

March 2007



منظمة الأغذية  
والزراعة  
للأمم المتحدة

联合国  
粮食及  
农业组织

Food  
and  
Agriculture  
Organization  
of  
the  
United  
Nations

Organisation  
des  
Nations  
Unies  
pour  
l'alimentation  
et  
l'agriculture

Organización  
de las  
Naciones  
Unidas  
para la  
Agricultura  
y la  
Alimentación

E

## COMMISSION ON PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES

### Second Session

Rome, 26 – 30 March 2007

### Report on OIE activities

### Agenda Item 8.3 of the Provisional Agenda

1. A report on relevant activities prepared by OIE is provided at Annex 1.

For reasons of economy, this document is produced in a limited number of copies. Delegates and observers are kindly requested to bring it to the meetings and to refrain from asking for additional copies, unless strictly indispensable.  
Most FAO meeting documents are available on Internet at [www.fao.org](http://www.fao.org)

W0000

## Annex 1

**REPORT ON OIE ACTIVITIES TO THE 2nd SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES OF THE INTERNATIONAL PLANT PROTECTION CONVENTION**

1. The OIE has continued to make progress on the work outlined in the Fourth Strategic Plan (2005-2009). This Plan consolidates 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 OIE Member Countries' disease status. This plan also introduced new strategic priorities, including strengthening the work of the five OIE 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 OIE Member Countries to resolve health related disputes. This paper refers primarily to the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code but similar provisions may be found in the Aquatic Animal Health Code.

**Strengthening Veterinary Services - PVS Tool**

2. In the context of these new strategic priorities, the OIE's work in strengthening Official 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 assess 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* (the Code). Through the PVS Evaluation Procedure, the OIE aims to help Veterinary Services form a shared vision with stakeholders and carry out strategic initiatives to strengthen performance. In addition to the PVS Tool, the OIE has developed PVS Indicators and a Manual for PVS Evaluators that are not yet available to the public.

3. The PVS Tool can be found at: [http://www.oie.int/eng/oie/organisation/en\\_vet\\_eval\\_tool.htm](http://www.oie.int/eng/oie/organisation/en_vet_eval_tool.htm)

**Zoning and compartmentalization**

4. The OIE has been promoting the use of zones and compartments for the purposes of supporting disease control and international trade for several years. In this context, 'zones' broadly refer to sub-populations of distinct health status that are defined primarily according to geographic features while 'compartments' refer to sub-populations defined primarily according to management and biosecurity practices.

5. The OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Standards Commission (the Code Commission) discussed advances in the OIE's approach to zoning and compartmentalisation at its meeting in March 2007.

6. The Code Commission will circulate "guidelines for zoning and compartmentalisation" to Member Countries for comment and possible adoption at the General Session in May 2007. Responding to the need for practical guidance on the application of the compartmentalisation concept, the OIE will also distribute a checklist on the practical application of this concept in regards to avian influenza and Newcastle disease in poultry during the General Session. The Checklist will not be part of the Code but will be placed on the OIE Internet site to assist Member Countries wishing to use compartmentalisation as part of the strategy to deal with these important poultry diseases.

**OIE recognition of country or zone health status for specified diseases**

7. In 1994, the OIE International Committee requested the Scientific Commission for Animal Diseases (then called the Foot and Mouth Disease and Other Epizootics Commission) to develop a procedure for the official recognition by the OIE of foot and mouth disease (FMD) free status of OIE Member Countries. The first official list of OIE Member Countries and zones recognised as 'FMD free without vaccination' was published in 1996. This procedure, which now covers four diseases in

total (FMD, rinderpest, contagious bovine pleuropneumonia and bovine spongiform encephalopathy) (BSE), can be summarised as follows:

- a) A country that wishes to be included on the list of disease free countries or zones sends a request, accompanied by specific documentation, to the OIE Director General, who forwards this information to the Scientific Commission for Animal Diseases (SCAD).
- b) The SCAD, on advice of ad hoc Groups of experts for the relevant disease(s), makes a recommendation for adoption by the International Committee of the OIE. If the information is not complete, SCAD may determine that additional documentation is required or that a visit from an expert panel is necessary before a recommendation for adoption can be submitted to the International Committee.
- c) Once the SCAD recommends the acceptance of a Member Country's request, Member Countries are informed of the proposal and have 60 days in which to register any objection. Objections must be based on scientific or technical grounds and provided in writing to the OIE. In this case, the Director General consults the SCAD, which may request further advice from relevant ad hoc Groups, before making a decision to accept or to reject the objections.
- d) During the General Session in May of each year, the International Committee, comprising delegates of all 168 Member Countries, consider the recommendations of the SCAD before passing a formal resolution on each of the four diseases in regard to the disease free status of Member Countries (or zones within Member Countries).
- e) OIE Member Countries are required to submit a fee with their applications. The fee is 9,000 Euros for BSE and 7,000 Euros for FMD, rinderpest and CBPP and least developed countries only pay half of the above-mentioned fees.

#### **OIE informal Dispute Mediation Mechanism**

8. The OIE Code provides science-based sanitary standards and advice for use by Member Countries. These standards are World Trade Organisation (WTO) references for international trade in animals and animal products in relation to the protection of animal health and protection against zoonotic diseases (diseases that may be transmitted from animals to man). If a WTO Member Country considers that a trading partner is not meeting its obligations under the WTO SPS Agreement, it may lodge a request for dispute settlement under WTO rules. Compliance with OIE standards, as set out in the Code, is one way for a country to demonstrate that its measures are 'SPS compliant'; alternatively the country may demonstrate that its measures are based on a risk analysis conducted according to the principles described in the Code.

9. The OIE provides a voluntary, informal mechanism to help Member Countries resolve technical differences. This mechanism (see Article 1.3.1.3., 2006 Edition) was incorporated into the Code in 1993 along with the section on Risk Analysis.

10. The OIE mechanism is a science-based approach to resolving differences through facilitated bilateral consultation with the assistance of experts proposed by the Director General of the OIE.

11. Initiation of the mechanism depends upon both parties requesting OIE involvement. They must also agree the terms of reference and the work program. The OIE expert(s) will submit a confidential report on the findings and recommendations to the OIE Director General, for transmission to both parties. The outcomes are not legally binding unless both parties agree to this in advance. The parties must meet all costs associated with the mediation process.

#### **OIE approach to Equivalence of Sanitary Measures**

12. The OIE, through the standards published in the Code, recognises the SPS principle of equivalence by recommending alternative sanitary measures for many diseases and pathogenic agents. Equivalence may be obtained, for example, by enhanced surveillance and monitoring, by the use of alternative test, treatment or isolation procedures, or by combinations of these approaches.

13. The OIE has also established guidelines to help OIE Member Countries to determine whether measures arising from different animal health and production systems may provide the same level of animal and human health protection. These guidelines are applicable whether equivalence applies at the level of the specific measures or on a systems-wide basis, and whether equivalence applies to specific areas of trade or commodities or generally. Chapter 1.3.6. (2006 Edition) sets out the provide principles and a step-wise process to follow in making a judgement on equivalence. These guidelines were adopted in 2003.

#### **Harmonisation with Codex**

14. To address worldwide consumer demand for safe food, the OIE is working closely with the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC) (and other relevant international organisations) to reduce food-borne risks to human health due to hazards arising from animals. In this context, a hazard is defined as a biological, chemical or physical agent in food with the potential to cause an adverse health effect in humans, whether or not it causes disease in animals. The development of standards for animal identification and traceability and a fundamental review of OIE model veterinary certificates are currently important areas of work.

#### **OIE activities in relation to invasive alien species**

15. Under the mandate granted by its 168 Member Countries, the OIE develops international standards, guidelines and recommendations for animal diseases and pathogens, including zoonoses that meet the criteria established by the OIE. The OIE mandate does not cover invasive species that are unrelated to a disease or pathogen of animals. The OIE will however continue incorporating risk mitigation measures for potentially alien species if such species are linked to a specific OIE listed disease.

16. The OIE is continuing to collaborate with the Secretariats of the CBD and the IPPC, and with the WTO on identifying gaps in the international framework for the management of invasive alien species. As part of this collaboration, the OIE has proposed an official cooperation agreement between the OIE and the CBD. The OIE is also working in collaboration with the FAO Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture on safeguarding genetic resources.