

MEETING OF THE *AD HOC* GROUP ON ALTERNATIVE STRATEGIES FOR THE CONTROL AND ELIMINATION OF *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* complex INFECTION IN LIVESTOCK

16th to 18th January 2024

WOAH Headquarters, Paris

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Purpose

The purpose of the *ad hoc* Group is to review the guidelines developed through the WOAHA consultancy project on 'Developing Guidelines for Alternative Strategies for the control of *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* complex infection in 'livestock' and provide recommendations and expert opinion on specific aspects identified by the authors. For the purpose of this *ad hoc* Group, zoonotic tuberculosis (zTB) is defined as an infection in humans caused by those species belonging to the *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* complex (MTBC) that are transmitted from an animal host.

The *ad hoc* Group is convened under the authority of the Director General of the WOAHA and reports through the Scientific Commission for Animal Diseases.

Background

In 2017, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH), the World Health Organization (WHO), and the International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease (Union) jointly developed a *Roadmap for Zoonotic Tuberculosis (TB)*, and a call for action to tackle zTB in people and animals. The Roadmap lays down 10 priorities, which include: (i) the need to reduce the prevalence of TB in livestock; (ii) the development of policies and guidelines for the prevention and, surveillance and control of TB in animals, and (iii) the implementation of community-based interventions to reduce burden of TB in humans and livestock, recognising the cultural and socioeconomic realities of each setting.

In September 2020, the WOAHA *ad hoc* Group ([AHG](#)) on Alternative Strategies for the Control and Elimination of *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* complex infection in livestock considered addressing the three specific priorities listed above and discussed actionable strategies to control TB in livestock other than by test and slaughter. The Group suggested that the selected TB control strategies need to be flexible and adaptable to the changing conditions of real-world scenarios, taking into account the socioeconomic and cultural settings. The Group recognised that one of the critical tasks of this initiative is to elicit expert opinions on science-based and community-accepted TB control strategies through interviews and focus groups with subject-matter experts.

To support the Roadmap for Zoonotic Tuberculosis and a call for action to tackle zTB in people and animals, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (USA) has awarded a federally funded project to WOAHA for 'Strengthening animal health systems to enhance prevention, detection and response to emerging zoonotic 'diseases'. As a part of the project, WOAHA launched a consultancy for the development of guidelines for alternative strategies for TB control in livestock. The objective of this consultancy is to identify alternative strategies for control of *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* complex infection in livestock through a literature review, a survey, interviews and focus group discussions with experts from different geographical background and multidisciplinary domains, such as those who may be involved in the bovine supply chain, animal /public health policymakers, field veterinarians, epidemiologists, meat traders, dairy farmers etc.

The consultants have now developed a literature review of the existing strategies for controlling MTBC infection in livestock, and elicited expert opinions through surveys, interviews and focus group discussion. The consultants have analysed the findings and prepared a first draft of the guidelines for alternative strategies for control of MTBC infection in livestock that will be presented to the WOAHA *ad hoc* Group.

The discussions for the validation of the guidelines will take place through discussions with the WOAHA *ad hoc* Group, WOAHA headquarters, and the consultants during the in person meeting.

Based on the feedback from this WOAH *ad hoc* Group, the consultants will revise the guidelines. The final output will be presented to the WOAH Scientific Commission in 2024 for its opinion and subsequently to the WOAH DG for validation.

Actions to deliver

The *ad hoc* Group will:

- **Consider findings from the literature review, on-line survey, focus group discussions and interviews prepared by the consultants** on current disease control strategies for TB in livestock, including identifying constraints and limitations of approaches, but also identify opportunities for improving the effectiveness of existing disease control measures.
- **Review and discuss the draft guidelines on alternative disease control strategies drafted by the consultants** for TB in livestock that could reduce economic impacts, while remaining socially and culturally acceptable in low-resource settings. These strategies should consist of measures that can be implemented at the herd level, with the potential to scale up to national and regional strategies.
- **Provide expert opinion and recommendations on the specific technical content of the guidelines identified by the consultants.**

WOAH Considerations

Ad hoc Group members are expected to be familiar with:

- The [Roadmap for Zoonotic Tuberculosis](#).
- [Chapter 8.12](#) Infection with Mycobacterium Tuberculosis complex of the WOAH *Terrestrial Animal Health Code* (most recent update adopted in 2017).
- [Chapter 3.1.13](#) Mammalian tuberculosis (infection with Mycobacterium tuberculosis complex)s of the WOAH *Terrestrial Animal Health Manual of Diagnostic Tests and Vaccines for Terrestrial Animals* (most recent update adopted in 2022).
- The literature review, on-line survey, focus group discussions and interviews developed through this consultancy.
- Draft guidelines for alternative strategies for the control of Mycobacterium tuberculosis complex infection in livestock developed through this consultancy.
- All other relevant material shared by the WOAH and *ad hoc* Group's members.

Expectations

Ad hoc Group members should:

- Sign the WOAH *Undertaking on Confidentiality of Information* (if not done already).
- Complete the *Declaration of Interests* form.
- Read and study in detail all materials provided by the WOAH prior to the meeting (see section "WOAH Considerations").
- Agree on the appointment of the Chair of the Group.
- Contribute to online and offline discussions.
- Contribute to drafting any advice.
- Understand that the membership of this *ad hoc* Group may be revised between group meetings to reflect changing needs and priorities (for example, if additional expertise becomes necessary).

Deliverables

Deliverables of this *ad hoc* Group include:

- Provide feedback on the literature review, on-line survey, focus groups discussions and interviews and the draft guidelines developed through the consultancy.

- Produce a report of the meeting summarising its recommendations within 2 weeks of the meeting.
- Provide advice, if any, of the proposed disease control alternatives may require a revision of the WOAHS standards on tuberculosis.

Tentative timeline

An introductory video call will be organised in December 2023 or early January 2024 to provide the *ad hoc* Group with the necessary background information including materials to be discussed during the in-person *ad hoc* Group meeting, which will take place from 16th to 18th January 2024 at WOAHS headquarters in Paris, France.