

**Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures**

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**REPORT ON OIE ACTIVITIES TO THE 38<sup>TH</sup> MEETING  
OF THE WTO SPS COMMITTEE**

Communication from the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE)

The following communication, received on 21 February 2007, is being circulated at the request of the OIE

1. The OIE has continued to make progress on the work outlined in the OIE Fourth Strategic Plan (2005-2009). The Fourth Plan consolidates the tasks previously defined, i.e. transparency in the global animal disease situation; the development of scientifically based standards; the establishment of guidelines for the prevention, control and eradication of animal diseases; and the determination of Member Countries' disease status. This plan also introduced new strategic priorities, including strengthening the OIE's work through its five regional representations; improving the capabilities of OIE Member Countries by using mechanisms such as the WTO Standards and Trade Development Fund (STDF); supporting the enhancement of governance mechanisms for Veterinary Services; and helping Member Countries to resolve health related disputes.

2. In the context of these new strategic priorities, the OIE's work in strengthening Veterinary Services warrants particular mention. The OIE, in collaboration with the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), has developed the Performance, Vision and Strategy (PVS) Tool. This Tool is designed to help veterinary services to establish their current level of performance and to identify gaps in their ability to comply with OIE international standards, as set out in the OIE *Terrestrial Animal Health Code* (see Chapters 1.3.3. on 'Evaluation of Veterinary Services' and 1.3.4. on 'Guidelines for the Evaluation of Veterinary Services'). Through the OIE PVS Evaluation Procedure, the OIE aims to help Veterinary Services form a shared vision with stakeholders (including the private sector) and carry out strategic initiatives to strengthen performance.

3. The OIE has been supported by several international donors (including a contribution from the STDF) in carrying out this work. The OIE PVS Tool can be accessed via the OIE internet site: [http://www.oie.int/eng/oie/organisation/en\\_vet\\_eval\\_tool.htm](http://www.oie.int/eng/oie/organisation/en_vet_eval_tool.htm)

4. In addition to the PVS Tool, the OIE has developed PVS Indicators and a Manual for PVS Evaluators. These documents are not, at this time, available to the public. With the conclusion of a major training course held 5-9 February in Paris, the OIE has now trained more than 80 veterinary experts to conduct PVS evaluations. There is strong demand for evaluations by Member Countries and the OIE expects that OIE trained evaluators will continue be in strong demand during 2007-2008.

5. In relation to the OIE's normative work, the following issues may be of interest to this Committee:

#### **OIE Decisions on the Animal Health status of Member Countries**

6. The OIE Scientific Commission on Animal Diseases (the OIE Scientific Commission) reviewed applications from Member Countries for OIE recognition in regard to bovine spongiform encephalopathy, contagious bovine pleuropneumonia, rinderpest and foot and mouth disease.

#### **OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code**

7. The OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Standards Commission (the Code Commission) met in October 2006 in Paris to address Member Countries' comments and the work completed by various OIE ad hoc groups and Working Groups. The Commission examined several texts, including the Terrestrial Animal Health Code (the Terrestrial Code) chapters and appendices on zoning and compartmentalisation, rabies, foot and mouth disease, bluetongue (chapter on disease and appendix on surveillance), bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE), equine diseases (equine influenza, equine infectious anaemia, equine piroplasmiasis, equine rhinopneumonitis, glanders, equine viral arteritis), classical swine fever, avian influenza (chapter on disease and appendices on surveillance and virus inactivation), bovine and small ruminant semen, animal identification and traceability, disposal of dead animals, and animal welfare guidelines.

#### **Zoning and compartmentalization**

8. The Code Commission reviewed the chapter and incorporated Member Countries' comments, taking into account the input from the OIE Scientific Commission concept paper published in the OIE Bulletin (No. 2006 – 2).

#### **Foot and mouth disease**

9. As requested in Resolution No. XXX of the 74th General Session, an ad hoc Group was asked to establish a procedure to expedite the recovery of status in the event of a limited disease outbreak in a previously FMD free country or zone. The ad hoc Group proposed a new article to facilitate an expedited procedure and a related definition of "containment zone".

#### **Bluetongue**

10. Considering recent outbreaks in Europe and the understanding that bluetongue is increasing its geographical distribution in this region, the Code Commission modified the northern latitude boundary in relevant articles.

11. Comments received from Member Countries on the first draft of the surveillance guidelines for bluetongue were reviewed by the OIE Scientific Commission. The Code Commission noted the incorporation of the compartmentalisation concept in these guidelines but questioned how this could be applied in practice other than to an individual holding, such as an artificial insemination centre. The incorporation of compartmentalisation in the bluetongue chapter will be further considered in light of future comments from Member Countries.

**BSE**

12. The Code Commission examined outstanding concerns regarding the risk of potentially infected animals in age cohorts born before risk management measures were enforced and proposed certain modifications.

13. Mindful of the safeguards provided by the production process for gelatine, the Code Commission examined Member Country comments and decided to revise the relevant article to allow all bones of cattle that have passed ante-mortem and post-mortem inspections to be used as a source material for the production of gelatine.

14. The Code Commission received a supporting document on BSE prepared by an expert group. The document provides supporting scientific evidence for recent changes to the chapter on BSE.

**Classical swine fever (CSF)**

15. The Code Commission reviewed the chapter on CSF, which was largely restructured and adopted in last General Session.

**Avian influenza (AI)**

16. The Code Commission noted that the Central Bureau has been receiving many inquiries, from Member Countries and industry representatives, about the health status of countries following occurrences of HPNAI infection in birds other than poultry (ie in wild birds and zoo birds). The Code Commission therefore clarified the definition of poultry and added a new point on the obligations of countries in regard to international trade and HPAI related measures.

17. The Code Commission also reviewed Code recommendations on the thermal inactivation of avian influenza virus in poultry meat.

**Animal identification and traceability**

18. The Code Commission noted the progress made by the OIE ad hoc Group on guidelines for animal identification and traceability. The Code Commission clarified that the guidelines were intended as an Appendix to the Code and that the guidelines would indeed set out principles and general approaches rather than prescribing specific standards.

19. The report of the Code Commission may be accessed at:  
[http://www.oie.int/download/SC/2006/A\\_TAHSC\\_OCTOBER2006.pdf](http://www.oie.int/download/SC/2006/A_TAHSC_OCTOBER2006.pdf)

**OIE Animal Production Food Safety Working Group**

20. The OIE Working Group on Animal Production Food Safety (the Working Group) met for the sixth time at OIE Headquarters from 7-9 November 2006. The Working Group reviewed Member Countries' comments and the work of OIE ad hoc groups relevant to its mandate (including an ad hoc Group on animal feed that met in October 2006), and made recommendations on guidelines under development for animal identification and traceability, for animal feeding; and on OIE model certificates. The Working Group noted the ongoing close collaboration with the Codex Alimentarius in the OIE's food safety related work. The Working Group recommended the development of a paper on the Role and Function of Veterinary Services in Food Safety, which should include information on how veterinary services cooperate with other authorities to protect animal and human health throughout the food chain. The Working Group's report will be reviewed by the Code Commission and included in the report of its March 2007 meeting.

21. OIE ad hoc Groups on the revision of OIE health certificates and on animal identification and traceability met in January 2007. The work of these groups, after review by the Working Group via electronic consultation, will be examined by the Code Commission at its March meeting.

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