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SELF-DECLARATION BY BOLIVIA AS A COUNTRY FREE OF AVIAN INFLUENZA IN POULTRY

Self-declaration sent to the OIE on 31 January 2020 by Dr. Carlos Edson Peñaranda Berssati, Delegate of Bolivia to the OIE, Executive Director General of the National Animal Health and Food Safety Service (SENASAG), of the Ministry of Rural Development and Land of Bolivia

1. INTRODUCTION

The National Animal Health and Food Safety Service (SENASAG) of the Ministry of Rural Development and Land (MDRyT) and the Plurinational State of Bolivia officially request the publication by the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) of a self-declaration issued by Bolivia of country freedom of Avian Influenza in poultry.

This self-declaration complies with Articles 1.4.6. and 10.4.3. of the *Terrestrial Animal Health Code (Terrestrial Code)* (2019). This is the first self-declaration regarding the absence of disease throughout the country as of 31 January 2020.

2. COMPULSORY NOTIFICATION DISEASE

In Bolivia, Article 5.1.6. of the General Regulations for Animal Health ([Annex 1](#)) stipulates that avian influenza is a disease reported to the OIE as never reported or considered as an exotic disease for the Andean Community, and that is subject to **compulsory notification** upon any suspicion or occurrence of the disease.

The procedures for the notification and response to avian influenza and other diseases are described in section 3.7.2. of the Manual of the National Epidemiological Surveillance System ([Annex 2](#)).

Since 1997, avian influenza has been classified as an exotic disease to the Andean sub-region, whose Bolivia is a member ([Resolución 447](#)). In addition, since 1999, Bolivia has developed regulations for the prevention and surveillance of this type of disease, which is detailed in the following table:

Table 1. List of animal health legislation for the notification and prevention of avian influenza

| Type of regulation | Brief description |
|--|---|
| Regulations under Law No. 1763 (of November 19, 1999) | Professional Practice of the Veterinary Doctor, Zootechnician and Zootechnical Doctor. Obligations (Art. 6, sub. e). - Report diseases of obligatory denounce with responsibility and in a timely manner to the competent authorities. (http://www.comvetcruz.com.bo/wp-content/uploads/ley-nr-1763.pdf) |
| Administrative Resolution No. 118/2002 (of August 29, 2002) | It establishes epidemiological surveillance for exotic poultry diseases in Bolivia, including avian influenza, whose Article 4 defines it as a disease that must be reported throughout the national territory and links the reporting of avian influenza to the national epidemiological surveillance network. (http://www.senasag.gob.bo/marco_legal/resoluciones-administrativas/category/5247-2002?download=1535:ra-118-2002) |
| Administrative Resolution No. 119/2002 (of August 29, 2002) | Establishes the National Program for the Eradication of Salmonellosis and Avian Health (PRONESA). (http://www.senasag.gob.bo/marco_legal/resoluciones-administrativas/category/5247-2002?download=1536:ra-119-2002) |
| Regulations of the National Animal Health Emergency System (From October 18, 2006) | National Animal Health Emergency System, a procedural instrument that enables rapid and effective action to be taken in the event of an exotic disease or epizootic of an endemic nature occurring on national territory or in a zone recognised as free. (https://www.oie.int/fileadmin/database/AMERICAS/Bolivia-Terrestrial/Generic_Terrestrial/Generic_Terrestrial_bolivia.pdf) |

3. HISTORY OF ABSENCE OF THE DISEASE

In historic terms, avian influenza is exotic to Bolivia, consequently:

- there has never been any vaccination against this disease;
- it is considered to be a compulsory notification disease since 2002 (Adm. Res. 118/2002);
- there is an early-warning system in place for these types of diseases;
- measures are in place to prevent its introduction, and;
- there is no knowledge of its presence in wildlife.

4. SURVEILLANCE AND EARLY WARNING SYSTEM

Article 1.2.2. of the General Regulation for Animal Health establishes the National Animal Health System which includes the National Epidemiological Surveillance System (SINAVE) and the National Animal Health Emergency System (SINAEZ). Both systems fall under the responsibility of SENASAG which is the Competent National Authority in terms of Agricultural Health and Food Safety, as established in point I of Article 8 of Law 830 ([Annex 3](#)).

SINAVE has issued a manual detailing the procedures for notification and response to diseases that require compulsory notification. Furthermore, SINAEZ has a technical regulation that regulates the technical administrative structure, created to address situations of sanitary alerts and effectively eradicate the occurrence of any exotic animal disease for the country or in a zone recognized as free of that disease.

Furthermore, SENASAG has issued the Manual for the Gathering, Conservation and Shipment of Samples to the Laboratory for the Diagnosis of the Common Diseases of Animals ([Annex 4](#)) which includes details of procedures for the collection and remission of poultry samples.

Data generated by those taking part in the surveillance network are registered and endorsed by SINAVE through SENASAG's Gran Paititi Computer System and through the system's epidemiological surveillance module. These data are reported to the rest of the world through the World Animal Health Information System (WAHIS) of the OIE.

The surveillance network is made up of various stakeholders: producers, epidemiological sensors, information units, epidemiologists, official and accredited laboratories. Added to these are private along with accredited veterinary doctors who form part of various official programs, the technical managers of veterinary establishments, animal concentration centres (auctions, markets, slaughterhouses/abattoirs), wildlife custody centres, public/private protected areas and scientific institutions authorized to work on issues of biodiversity. In terms of their different functions, all actively address their obligation to report the occurrence of diseases to SINAVE, thus generating information on the health status of animal populations and their respective diseases.

Between 2012 and 2019, SINAVE, reported 126 diseases and events occurring in backyard poultry flocks, which were predominantly due to coccidiosis (17), respiratory syndromes (17), colibacillosis (16) and poisonings (14). The rest of events corresponded to investigations related to skin infections (9), external parasitic infestations (7), oedemas (5), Newcastle disease (5), flooding affections (5), avian typhoid (5), avian cholera (4), Avian smallpox (4), drought affections (4), avian infectious bronchitis (3), conjunctivitis (2), enteritis (2), nervous syndrome (2), trauma (2), ascites (1), malnutrition (1) and internal parasitic infestations (1).

Moreover, the components of SINAVE also include a livestock registry (Registry of farms), through which SENASAG undertakes inspection and monitoring as part of the registration of commercial poultry establishments. To date, 3,909 commercial farms have been registered (inspected). Table 1 indicates the compulsory notification diseases detected in the monitoring processes carried out between 2012 and 2019 for this type of poultry establishment.

Table 1. Presence of avian diseases in the commercial poultry sector, 2012 - 2019

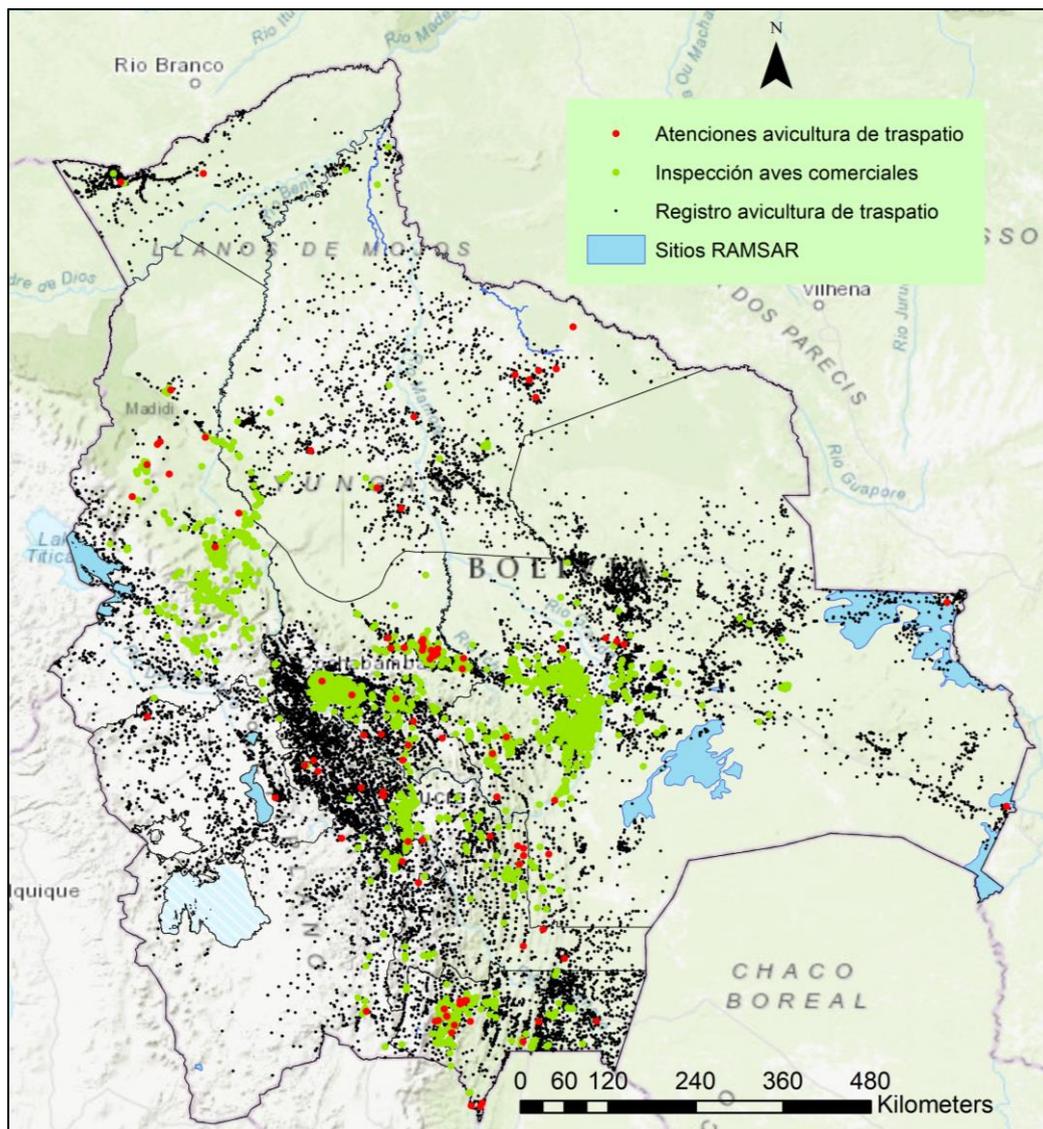
| Notifiable avian diseases | Presence | | | | | | | |
|---|----------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 |
| Avian chlamydiosis | ? | ? | ? | | | | | |
| Avian infectious laryngotracheitis | +() | +() | + | | +() | | | |
| Avian infectious bronchitis | ? | ? | + | | | | | |
| Avian mycoplasmosis (<i>M. synoviae</i>) | +() | +() | + | +? | +? | +? | +? | +? |
| Avian mycoplasmosis (<i>M. gallisepticum</i>) | +() | +() | + | +? | +? | +? | +? | +? |
| Infectious bursitis (Gumboro disease) | +() | +() | | | | | | |
| Newcastle disease | +() | +() | + | | | | | |

? = Suspected disease; + = Disease present; +? = Infection/Infestation; +() = Disease contained to one or more zones

Backyard poultry farming (domestic) is registered by SENASAG through the Single National Registry of Agricultural Health (RUNSA), which has registered about 90 thousand backyard farmers from 2010 to 2019.

Map 1 shows the distribution of registration and inspections in backyard poultry farming and the registration of commercial farms under monitoring by SENSAG.

Map 1 Distribution of records and visits to backyard poultry and commercial poultry inspections



Surveillance for avian influenza is carried out within the framework of SINAVE, with reports and responses to notifications establishing the procedures for the investigation of suspected avian influenza, based on compatible clinical signs, production indices and laboratory diagnoses carried out during the routine sampling of poultry. Laboratory diagnosis is undertaken at the official laboratories of SENASAG for all avian influenza suspect cases.

For the diagnosis of avian influenza, indirect and blocking AGID and Elisa tests are applied for the detection of antibodies against nucleoprotein/matrix (NP/M) for the type A virus of avian influenza as a primary test for different bird species and poultry breeding farms; rRT-PCR matrix/influenza type A assays, and rRT-PCR for the typing of sub-types H5 and H7, are carried out as a confirmatory test.

4.1 Import Surveillance.

Monitoring of imports for avian influenza consists of randomly collecting 10 samples of one-day old chicken per batch at the place of entry into the country. These samples are sent to the SENASAG laboratory for serological analysis. In the case of imported fertile eggs, random samples (10 per batch) are taken at the time of hatching of the chicks for the diagnosis of avian influenza.

4.2 Serological and virological surveillance.

In breeding farms, quarterly monitoring of batches is carried out during the breeding and production stages (from sixteen weeks of age until the end of the cycle), which consists of serological examinations of 10 blood samples collected per barn or shed. Table 2 shows the results of the confirmatory test (rT PCR H5 H7) of this monitoring process, where no sample was found to be positive for avian influenza.

Table 2. Results for avian influenza.

| Year | Number of samples | | |
|--------------|-------------------|------------|----------|
| | Total | Negative | Positive |
| 2012 | 87 | 87 | 0 |
| 2013 | 10 | 10 | 0 |
| 2014 | 14 | 14 | 0 |
| 2015 | 17 | 17 | 0 |
| 2016 | 16 | 16 | 0 |
| 2017 | 18 | 18 | 0 |
| 2018 | 23 | 23 | 0 |
| 2019 | 15 | 15 | 0 |
| TOTAL | 200 | 200 | 0 |

In 2016, a structured serological survey was applied for the detection of infection by avian influenza viruses in commercial farms (commercial broiler and laying hens). A random sampling with a two-stage design and stratification was considered. Samples were taken from 301 farms, consisting of 20 samples from each commercial broiler farm and 15 samples from each commercial laying farm (see table 3). A farm prevalence of 1% and an intra-farm prevalence of 15% in broiler farms and 12% in laying farms was assumed, with a 95% confidence level. The results indicated that no sample was found positive for antibodies against the avian influenza virus or the presence of virus amplicons.

Table 3. Serological study, 2016

| Department | Farms | Poultry/farm | Samples |
|--------------|------------|--------------|--------------|
| Cochabamba | 87 | 20 | 1,740 |
| Chuquisaca | 27 | 15 | 405 |
| La Paz | 24 | 15 | 360 |
| Potosí | 2 | 15 | 30 |
| Santa Cruz | 140 | 20 | 2.800 |
| Tarija | 18 | 20 | 360 |
| Beni | 3 | 15 | 45 |
| TOTAL | 301 | | 5,740 |

In relation to the surveillance of wild fowl, this is based on interventions and agreements with institutions such as the Vice-Ministry of Environment, Biodiversity, Climate Change and Forest Management and Development, which regulates and establishes the procedures and requirements for conducting scientific research in the field of biological diversity with respect to all areas of knowledge; and the Society for the Conservation of Wildlife (WCS), which is an institution that undertook studies in Bolivia from 2004 to 2013 with respect to wild fowl, carrying out serological tests and cloacal swabs, all of which produced negative results.

4.3. Risk-based surveillance for avian influenza

Furthermore, monitoring was carried out of backyard poultry using the following criteria: a) in zones where the population of commercial farms is significant and where there is a close epidemiological link between commercial farms and backyard flocks, and b) in zones where there is no large number of commercial farms, but there are wetlands near the routes of migratory birds, which connect to zones of high poultry production in terms of risk criteria.

Between 2016 and 2017, a risk-based surveillance was carried out in the departments of Santa Cruz and Cochabamba, as these departments are the ones that mostly meet the aforementioned risk criteria. A completely randomised design was used in the identified zones and an average of 16 samples were taken per farm, as shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Risk-based serological surveillance

| Department | Communities | Samples |
|--------------|-------------|------------|
| Santa Cruz | 29 | 529 |
| Cochabamba | 13 | 246 |
| TOTAL | 42 | 775 |

5. PREVENTION MEASURES IMPLEMENTED

SENASAG, through the Health Education Area of the National Animal Health Unit, has developed health education activities aimed at changing the behaviour and attitudes of producers in relation to the prevention of the introduction, control and eradication of avian diseases. Training programmes are also held at the national level for poultry farmers and technicians from the public and private sectors, with the purpose of informing and training those involved with animal health about the importance of avian diseases, including avian influenza, using for this purpose printed materials and other information platforms (http://www.senasag.gob.bo/pronesa_mbpa/Index.html).

During the 2019 administration, SENASAG has developed training activities on poultry health and avian influenza, which are detailed in Table 5.

Table 5. Details of training activities on avian influenza

| Topic | Participants |
|---|--------------|
| Accreditation of veterinary medical professionals as technical managers of poultry establishments: - Epidemiological Surveillance System of endemic and exotic diseases under program. - Sample collection and submission | 120 |
| | 12 |
| National Poultry Health Workshop: - Serological Surveillance Planning for Avian Influenza and Newcastle Disease. - Signology of avian influenza. - Procedure for self-declaration of freedom from avian influenza and Newcastle disease. | 35 |
| Meetings with the National Association of Poultry Farmers: - Review of the avian influenza surveillance and prevention programme. - Analysis of the animal health situation in poultry health in Bolivia. | 43 |

Additionally, a “Manual of Procedures in the Occurrence of Avian Influenza” ([Annex 5](#)) has been prepared, which has developed drills to respond to any occurrence of avian influenza.

SENASAG has also taken part in training activities for the diagnosis of avian influenza and differential diseases within the framework of the Southern Cone Permanent Veterinary Committee.

Since 2009, training courses on exotic animal diseases, including avian influenza, have been systematically conducted for the staff of the official veterinary service. Likewise, the Avian Health Programme holds a workshop each year with updates on issues regarding avian health; these are directed at official and private technicians and deal with the surveillance, prevention and control of avian diseases.

The main objective of the sampling of birds that are imported into the country is to prevent the entry of avian diseases (including avian influenza) into breeding farms that use poultry imported from other countries; this has been undertaken from 2005 up to the present.

The objective of [Resolution No. 1285](#) of the Andean Community of Nations (CAN) on "Sanitary Standard for intra-sub-regional and third countries trade and movement of birds and their products", is to establish the harmonised sanitary requirements for the importation and movement of birds and their products, including specific provisions for avian influenza and other avian diseases. These requirements state that the country, zone or compartment needs to be free of diseases exotic to the CAN (including avian influenza) in accordance with the international provisions or to apply a risk analysis of the exporting country.

Article 2.8.2. of the General Regulations for Animal Health (REGENSA), establishes the requirements for the registration of poultry establishments. Point 1 of this article refers to documentary requirements, which include the requirement to submit a programme for good poultry practices, endorsed by the veterinarian responsible for the establishment, and which must contain the following: a plan of vaccination, a biosecurity plan, a control plan for pests, a waste management plan (mortalities, litter, incubation waste, etc.), along with a production registry format. Furthermore, point 2 of the same Article establishes the technical requirements in terms of infrastructure and biosecurity that poultry establishments that request sanitary registration must adhere to. Finally, point 3 specifically details the technical aspects of biosafety required to obtain sanitary registration.

6. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the information provided in this report and in accordance with the provisions of Articles 1.4.6. and 10.4.3. of the OIE *Terrestrial Code*, this self-declaration provides documented evidence that:

- there has never been any vaccination against this disease;
- it is considered to be a compulsory notifiable disease;
- there is an early-warning system in place for these types of diseases;
- measures are in place to prevent its introduction, and;
- there is no knowledge of its presence in wildlife.

Consequently, the OIE Delegate of Bolivia declares that the country fulfils the requirements for freedom from infection with avian influenza virus in poultry as of 30 January 2020, in compliance with Articles 1.4.6. and 10.4.3. of the OIE *Terrestrial Code* (2019) and consistent with the information provided in WAHIS.

Declaración que acompaña el documento de autodeclaración.

Yo, el/la abajo firmante, **CARLOS EDSON PEÑARANDA BERSATTI**
.....

Delegado de..... **BOLIVIA** ante la Organización Mundial de Sanidad Animal (OIE), asumo la responsabilidad de la autodeclaración de ausencia de.....

..... **INFLUENZA AVIAR**(enfermedad)

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Hecho el ..31../.01.../...2020..

Firma del Delegado:



| | |
|--|--|
| <p>Declaración que acompaña el documento de autodeclaración.</p> <p>Yo, el/la abajo firmante, CARLOS EDSON PEÑARANDA BERSATTI</p> <p>Delegado de BOLIVIA ante la Organización Mundial de Sanidad Animal (OIE), asumo la responsabilidad de la autodeclaración de ausencia de INFLUENZA AVIAR (enfermedad).</p> <p>Hecho el 31/01)2020</p> <p>Firma del Delegado:</p> | <p>Statement accompanying the self-declaration document.</p> <p>I, the undersigned, CARLOS EDSON PEÑARANDA BERSATTI</p> <p>Delegate of BOLIVIA before the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), assume responsibility for the self-declaration of absence of AVIAN INFLUENZA (disease).</p> <p>Issued on 31st January 2020</p> <p>Signature of the Delegate:</p> |
|--|--|

