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Activities of the Specialist Commissions

SCIENTIFIC COMMISSION FOR ANIMAL DISEASES

Technical Working Document



World Organisation
for Animal Health

Since the 92nd General Session in May 2025, the Scientific Commission for Animal Diseases (Scientific Commission) met twice from 8 to 12 September 2025 and from 2 to 6 February 2026. 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 ad hoc* 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 including guidelines development;
- liaised with the Biological Standards Commission and the Code Commission on topics of common interest.

2. Highlights of the year's activities

- six *ad hoc* Group reports on the evaluation of a total of 23 applications for official recognition of animal health status and for WOAHA endorsement of official control programmes were reviewed. Of the 23 applications, 10 are proposed for official recognition by the Assembly in May 2026;
- thirty-six annual reconfirmations for official animal health status and 13 annual reconfirmations for the endorsement of official control programmes of 2025 were comprehensively assessed;
- three applications were reviewed for the recovery of a 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, by 2029, provide WOAHA with the relevant documentation demonstrating that their measures meet the criteria of equivalence laid out in Chapter 5.3. The Scientific Commission has been developing a method for the assessment of equivalency of risk mitigation measures put in place by Members for maintenance of an official disease-free status which will be further refined and annexed to the next September 2026 meeting report;
- streamlining of 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. In this context, the Scientific Commission endorsed a revised annual reconfirmation form for FMD (where vaccination is not practised), featuring more direct questions, and established criteria determining when the submission of documented evidence is required. The revised annual reconfirmation form will be piloted with some Members before implementation at a date to be determined depending on the feedback from the pilot phase;

- assessment of highly pathogenic avian influenza viruses in bovines as an emerging disease according to the existing standard operating procedure (SOP);
- provided opinion on development of guidelines including Guidelines for African Swine Fever (ASF) vaccines: field evaluation and post vaccination monitoring and FMD surveillance.

3. Collaboration with the Code Commission

- review of Chapters 1.6., 8.8., 14.7, 15.2. 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;
 - provided scientific opinion on Chapters 11.9., 12.11. 14.9.
 - review of the ToRs for an *ad hoc* Group on disinfection and disinsection and on revision to Chapter 8.21. 'Infection with West Nile virus'.
 - review of the recommendations and proposed draft chapters of the *ad hoc* Groups on zoning, sheep pox and goat pox, Venezuelan equine encephalitis;
 - endorsement of case definitions for anthrax, Aujeszky's disease and *chlamydia abortus*.
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