listed diseases, infestations and infections. This transversal chapter relates to all disease-specific chapters and has a special interest for those diseases for which the OIE officially recognises disease status;

- Chapter 8.14 **Infection with rabies virus** was adopted after a comprehensive review following a recommendation of the Rabies Global Conference (Geneva, 2015) and its endorsement by the Assembly at the 84th General Session in 2016. The revised standard now includes guidance for countries to apply, on a voluntary basis, for OIE endorsement of their national control programmes for dog-mediated rabies. A procedure will now be developed by the OIE in accordance with this standard to provide members with more details on the process to be followed to achieve OIE endorsement of their national control programme;
- A new Chapter 7.14. **Killing of reptiles for their skins, meat and other products** was adopted to address the increasing need of ensuring captive and wild reptiles' welfare during the process of killing. The new chapter describes how to use appropriate methods for restraining, stunning or killing reptiles, as well as the competencies needed for animal handlers, taking into consideration that the anatomy and physiology of reptiles are distinct from those of mammals and birds.

1.7. Information regarding all adopted amendments are available in the [official report of the 87th General Session](#) and in the [February 2019 meeting report of the Code Commission](#) which are available the OIE public website.

1.8. The online versions of the [28th edition \(2019\) of the Terrestrial Code](#) will soon be available and can be accessed from the OIE public website.

1.3 Aquatic Code and Aquatic Manual

- Amendments to several of the criteria for listing species as susceptible to infection with a specific pathogen (Chapter 1.5.) were amended, and a new Article 1.5.9. was adopted to include a mechanism to list taxonomic groups of species as susceptible, when many species within a taxon have been determined to be susceptible and none has been found to be refractory to infection;
- The list of susceptible species in the Chapters on infection with salmonid alphavirus, infection with koi herpesvirus, infection with spring viraemia of carp virus and infection with infectious haematopoietic necrosis virus in the Aquatic Code and Aquatic Manual, were amended after consideration of the work of the ad hoc Group on Susceptibility of fish species to infection with OIE listed diseases;
- Article X.X.8. for all disease-specific chapters of the Aquatic Code (Article 10.4.12. for infection with infectious salmon anaemia) were amended to clarify that imported aquatic animals could be killed and processed either in the original quarantine facility (where the animals were grown) or following biosecure transport to another quarantine facility (for processing).

1.9. Information regarding all adopted amendments are available in the [official report of the 87th General Session](#) and in the [February 2019 report of the Aquatic Animals Commission](#) which are available the OIE public website.

1.10. The online version of the [22nd edition \(2019\) of the Aquatic Code](#) will soon be available and can be accessed from the OIE public website.

1.4 Global Conference on Aquatic Animal Health

1.11. The fourth Global Conference on Aquatic Animal Health was held in Santiago, Chile, from 2 to 4 April 2019, with the theme of 'Collaboration, sustainability: our future'. The key objectives of the Conference were to encourage and support members and the OIE to improve aquatic animal health and welfare worldwide in response to the rapid development of the aquaculture industry and the high occurrence of emerging diseases. Successful management of disease emergence and spread requires prompt detection and reporting, improved husbandry and biosecurity practices, investment in aquatic animal health management that keeps pace with the growth of the industry, stronger aquatic animal health services and coordinated responses to emerging threats. The recommendations from the conference emphasised the importance of national, regional and global collaboration in response to important new and emerging diseases of aquatic animals, ensuring that the OIE standards are relevant for small scale aquaculture and that biosecurity measures are implemented based on risk and to ensure safe trade in genetic material. The

recommendations will be considered carefully by the Aquatic Animals Commission in its work to revise and develop OIE international standards in the Aquatic Code and Aquatic Manual for the improvement of aquatic animal health and welfare worldwide.

1.12. All [abstracts and presentations](#) are available on the OIE website.

1.5 Official OIE recognition of disease status and control programmes of member countries

1.13. OIE member countries can apply to be included in the list of countries with an officially recognised status for the following six priority diseases: bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE), foot and mouth disease (FMD), contagious bovine pleuropneumonia (CBPP), African horse sickness, peste des petits ruminants (PPR) and classical swine fever (CSF).

1.14. At the 87th General Session, several new countries or zones of countries obtained official recognition of their status:

- Latvia and Uruguay, as well as a zone in Ecuador were officially recognised as being "free from CSF";
- Peru and Uruguay were officially recognised as being "free from CBPP";
- Croatia was officially recognised as being "free from PPR";
- Ecuador was officially recognised as having a "controlled BSE risk", and Serbia was officially recognised as having a "negligible BSE risk";
- a zone in Botswana and one in Bolivia and five in Kazakhstan (an officially recognised FMD-free zone without vaccination was split into five zones) were officially recognised as "free from FMD without vaccination".

1.15. In addition to official status recognition, new procedures describing the process for the preparation, assessment and approval of dossiers for the official recognition of disease status of non-contiguous territories were made available for OIE members.

1.16. Also of interest, procedures for self-declarations of disease freedom by countries (first published in December 2017) were updated in June 2019. Under the responsibility of OIE members, self-declarations provide a way to enhance transparency and to give visibility, in a timely manner, to the absence of diseases in countries.

1.17. The [full list of countries and their recognised disease status for AHS, BSE, CBPP, CSF, FMD, and PPR](#) can be accessed online on the OIE public website.

1.6 Global animal health situation

1.18. During the General Session an analysis of events and trends that occurred in 2018 through to the beginning of 2019 was presented by the OIE World Animal Health Information and Analysis Department based on reports submitted by member countries and territories. Particular attention was paid to the global situation analysis regarding six OIE-Listed diseases and infections based on two pathways of spread: vectors for Infection with Rift Valley fever virus; West Nile fever and infection with bluetongue virus and movement of animals and animal products for infection with avian influenza viruses; infection with koi herpesvirus and infection with *Batrachochytrium salamandrovirans*. Also, an evaluation of global compliance of members reporting obligations and quality of reports submitted was shared with the Assembly. [More information](#) can be found on the OIE website.

1.7 Strategic challenges in the control of African swine fever at global level

1.19. Throughout the second semester of 2018, 25 countries across Europe, Africa and Asia informed the OIE of outbreaks of African swine fever in their territory. During the 87th OIE General Session, a report on the global ASF situation was presented to the Assembly. The full report: "[Strategic challenges in the control of African swine fever at global level](#)" and [Resolution No. 33](#) on the Global situation relating to African swine fever are available at the OIE Website.

1.20. Given the gravity of the situation and following the request of its member countries, the OIE launched a global initiative for the control of ASF. It will use the Global Framework for the Progressive Control of Transboundary Animal Diseases (GF-TADs) mechanism to develop, improve and harmonise partnerships and coordination at national, regional and international levels. The objective is to control the disease, strengthen countries' prevention and preparation efforts, and minimise the adverse effects on animal health, animal welfare and international trade.

1.8 Discussion about how external factors, such as climate change or conflicts, have an impact on Veterinary Services

1.21. During the 87th OIE General Session, a report on 'How external factors will impact Veterinary Services and the adaptations required' was presented to the Assembly, identifying the most relevant external factors, examining how prepared Veterinary Services are, and what could help them to be better prepared.

1.22. To build this overview, the OIE conducted a survey among its member countries (74% responded) and stakeholders and a scenario-building workshop.

1.23. The report showed that both OIE member countries and stakeholders judged Veterinary Services to have appropriate priorities, high levels of capacity, and strong influence; both groups of respondents also saw opportunities to further strengthen these. Through scenario planning, a preferred future "Green Growth with Equity" was identified along with suggestions for what Veterinary Services could do to help bring this about.

1.24. OIE member countries reported on the current future-oriented activities of Veterinary Services, showing overall high engagement in general planning and disease and health risk assessments, but less use of institutional risk assessment or formal foresight studies. However, they assessed these as highly important for Veterinary Services, thus implicating a gap which needs to be overcome so that Veterinary Services can be best prepared for an uncertain future. OIE member countries identified and ranked actions that could support the capacity of Veterinary Services for foresight and adaptation, including areas which the OIE would lead.

1.25. The full report: "[How external factors \(e.g. Climate change, conflicts, socio-economics, trading patterns\) will impact veterinary services and the adaptations required](#)" is available at the OIE Website.

1.9 OIE scientific network

1.26. The OIE has access to leading knowledge and skills thanks to its global network of Reference Centres composed of Reference Laboratories and Collaborating Centres. Sharing of information among these various institutes has proved vital to our achievements in animal health and disease control throughout the world. In 2019, the number of official OIE Centres of scientific excellence is 312, located in 45 countries across the five OIE regions.

1.27. The updated lists of Reference Laboratories and Collaborating Centres are available at: <http://www.oie.int/en/scientific-expertise/reference-laboratories/list-of-laboratories/> and <http://www.oie.int/en/scientific-expertise/collaborating-centres/list-of-centres/>, respectively.

2 CAPACITY BUILDING ACTIVITIES

2.1 OIE Focal Point Seminars

2.1. OIE capacity-building activities also includes Information Seminars for Recently Appointed OIE Delegates and Regional Seminars for the OIE National Focal Points appointed for eight different areas (Animal Disease Notification to the OIE, Veterinary Products, Communication, Animal Production Food Safety, Animal Welfare, Veterinary Laboratories, Wildlife and Aquatic Animals). The aim of this programme is to provide good governance concepts for improving animal health, animal welfare and food safety of animal-origin products at the national, regional and international level, and to explain and clarify the role and responsibilities of newly-appointed OIE Delegates and of OIE National Focal Points with respect to OIE activities.

2.2. These seminars provide participants with knowledge about the rights, commitments and responsibilities of OIE Delegates and OIE National Focal Points in the OIE standard-setting process and provide a forum for discussion of implementation and compliance with the OIE international standards. They allow the participants to acquire knowledge about the roles and responsibilities of Veterinary Services and other relevant competent authorities, about relevant OIE international standards and about the specific tasks expected of National Focal Points in their respective areas.

2.3. These training sessions are also fora for experience sharing and discussion among countries within a region.
