

# VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE *AD HOC* GROUP ON THE IMPACT OF THE REVISION OF BSE STANDARDS AND THE MAINTENANCE OF OFFICIAL BSE RISK STATUS

22 to 24 June 2022

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## Terms of reference

### Purpose

The purpose of this *ad hoc* Group (the Group) is to finalise the assessment performed by the *ad hoc* Group in June 2021 on the impact of the revised bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) standards on the maintenance of official BSE risk status of three Members, and to further revise the annual reconfirmation form for maintenance of official BSE risk status.

### Background

In February 2018, the Terrestrial Animal Health Standards Commission (Code Commission) and the Scientific Commission for Animal Diseases (Scientific Commission) agreed on an in-depth review of Chapters 1.8. Application for official recognition by the World Animal Health Organisation (WOAH) of risk status for BSE and 11.4. BSE. Since then, six *ad hoc* Groups have been convened to complete the revision of BSE standards as well as to assess the potential impact of the revised provisions on the already officially recognised BSE risk status of Members.

The BSE *ad hoc* Group that convened in June 2021 conducted an impact assessment of 18 Members which were identified to have been granted an official BSE risk status based on a negligible risk of entry despite a non-negligible exposure assessment. The BSE risk status of these Members may be affected because the revised BSE standards require conducting an exposure assessment with demonstration of negligible risk of BSE agents being recycled in the cattle population, regardless of the outcome of the entry assessment. The BSE *ad hoc* Group concluded that the exposure risk could not be considered negligible for seven Members or zones having a negligible BSE risk status and for one Member having a controlled BSE risk status and recommended these eight Members submit additional information when reconfirming their BSE risk status in November 2021.

The Scientific Commission, at its February 2022 meeting, reviewed the information provided by these eight Members in response to the questions raised by the BSE *ad hoc* Group of June 2021. Based on the nature and scope of the submitted information, the Scientific Commission referred the dossiers of three Members to the Group to request its assessment and recommendations to be considered at the September 2022 meeting of the Scientific Commission.

In addition, the same *ad hoc* Group of June 2021 drafted and proposed a template of the annual reconfirmation form for maintenance of BSE risk status according to the draft revised BSE standards at that time. This draft template of the annual reconfirmation form for BSE risk status was endorsed by the Scientific Commission at its September 2021 meeting while noting that further adjustments may be necessary. The Group is requested to continue the revision of the annual reconfirmation form in line with the latest version of the draft revised BSE standards.

### Pre-requisites

Group members should:

- Sign the Undertaking on Confidentiality of information (if not done already);
- Complete the Declaration of Interest form.
- Understand that the membership of the Group may be retained between *ad hoc* Group meetings to ensure continuity of the work.

## Actions to deliver

The members of this Group will conduct the following actions:

1. Continue the assessment of the impact that the revised BSE provisions may have on the maintenance of officially recognised BSE risk status of three Members
  - Before the start of the meeting, after receiving the working documents by the WOAH secretariat, review the recommendation made by the BSE *ad hoc* Group that conducted the impact assessment in June 2021 and assess the information submitted during the 2021 annual reconfirmation campaign.
  - Draft a report on the assessment including recommendations on the next steps with regard to the maintenance of the official BSE risk status.
2. Revise the template of the annual reconfirmation form for maintenance of BSE risk status.

Revise the annual reconfirmation form for maintenance of BSE risk status drafted by the BSE *ad hoc* Group in June 2021. Provide clear guidance on the expected type of information that Members should submit to substantiate their responses for reconfirming their BSE risk status in accordance with the latest version of the revised BSE standards.
3. Provide their expert opinion on any additional request made by the secretariat relevant to the revision of the BSE standards.

## Deliverables

The Group is expected to produce a detailed report with recommendations to the Scientific Commission on the following outcomes:

- Evaluation of the information submitted by three Members taking into account the report of the BSE *ad hoc* Group that conducted the impact assessment in June 2021 to address whether all remaining gaps have been resolved or if there are any points to be followed-up in the 2022 annual reconfirmation campaign.
- Revision of the draft annual reconfirmation form for maintenance of BSE risk status based on the latest version of the revised BSE standards.

## Reporting / Timeline

WOAH will circulate the draft report no more than seven days after the virtual meeting (not later than 1 July 2022) and the Group will finalise its report within the following week (deadline: 8 July 2022).