

Activities of the Specialist Commissions

SCIENTIFIC COMMISSION FOR ANIMAL DISEASES

Technical Working Document



The Scientific Commission for Animal Diseases (Scientific Commission) met in February and in September 2024. The **reports** are available online. During these meetings, the Commission contributed significantly to WOAHA's standard-setting, disease status recognition and scientific advisory processes.

1. Key activities and achievements of the Commission

- contributed to WOAHA's standard-setting process by providing scientific input as requested in response to comments received from Members on *Terrestrial Code* chapters and other matters as they arose;
- for *ad hoc* Groups convened by the Director General under the Commission's supervision, reviewed the ToRs for planned future *ad hoc* Groups and the reports of those that had already met;
- made assessments regarding the official animal health status of Members and worked on standards related to official status recognition;
- worked on disease control-specific issues, including (but not limited to) the development of case definitions to facilitate notification, the evaluation of diseases against the listing criteria described in Chapter 1.2. of the *Terrestrial Code* and against the Glossary definition of 'emerging disease', and provided recommendations on global disease control and eradication strategies;
- liaised with the Biological Standards Commission and the Code Commission on topics of common interest.

2. Highlights of the year's activities

- five *ad hoc* Group reports on the evaluation of a total of 13 applications for official recognition of animal health status and for WOAHA endorsement of official control programmes were reviewed. Of the 13 applications, five achieved official recognition by the Assembly in May 2024;
- thirty-eight annual reconfirmations for official animal health status and 12 annual reconfirmations for the endorsement of official control programmes of 2023 were comprehensively assessed;
- three applications were reviewed for the recovery of a containment zone or the suspension of a country's free status;
- the issue of certain Members with an official animal health status importing commodities from countries or zones not officially recognised as free by WOAHA for the disease in question without fully complying with the relevant provisions of the *Terrestrial Code* was further discussed. The Scientific Commission recommended that Members having an officially recognised status that are using alternative measures to those described in the disease-specific chapters should, within the next five years, provide WOAHA with the relevant documentation demonstrating that their measures meet the criteria of equivalence laid out in Chapter 5.3.;
- endorsement of a three-step plan for streamlining the annual reconfirmation process, as requested by Members, while still respecting the relevant requirements of the *Terrestrial Code* and without compromising the credibility of the WOAHA procedure;
- annual reassessment of existing emerging diseases according to the existing standard operating procedure (SOP).

3. Collaboration with the Code Commission

- review of Chapters 1.6., 1.11., 11.5. on Contagious bovine pleuropneumonia (CBPP) and 12.1. on African horse sickness (AHS) to ensure a common understanding of the main concerns raised by Members, the decisions made on the revised chapters and their impact on official status recognition, as well as on the adapted procedures that will be required;
- review of the ToRs for an *ad hoc* Group on zoning to be convened to revise Chapter 4.4. Zoning and compartmentalisation and develop a new Chapter 4.Y. Application of zoning;
- review of the recommendations and proposed draft chapter of the *ad hoc* Groups on the revision of chapters on equine encephalitides and Chapter 14.8. Scrapie;
- review of the recommendations of the *ad hoc* Group on biosecurity for a new Chapter 4.X. Biosecurity;
- endorsement of case definitions for Infection with Avian metapneumovirus (Turkey rhinotracheitis), Infection with *Francisella tularensis* (Tularemia) and infection with small ruminant lentiviruses (maedi visna and caprine arthritis encephalitis);
- evaluation of Infection with Nairobi sheep disease virus (Nairobi sheep disease) and Infection with *Mycobacterium avium* subsp. *paratuberculosis* (paratuberculosis) against the listing criteria of *Terrestrial Code* Chapter 1.2.