

Report of the Meeting of the *ad hoc* Group on Biosecurity for Terrestrial Animals

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20 March & 26 June 2023
Virtual

2–4 May 2023
Paris

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1. Introduction

The *ad hoc* Group was convened by the Director General following the request of the Terrestrial Animal Health Standards Commission (hereafter 'the Code Commission') to develop a new chapter on biosecurity for terrestrial animals for the *Terrestrial Animal Health Code* (hereafter the '*Terrestrial Code*').

The Code Commission together with the Scientific Commission considered the *ad hoc* Group's [first meeting report](#) at its February 2023 meetings and provided feedback. The Code Commission requested that the *ad hoc* Group continue its work to finalise the draft chapter, revise the current Glossary definitions for 'biosecurity' and 'biosecurity plan' and propose a definition for the new term 'swill'.

The *ad hoc* Group met virtually on 20 March 2023 to discuss the Commissions feedback and in person between the 2 and 4 May 2023 as well as virtually on 26 June 2023.

2. Adoption of agenda, terms of reference and appointment of chair and rapporteur.

Dr Jeroen Dewulf accepted to continue as Chair and Dr Kerry Daly was appointed as rapporteur. The *ad hoc* Group adopted the agenda and the Terms of Reference. The agenda, the list of participants and the Terms of Reference are presented in [Annex 1](#), [Annex 2](#) and [Annex 3](#), respectively.

3. Welcome

Dr Montserrat Arroyo, the WOAHA Deputy Director General, International Standards and Science, welcomed members of the *ad hoc* Group and thanked them for their availability and contribution to this work of WOAHA. She extended her appreciation to their institutes and national governments for allowing their participation in this meeting. She acknowledged the good progress made by the *ad hoc* Group and reemphasised how important their contribution was to address this challenging subject.

Dr Dewulf, Chair of the *ad hoc* Group welcomed the experts and acknowledged the valuable contribution thus far and encouraged members to continue to actively participate.

4. Review of existing Glossary definitions and proposal of new definitions

Taking into consideration the feedback from the Commissions, the *ad hoc* Group discussed further the Glossary definitions of two existing terms: 'biosecurity' and 'biosecurity plan', and the proposed definition for the new term 'swill'.

4.1. Biosecurity

The *ad hoc* Group proposed a revised definition that incorporated the concept of 'behavioural measures', to bring the 'human' component into the definition. Behavioural measures differ from management measures, as the former refer to the attitude, skills and culture of the people who must implement them (an important concepts to consider for improving compliance), whereas management measures refer to the procedures.

The *ad hoc* Group proposed to refer to 'pathogenic agents' instead of 'animal diseases' as it is the agent of the disease that can be introduced, established or spread. The terms 'infections and infestations' were deleted as they were redundant with the use of 'pathogenic agents'.

The *ad hoc* Group proposed to reorder the prepositions 'to, within and from' to align with the corresponding nouns 'introduction, establishment and spread'.

The *ad hoc* Group proposed to delete the term 'animal' in front of 'population' as it is implicitly referred to in the Glossary definition of 'population'.

4.2. Biosecurity plan

The *ad hoc* Group proposed a revised definition to refer to 'document or series of documents' instead of 'plan' to clarify what a 'plan' is when speaking of a biosecurity plan.

The *ad hoc* Group proposed to include the concept of 'establishment' alongside 'introduction and spread of disease' and refer to 'pathogenic agents' instead of 'disease' to be consistent with the edited definition of 'biosecurity'.

The rest of the definition was edited to simplify it and clarify that the plan should also include a description and an assessment of biosecurity.

4.3. Swill

Taking into consideration the comments from the Commissions, the *ad hoc* Group proposed a definition that defines swill as food scraps or food waste that contains (or has been in contact with) meat, by-products (e.g. bakery waste, by products from production of beer as well as animal by-products such as fat, blood, bones) or other animal products (e.g. milk) without the concept of 'treatment' or 'intention' to be fed to animals. Whether it is intended to be fed to animals or not does not change what 'swill' is (i.e. food waste...) and recommendations regarding appropriate treatment or processes to be applied before it can be safely fed to animals should be described in the relevant *Terrestrial Code* chapters rather than in the definition. The *ad hoc* Group proposed the term 'Desechos' to use in Spanish and 'Eaux grasses' in French.

5. Draft new chapter 4.X.

The *ad hoc* Group considered the feedback provided by the [Code Commission](#) and the [Scientific Commission](#) in their respective February 2023 meeting reports to draft the new chapter, and noted that both Commissions agreed with the proposed structure of the new Chapter 4.X., and with the proposed content as presented in the *ad hoc* Group's [first meeting report](#). The *ad hoc* Group also took note of the Commissions suggested concepts to include in the chapter.

The *ad hoc* Group drafted the text in accordance with the guidance provided by the Commissions and in line with the current use of the term 'biosecurity' in the *Terrestrial Code*, which is wide in scope. The *ad hoc* Group also considered various existing reference materials (see [Annex 4](#)) during the drafting process and agreed that the chapter should not repeat the content of these materials but rather cover key concepts relevant to the *Terrestrial Code*. The *ad hoc* Group proposed a draft chapter that comprises eleven articles and that describes the key concepts at a high level.

The draft articles proposed are:

- 4.X.1. Introduction
- 4.X.2. Purpose and scope
- 4.X.3. Definitions
- 4.X.4. Guiding general principles
- 4.X.5. Roles and responsibilities
- 4.X.6. Potential sources of pathogenic agents
- 4.X.7. Transmission pathways
- 4.X.8. Measures of biosecurity
- 4.X.9. Biosecurity plan
- 4.X.10. Evaluation and compliance.
- 4.X.11. Training and awareness.

The *ad hoc* Group proposed an introduction that explains what biosecurity is and its benefits. It proposed that the chapter provide guidance to relevant actors on how to define and implement biosecurity to support disease prevention and control programmes. Recognising the recommendations of the Commission, the *ad hoc* Group proposed that the chapter take a holistic approach. Therefore, it proposed that the concepts described should apply to all animals, for any type of animal gatherings and husbandry systems as well as for all components of animal production and commercial chains. Following recommendations from the Commissions, the *ad hoc* Group included wildlife as one of the interfaces to consider due to the potential risk in disease transmission to domestic animals. The *ad hoc* Group agreed to include a sentence to clarify that the chapter did not apply to laboratories, whose approaches to biosecurity are addressed in the *WOAH Manual of Diagnostic Tests and Vaccines for Terrestrial Animals*.

The *ad hoc* Group proposed an article that describes the guiding principles of biosecurity and the roles and responsibilities of the various actors involved, both from private and public sectors as recommended by the Commissions. It proposed an article identifying the potential sources of pathogenic agents and transmission pathways to consider when defining the measures of biosecurity to include in the biosecurity plan. Upon recommendation from the Commissions, the *ad hoc* Group proposed points to consider when evaluating the performance of the measures, evaluating the relevance of the biosecurity plan, and evaluating the compliance to the plan, including the concept of 'critical control point'. The *ad hoc* Group also proposed an article to cover the concept of training which is essential to ensure appropriate implementation of biosecurity, including recommendations to raise awareness more widely with actors not directly involved.

6. Next steps

The Secretariat informed the *ad hoc* Group that once validated by the WOAHA Director General, the report will be presented to the Code Commission and the Scientific Commission at their respective September 2023 meetings and that the Code Commission will review the draft texts.

.../Annexes

Annex 1. Agenda

MEETING OF THE *AD HOC* GROUP ON BIOSECURITY FOR TERRESTRIAL ANIMALS

Second meeting, Virtual, 20 March and 26 June, and Paris, 2-4 May 2023

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1. Welcome from DDG-ISS
 2. Adoption of the Agenda, Chair introduction and appointment of rapporteur
 3. Adoption of the Terms of reference
 4. Review recommendations from the Code Commission, the Scientific Commission and the wider WOAHS Secretariat
 5. Review draft text of the chapter article by article
 6. Any other business
 7. Next steps, next meeting
-

Annex 2. List of Participants

MEETING OF THE *AD HOC* GROUP ON BIOSECURITY FOR TERRESTRIAL ANIMALS

Second Meeting, Virtual, 20 March and 26 June, and Paris, 2-4 May 2022

MEMBERS OF THE *AD HOC* GROUP

Prof Jeroen Dewulf (chair)

Department Chair
Internal medicine, Reproduction,
Population Medicine, Ghent
University
Ghent
BELGIUM

Dr Kerry Daly (rapporteur)

Senior Veterinary Officer
Department of Agriculture, Fisheries
and Forestry
Canberra
AUSTRALIA

Dr Jorge Caetano Junior

Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and
Food Supply,
General Coordinator of Animal Health
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Dr Lionel Gbaguidi

Animal Health and Production Officer
UNFAO Subregional Office for West
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Interim Department Chair
Veterinary Population Medicine
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REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SPECIALIST COMMISSIONS

Dr Etienne Bonbon

Terrestrial Animal Health Standards
Commission
FRANCE

Dr Silvia Bellini

Scientific Commission for Animal
Diseases
ITALY

WOAH HEADQUARTERS

Dr Francisco D'Alessio

Deputy head
Standards Department

Ms Elizabeth Marier

Chargée de mission
Standards Department

Annex 3. Terms of Reference

AD HOC GROUP ON BIOSECURITY FOR TERRESTRIAL ANIMALS

Second meeting, Virtual, 20 March and 26 June, and Paris, 2–4 May 2023

Purpose

The overall purpose of the *ad hoc* Group on biosecurity for terrestrial animals is to develop a new chapter on Biosecurity for terrestrial animals, for inclusion in Section 4. 'Disease prevention and control' of the WOAHA *Terrestrial Animal Health Code* (the *Terrestrial Code*). It also aims to review the current definitions for 'biosecurity' in the Glossary of the *Terrestrial Code* or propose definitions for new terms as deemed necessary.

The Terrestrial Animal Health Standards Commission (the Code Commission) requested that an *ad hoc* Group be convened to undertake this work, which was approved by the WOAHA Director General.

Background

The Code Commission agreed that biosecurity is essential for disease prevention and control. In 2017, the Commission agreed that the next priority was to develop a new chapter on Biosecurity for terrestrial animals and that the new chapter should include the principles of biosecurity and be relevant for all WOAHA Members.

At their September 2022 meetings, the Scientific Commission and the Code Commission discussed in length the meaning of 'biosecurity' and how the term is used in the *Terrestrial Code* and proposed the scope and objectives.

In November 2022, the *ad hoc* Group met for the first time to define the Scope and Objectives of the new chapter as well as to propose a structure for the Commissions' consideration at their February 2023 meeting.

Specific issues to be addressed

Taking into consideration, the recommendations received from the Scientific Commission and the Code Commission following the February 2023 meetings, the Group is asked to develop the content of the chapter in view to support the Veterinary Authorities in enforcing, auditing, developing certification on biosecurity.

Actions to deliver for the first meeting

In this second meeting, taking into consideration both Commissions' recommendations, the *ad hoc* Group should:

1. Refine the scope, objectives and the structure of the new chapter on biosecurity for terrestrial animals.
2. Revise the current Glossary definitions for 'Biosecurity' and 'Biosecurity plan'.
3. Develop draft text for each article of the chapter.
4. Assess whether the proposed new definition for 'swill' is aligned with how the term 'swill' is used in the *Terrestrial Code*, revise the definition as needed and propose a term for swill in Spanish and in French.
5. Consider the use of the terms 'Biosecurity' and 'Biosecurity plan' in the context of the *Terrestrial Code*, and if needed, propose amendments to other chapters of the *Terrestrial Code* to align with the proposed changes to the definitions.

Considerations

When developing this work, the *ad hoc* Group should consider:

1. the chapter structure and style and the content of the *Terrestrial Code* (in particular Section 4) and the Glossary definitions;

2. the recommendations from the Scientific Commission, the Code Commission (February 2023) and the Secretariat;
3. existing recommendations and references to biosecurity used in the *Terrestrial Code*, the *Terrestrial Manual* and whether the proposed revised Glossary definitions for 'biosecurity' and 'biosecurity plan' remain consistent with the intent for which they are used throughout the *Terrestrial Code*;
4. the new Glossary definitions for 'swill' and ensure it is consistent with the intent for which the term is used throughout the *Terrestrial Code*;
5. the relevance to all WOAHA Members (as relevant for the *Terrestrial Code*), regardless of the geographical diversity of terrestrial animal disease and species worldwide given the different environments and conditions for implementation across countries.
6. all relevant material provided by the *ad hoc* Group Secretariat in preparation of the meeting.

Expectations

Ad hoc Group members should:

- be familiar with the structure of the *Terrestrial Code* and the use of Glossary definitions;
- be familiar with relevant *Terrestrial Code* chapters (to be provided in the working documents);
- read all working documents provided by the Secretariat prior to the meeting;
- contribute to discussions;
- contribute to drafting text; and
- understand that the *ad hoc* Group may be reconvened again to ensure continuity of the work.

Deliverables

1. a report that contains the rationale for the decision made on:
 - a) the text proposed for each article;
 - b) how the Commissions' recommendations were addressed;
2. a draft chapter;
3. the revised Glossary definitions and revised new definition(s)

Reporting / timeline

The *ad hoc* Group will finalise its deliverables by 24 July 2023 in time for the September 2023 Commission meetings.

Annex 4. Example of existing material

AD HOC GROUP ON BIOSECURITY FOR TERRESTRIAL ANIMALS

Second meeting, Virtual, 20 March and 26 June, and Paris, 2–4 May 2023

Non exhaustive list of external resources with recommendations on biosecurity (mainly on-farm)

<https://ahdb.org.uk/Contents/Item/Display/53637>

<https://www.severnedgevetts.co.uk/sites/default/files/files/make-farm-fortress.pdf>

<https://www.farmbiosecurity.com.au/essentials-toolkit/people-vehicles-equipment/>

<https://www.farmhealthonline.com/veterinary-questions/biosecurity/>

<https://inspection.canada.ca/animal-health/terrestrial-animals/biosecurity/standards-and-principles/proactive-management/eng/1374175296768/1374176128059?chap=6>

http://www.ontlpc.ca/pdfs/downloads/olpc-livestock_web.pdf

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2095809919308549>

<https://www.teagasc.ie/media/website/animals/beef/Biosecurity.pdf>

<https://biocheckgent.com/en/about-biosecurity>

Application of biosecurity in different production systems at individual, country and regional levels:

<https://www.oie.int/app/uploads/2021/03/2018-eur1-bellini-a.pdf>

<https://www.cost.eu/biosecurity-better/>

<https://inside.fei.org/fei/your-role/veterinarians/biosecurity-movements/biosecurity> (referred to in Chapter 4.17.)

<https://haveyoursay.awe.gov.au/national-biosecurity-strategy>

Red Tractor standards on biosecurity (for various animal species):

<https://redtractorassurance.org.uk/standards/biosecurity-and-disease-control-22/#>

[Biosecurity of Animals - Management and Nutrition - MSD Veterinary Manual \(msdvetmanual.com\)](#)

[Principles of Biosecurity of Animals - Management and Nutrition - MSD Veterinary Manual \(msdvetmanual.com\)](#)

<https://better-biosecurity.eu/>

Biosecurity in Animal Production and Veterinary Medicine: from principles to practice. Sample available to read here: ([book](#))

Good practices for biosecurity in the pig sector – issues and options in developing and transition countries:

<https://www.fao.org/publications/card/en/c/4d7fd824-a334-5796-9249-4309a129170e/>

ASF guidance: https://www.woah.org/fileadmin/Home/eng/Animal_Health_in_the_World/docs/pdf/ASF/ASF-BiosecurityChecklist-Compartmentalisation_EN.pdf

Self-assessment tool: <https://biocheckgent.com/en>

Equine Disease Free Zone WOAHO guidelines: <https://www.woah.org/app/uploads/2021/03/edfz-guidelines.pdf>

Progressive Management Pathways for Terrestrial Animal Biosecurity (FAO-PMP-TAB):

<https://www.fao.org/3/cc5771en/cc5771en.pdf>

Good practices for biosecurity in the pig sector: <https://www.fao.org/3/i1435e/i1435e00.pdf>

FAO Biosecurity toolkit: <https://www.fao.org/3/a1140e/a1140e00.htm>