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## REPORT OF THE FIFTH MEETING OF THE OIE WORKING GROUP ON ANIMAL PRODUCTION FOOD SAFETY

Paris, 30 January-1 February 2006

### (Extract from the report of the March 2006 meeting of the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Standards Commission)

The OIE Working Group on Animal Production Food Safety (hereinafter referred to as the Working Group) met for the fifth time at the OIE Headquarters from 30 January to 1 February 2006.

The members of the Working Group and other participants are listed at [Appendix A](#). The Agenda adopted is given at [Appendix B](#). The report of the fourth meeting of the Working Group was adopted unchanged.

The Director General of the OIE, Dr B. Vallat, welcomed all members and indicated that he considered that the meeting was an important opportunity for the Working Group to deal with subjects already under consideration by other international organisations. He recalled the mandate of the Working Group and the role of its members. He noted the current excellent cooperation with the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC) and reiterated the OIE interest in continuing in this direction. On the issue of biotechnology, he stressed the need for the OIE to focus on vaccines and diagnostic tests, while Codex dealt with the food safety aspects. He considered that the existing OIE draft Guide to Good Farming Practices should be further developed with the help of FAO expertise. For animal identification and traceability, a system encompassing the entire food production chain is required; the outcome of the OIE *ad hoc* Group on animal identification and traceability should therefore dovetail with the Codex work on traceability/product tracing. The Director General underlined the need to review OIE model certificates with a view to simplifying the administrative conditions by allowing Member Countries to adopt trade certificates that cover the entire food chain; this work should be done in coordination with the Codex Committee on Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems (CCFICS). While the CAC, the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) have done substantial work on salmonellosis in poultry, the Director General considered that the OIE needed to cover unaddressed issues by developing animal health standards for *Salmonella enteritidis* and *S. typhimurium* in poultry on farm.

#### 1. Update on OIE and Codex activities

Dr A. Thiermann, the President of the Terrestrial Animal Health Standards Commission (hereinafter referred to as the Terrestrial Code Commission), reported on the updated standards adopted by the 73<sup>rd</sup> General Session of the OIE International Committee on bovine tuberculosis, bovine spongiform encephalopathy and on antimicrobial resistance.

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The OIE Secretariat reported on the OIE contribution to meetings of the CAC and its subsidiary bodies held since the last meeting of the Working Group, notably: during the 28<sup>th</sup> Session of the CAC, the OIE presented an information document on relevant activities, and the Director General took the floor to stress the importance of the OIE and Codex strengthening and formalising their cooperation; the OIE attended the 14<sup>th</sup> Session of the CCFICS and the related Working Group to provide its input on the issues of traceability and the revision of certification guidelines; the OIE reiterated its support for the creation of a joint Codex-OIE Task Force on antimicrobial resistance by replying to a Codex circular letter to be addressed by the CAC; for the recent Codex Task Force on Food Derived from Biotechnology, the OIE provided information on his current activities and the same will be done for the upcoming Codex Committee on Residues of Veterinary Drugs in Foods (CCRVDF).

Dr K. Miyagishima, Secretary of the CAC, reported on the 28<sup>th</sup> Session of the CAC (held in July 2005) by recalling that the CAC had adopted the “Guidelines for Cooperation between the Codex Alimentarius Commission and International Intergovernmental Organizations (IGO) in the Elaboration of Standards and Related Texts”. These Guidelines do not include provisions for establishing joint subsidiary bodies between Codex and an IGO, but focus on strengthening cooperation using the existing modalities. He also stressed that the CAC further endorsed the recommendation of the 55<sup>th</sup> Session of the Executive Committee related to the collaboration between Codex and the OIE as follows:

- a) OIE be encouraged to continue to participate actively in the standard-setting work of the Commission, namely through the work of relevant subsidiary bodies of the Commission;
- b) OIE be invited to regularly submit, to relevant Codex subsidiary bodies, reports on its activities relevant to the work of these subsidiary bodies, while these subsidiary bodies continue to seek ways to improve cooperation with OIE in their respective area of work and inform the Executive Committee of their decisions/recommendations accordingly, and
- c) OIE be invited to submit a summary report to the regular sessions of the Commission on its activities of relevance to the work of the Commission, including the outcomes of meeting of the OIE Working Group on Animal Production Food Safety.

Dr Miyagishima reiterated that, at that meeting, the CAC had adopted the following texts at Step 8: Code of Hygienic Practice for Meat, Code of Practice to Minimize and Contain Antimicrobial Resistance, Code of Practice for Fish and Fishery Products (section on Aquaculture) and Principles for Electronic Certification (annexed to CAC/GL 38-2001). He also reported on the previous meeting of CCFICS that had addressed the issue of traceability, by proposing for final adoption by the CAC “Principles for traceability/product tracing as a tool within a food inspection and certification system”. The revision of generic official certificate formats will be addressed by a physical working group meeting in June.

## 2. Biotechnology

Dr A. Schudel and Dr E. Erlacher-Vindell, respectively the Head and Deputy Head of the Scientific and Technical Department, joined the meeting. Dr Schudel presented Resolution XXVIII adopted in 2005 by the International Committee on “Applications of Genetic Engineering for Livestock and Biotechnology Products”. He introduced the terms of reference of the *ad hoc* Group on biotechnology that were drawn up by the Biological Standards Commission according to the adopted resolution. He stressed the fact that the *ad hoc* Group would be working on two main topics in relation to biotechnology: on the one hand vaccines and diagnostic tests and on the other on cloned animals.

The Working Group discussed the terms of reference in light of the ongoing work in the CAC on the use of modern biotechnology and reached the following conclusions:

- a) The Working Group recommends that the Biological Standards Commission gives consideration to using the definitions present in the Cartagena Protocol and in the Codex Alimentarius (notably the definition on “modern biotechnology” to ensure coherence with the other international texts).

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- b) The Working Group recommends that, in the proposed terms of reference for the *ad hoc* Group, the Biological Standards Commission separates the two issues present in the 4<sup>th</sup> bullet point: “criteria for assessing the health of embryos and production animals” and “develop guidelines for exclusion of unapproved animals”.
- c) The Working Group considers that communication is a horizontal issue linked with the use of traceability in modern biotechnology and recommends that the Biological Standards Commission address the issue.
- d) The Working Group recommends that the OIE not address the public health aspects of the final food products, since that lies in the mandate of the CAC.
- e) The Working Group recommends that the OIE clarify whether it intends to address the ethical aspects of modern biotechnology.

### **3. Strengthening public health and animal health through responsible use of reliable, safe and effective veterinary drugs**

Dr P. Dehaumont, the Director of the OIE Collaborative Centre for Veterinary Medicinal Products, gave a comprehensive presentation on the work of the OIE on Veterinary Critically Important Antimicrobials (VCIA). He explained the OIE’s collaboration with WHO, FAO, CAC and the VICH (the International Cooperation on Harmonisation of Technical Requirements for Registration of Veterinary Medicinal Products). He recalled that the CAC established through the Codex Committee on Residues of Veterinary Drugs in Food (CCRVDF) Maximum Residue Limits (MRL) and other related guidelines. He then stated that the VICH objectives are to harmonise technical requirements for veterinary medicinal product (VMP) registration. Until now 33 VICH guidelines have been established. The OIE adopted four guidelines on antimicrobial resistance in 2003 and one guideline on risk analysis in 2004. Through its Working Group on antimicrobial resistance, the OIE is working on a list of Veterinary Critically Important Antimicrobials.

Dr Vallat added that the OIE maintains its proposal that the CAC form a joint Task Force on antimicrobial resistance with the OIE. The Working Group discussed the presentation made by Dr Dehaumont and encouraged the CAC to decide as soon as possible on how it intended to cooperate with the OIE in its future work on antimicrobial resistance.

Dr J. Schlundt, the Director of the Department of Food Safety, Zoonoses and Foodborne Diseases in WHO, informed the Working Group that the WHO had already established a list of critically important antimicrobials for human use, as well as criteria for their selection.

The Working Group encouraged the OIE to finalise its work on a list of Veterinary Critically Important Antimicrobials as soon as possible. Once the OIE list of Veterinary Critically Important Antimicrobials is available, OIE should discuss with WHO the recommendations both organisations should make on the use of critically important antimicrobials for both human and veterinary use.

### **4. Control of hazards of public health and animal health importance through ante- and post-mortem meat inspection**

The Working Group noted that the Secretariat, in accordance with the discussion in the fourth meeting, had finalised the document “Control of Hazards of Public Health and Animal Health Importance Through Ante- and Post-Mortem Meat Inspection” and had placed it on the OIE Website as an information document.

The Working Group addressed Member Countries’ comments on the proposed “Appendix x.x.x. Guidelines for the Control of Hazards of Public Health and Animal Health Importance through Ante- and Post-Mortem Meat Inspection” for the *Terrestrial Code*. This document had previously been refined by the Secretariat as requested by the Working Group in its fourth meeting. Subsequently, the Terrestrial Code Commission had reviewed and amended the document and sent it for comments to OIE Member Countries.

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The Working Group recommended that the Terrestrial Code Commission review the use of the terms “*veterinary services*”, “*veterinary administration*”, “*veterinary authority*” and “*competent authority*” in the *Terrestrial Code* for consistency; this should be done in line with the IV Strategic Plan’s direction for strengthening cooperation with other competent authorities.

The Working Group put the following views to the Terrestrial Code Commission:

- a) Under the heading “Hygienic practice throughout the food chain”, it is important to also address future issues by promoting the linkage of surveillance data and epidemiological information.
- b) The heading “Hygienic practice throughout the food chain” should be expanded to include the words: “, from production to distribution” and a footnote from CCFICS proposed for the “Principles for traceability/product tracing as a tool within a food inspection and certification system” should be inserted with the following text:
 

*“Production could be interpreted in such a broad manner as to cover food- producing animals, feed, fertilisers, pesticides, veterinary drugs and any input of plant or animal origin, etc., if relevant for specific applications of traceability/product tracing to food.”*
- c) Under the heading “Veterinary Services and meat inspection programs”, in the bulleted list, monitoring should be coupled with the dissemination of information.
- d) The heading “Risk assessment” should be expanded to include the words: “risk management” as the concept is also addressed in that section.
- e) Throughout the section under this heading, renamed “Risk assessment and risk management”, the use of the term “competent authorities” is more appropriate than “veterinary services”.
- f) Under the heading “Establishment of policies and standards”, a generic reference to the use of risk mitigation measures is advisable, without listing any of the specific measures.

## 5. Role and functionality of Veterinary Services

The OIE Secretariat had redrafted the document “Role and functionality of Veterinary Services” in accordance with the comments received. The Working Group decided to change the title of the document to “Cooperation between the Codex Alimentarius Commission and the OIE on food safety throughout the food chain” as this was a better description of the content of the document.

The Working Group discussed this document and recommended that it not be included in the *Terrestrial Code*, but published on the OIE Website and in the *OIE Bulletin*, as well as presented to the CAC for information. The document, as revised by the Working Group, is shown at Appendix C. A document on the “Role and functionality of Veterinary Services” was now seen as a separate output of this cooperation.

## 6. Good farming practices

The OIE Secretariat recalled how the Guide to Good Farming Practices (GGFP) had been revised, in accordance with the recommendations of the previous Working Group meeting; this revised version had been submitted to the September 2005 meeting of the Terrestrial Code Commission, which commented:

*“The Terrestrial Code Commission noted the work of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) on good agricultural practice and recommended that, with regard to the Working Group document ‘Guide to good farming practices’, the OIE and the FAO coordinate their work with the aim of the information being published by both organisations for the guidance of Member Countries and the public.”*

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The Working Group supported these views and considered that WHO would also need to be involved in the work to ensure that the public health aspects were appropriately taken into account. The Working Group recommended that the OIE contact the Animal Production and Health Division of FAO in order to formalise the cooperation for the drafting an FAO/OIE GGFP in collaboration with WHO; in this work, a contribution from the Codex Alimentarius Secretariat should be sought to ensure consistency with relevant Codex Alimentarius texts and with appropriate references.

The Working Group emphasised that, in this process, the following points would need to be taken into account:

- a) The written comments provided, including those on “off label” usage for veterinary drugs
- b) The cost effectiveness of the measures prescribed
- c) The hazard analysis of critical control points (HACCP) approach should be used to the extent possible
- d) Requirements and management of smallholder’s production systems, notably in relation to different species being farmed together
- e) The terminology used in the GGFP needs to be consistent with the *Terrestrial Code*.

The resulting work will likely incorporate much of the existing text, but needs to be shaped so that it contains clear principles and the rationale for the requirements.

These guidelines would underpin additional on-farm measures introduced to reduce specific animal or public health hazards of concern in Member Countries.

## **7. Animal identification and traceability**

The work done by the OIE *ad hoc* Group on animal identification and traceability was presented to the Working Group: in line with its terms of reference, the *ad hoc* Group had commenced its work by agreeing on key definitions and enumerating a set of principles for good live animal identification and traceability; one expert from the Codex Alimentarius Secretariat had attended the meeting in order to ensure coordination with the CAC work in this area. After endorsement by the Working Group, the report of the first meeting of the *ad hoc* Group had been included in the report of the Terrestrial Code Commission and submitted to Member Countries for comment. The Working Group was informed that the planned next steps for the *ad hoc* Group were to lay out the main criteria, based on the agreed principles, that constitute a good system for the identification and traceability of live animals and the outcomes required; finally, the *ad hoc* Group would develop a set of recommendations for the practical implementation of the system.

The Working Group addressed Member Countries’ comments received. It acknowledged that traceability is important for public health, animal health and other managerial reasons. The Working Group agreed that the OIE, in conjunction with the FAO, should prepare a document to assist the practical implementation of future OIE standards on animal identification traceability.

The Working Group congratulated the *ad hoc* Group for its constructive work and requested it to produce a revised version of Chapter 1.3.7. that takes into account the comments received from Member Countries and the Working Group’s views and written comments.

## **8. Bovine brucellosis**

The meeting was joined by Dr A. Petrini, Charge de Mission for the International Trade Department. Dr Thiermann and Dr Petrini presented the work done by the *ad hoc* Group on brucellosis: in line with the revision done the previous year on the *Terrestrial Code* chapter on bovine tuberculosis, the OIE Scientific Commission for Animal Diseases (hereinafter referred to as the Scientific Commission) had requested an *ad hoc* Group to update the chapter on bovine brucellosis. The report of this *ad hoc* Group would be circulated to Member Countries in the report of the Scientific Commission. The draft revised chapter on bovine brucellosis was presented to the Working Group.

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The Working Group considered the term “competent authority” to be more suitable than “veterinary administration” in Articles 2.3.1.10. and 2.3.1.11. It also noted that in these same two articles, the name of the Codex Alimentarius standard for meat should be corrected to “Code of hygienic practice for meat”.

A comment on point 2 of Article 2.3.3.11. would be passed on to the Terrestrial Code Commission for consideration.

The Working Group noted how these revisions were similar to the changes applied the previous year to the chapter on bovine tuberculosis and was comfortable with the general approach. The Working Group expressed its satisfaction that the animal production food safety aspects were addressed in these chapters.

### **9. Animal feeding**

The Working Group was updated on the recent CAC work and ongoing discussions on animal feeding. The OIE involvement in this area was also discussed in the light of the respective mandates of the CAC and the OIE. The Working Group recognised the need for the OIE to set guidelines to address animal feed in order to complement the existing Codex Alimentarius and OIE international standards.

The Working Group recommended that the OIE set up an *ad hoc* Group on animal feeding that would work under the recommended terms of reference (attached at Appendix D). It recommended that the membership of the *ad hoc* Group would be such as to ensure complementarity with the CAC work on the topic.

### **10. The role of Veterinary Services in the reduction of chemical hazards of public and animal health significance at the farm level**

The Working Group, following its work programme, addressed the issue of the role of Veterinary Services in the reduction of chemical hazards of public and animal health significance at the farm level. It noted the interest of OIE Member Countries in this topic and also that the OIE IV Strategic Plan requested the OIE to address this issue.

After discussing the appropriate format for recommendations on this issue, the Working Group decided that this should be addressed in the framework of the GGFP.

The Working Group also considered that this work should be done with cross-referencing to existing Codex Alimentarius standards (notably on veterinary drugs).

### **11. Revision of OIE model certificates**

The OIE Secretariat reported on the revision of the OIE model certificates. Addressing the Working Group’s recommendation, the OIE had started by comparing the OIE and Codex certification systems and submitting its views to the latest CCFICS meeting along with comments on the revised “proposed draft revision to the guidelines for generic official certificate formats and the production and issuance of certificates” in order to promote the possibility of trading partners working with a single certificate that would cover the entire food chain. The revision work will be pursued by a CCFICS Working Group meeting in June, to which the OIE has been invited. Dr Miyagishima reported on the current Codex draft and existing model certificates for milk and milk products and for fish and fish products. The Working Group was informed that the OIE has also been involved in the work undertaken by the International Dairy Federation (IDF) in the Codex Committee on Milk and Milk Products (CCMMP), on the Codex Model Export Certificate for Milk and Milk Products and with the IPPC Working Group on electronic certification.

The Working Group considered that the ongoing work in the CAC and the OIE was creating good opportunities for cooperation between the two organisations and recommended that it should be continued in order to obtain standards that allow would Member Countries to draw up single certificates that cover the entire food production chain.

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The Working Group addressed the issue of electronic certification and considered the need for the OIE to address it in view of its future developments. For this purpose, it believed that a standardised approach should be used in referring to the technical requirements of an electronic certification system. The Working Group noted that some CAC and other international requirements already referred to the UN-CEFACT body that globally promotes harmonisation of electronic certification systems for official and commercial purposes.

The Working Group recommended that the OIE continue to coordinate its work with the CAC (and especially CCFICS) and maximise cooperation with other interested parties such as IDF, outlining its proposal for combined certificates addressing the entire food chain, when this was possible.

The Working Group requested the Director General to set up an *ad hoc* Group that would revise the current OIE work and update certification guidelines and model certificates. This *ad hoc* Group would report to the Terrestrial Code Commission. This *ad hoc* Group would need to take into account:

- a) public health issues;
- b) animal health issues;
- c) ongoing work in the CAC in order to ensure coordination (through involvement of a Codex Alimentarius expert);
- d) other import/export needs (e.g. Customs);
- e) electronic certification (taking into account UN-CEFACT work);
- f) evaluating to what extent the model certificates can be combined in order to reduce the number of necessary model certificates available.

The Working Group requested that it be involved in the follow-up work to ensure public health aspects are addressed properly.

## 12. Salmonellosis

As requested by the Working Group at its fourth meeting, the Secretariat had prepared a discussion paper on salmonellosis, taking into account Codex (CCFH) and WHO work on risk reduction for salmonellosis; initially *Salmonella enteritidis* in eggs. This document summarized the work done on this subject by FAO, WHO and the CAC, and focuses on the draft Code of hygienic practice for eggs and egg products prepared by the CCFH. This draft Code is at step 6 of the Codex elaboration procedure.

The Working Group considered the draft Code as an important tool for Member Countries to ensure safe and suitable eggs and egg products. While the draft Code encompasses the whole food chain, the Working Group considered that the provisions contained in the draft Code on flock management and animal health could be expanded from the viewpoint of the OIE recommendations for controlling and eradicating animal diseases, including zoonoses.

The Working Group recommended that the Director General of the OIE appoint an *ad hoc* Group to develop draft standards on salmonellosis in poultry to complement the ongoing work of the CAC. The standards should address methods for the detection of *Salmonella spp.* in flocks, measures for control and eradication, as well as risk mitigation measures for affected commodities.

The Working Group discussed the list of examples of measures under the section on “Flock management and animal health” in the current Codex draft Code of hygienic practice for eggs and egg products, and considered the addition of a further measure based on the following text:

*“Destruction of salmonella-positive flocks or slaughter and special treatment of the meat from these positive flocks in accordance with country requirements.”*

Appendix XXXVIII (contd)**13. Alternatives to formal notification for certain diseases of international significance**

The Working Group acknowledged that this item was being addressed by the *ad hoc* Group on Emerging Zoonoses, the Aquatic Animal Health Standards Commission and the Terrestrial Code Commission.

Dr J. Domenech, Chief Animal Health Service AGAH of FAO, underlined the importance of the current cooperation mechanism in place between FAO/WHO/OIE for the monitoring of the transboundary diseases through the Global Early Warning System (GLEWS). This mechanism, which addresses not only formal notification, allows a better understanding of the epidemiological information received.

The Working Group acknowledged that official notification was an important tool for controlling the international spread of diseases, but considered that other risk assessment and risk management instruments exist; the Working Group encouraged the OIE to continue exploring them.

**14. Work programme**

The Working Group's work programme, as revised at the meeting, is attached at Appendix E.

**15. Resolutions and recommendations for the 74<sup>th</sup> OIE General Session**

The Working Group welcomed Resolution XXIV on Animal Production Food Safety adopted in 2005 by the International Committee. Considering the content of this resolution and the content of its updated work programme, the Working Group drafted for the Director General a resolution for the next OIE General Session.

**16. Modus operandi**

The Working Group considered the results accomplished in this meeting to be very positive and supported this *modus operandi* being applied for future meetings. The Working Group thanked the OIE Secretariat for its good work and recommended the timely distribution of documents to the Working Group.

The Working Group recognised the International Committee's concerns on the need for transparency in the working procedures of the OIE (as stated in the IV Strategic Plan). On this basis, the Working Group made some minor amendments to the *modus operandi* adopted at the previous meeting; the text is attached at Appendix F. The Working Group recommended the elaboration of a paper clarifying its role and working procedures that and such a paper be made available to interested parties.

**17. Discussion on hazards and risks**

There was a discussion on a draft paper tabled by Dr McKenzie, Executive Director of the New Zealand Food Safety Authority, relating to hazards and risks and their use in international standards. Elements of the paper are to be discussed at the Codex Committee on General Principles in April 2006. It was agreed that a further paper would be developed by a Working Group member for consideration at the next meeting of the Working Group.

**18. Next meeting**

The Working Group decided that its next meeting would be on 7-9 November 2006.

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.../Appendices



## MEETING OF THE OIE ANIMAL PRODUCTION FOOD SAFETY WORKING GROUP

Paris, 30 January- 01 February 2006

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**MEETING OF THE OIE ANIMAL PRODUCTION FOOD SAFETY WORKING GROUP****Paris, 30 January- 01 February 2006**

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**Adopted agenda**

1. Welcome from the OIE Director General
2. Adoption of the agenda
3. Report of the previous meeting of the Working Group
4. Update on OIE/ *Codex Alimentarius* activities
  - 4.1. General update on OIE/*Codex Alimentarius* activities
  - 4.2. Cooperation on the issue of biotechnology
5. Strengthening public health and animal health through responsible use of reliable, safe and effective veterinary drugs
  - 5.1. Veterinary critically important antimicrobials survey-preliminary results
6. **Control of hazards of public health and animal health importance through *ante-* and *post-mortem* meat inspection**
  - 6.1. Comments received from Member Countries
  - 6.2. Revised version proposed by OIE Secretariat
  - 6.3. Role and functionality of Veterinary Services in food safety throughout the food chain
7. **Guide to Good Farming Practices**
  - 7.1. Draft revised paper for discussion
8. **Animal identification and traceability**
  - 8.1. Comments received from Member Countries
9. **Bovine brucellosis**
  - 9.1. Revised chapter 2.3.1. of the OIE *Terrestrial Code* on 'Bovine brucellosis'
10. **Animal feed**
  - 10.1. Terms of Reference for the OIE *ad hoc* Group
11. **The role of Veterinary Services in the reduction of chemical hazards of public and animal health significance at the farm level**
  - 11.1. Terms of Reference for the OIE *ad hoc* Group

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Appendix B (contd)

**12. Revision of OIE model certificates**

- 12.1. Advice to the Terrestrial Animal Health Standards Commission on animal production food safety aspects

**13. Salmonellosis**

- 13.1. Discussion on OIE Secretariat paper

**14. Alternatives to formal notification for certain diseases of international significance**

**15. Work programme for 2006**

**16. Resolutions and recommendations for the 74<sup>th</sup> OIE General Session**

**17. Modus operandi**

**18. Discussion on hazards and risks**

**19. Next meeting**

**COOPERATION BETWEEN THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION AND THE OIE ON  
FOOD SAFETY THROUGHOUT THE FOOD CHAIN  
OIE Working Group on Animal Production Food Safety**

**1. Introduction**

Food safety is an issue of increasing concern world wide and prioritisation of food safety as an essential public health function was advocated recently by the World Health Assembly. Better monitoring and surveillance demonstrates that the main burden of food-borne disease is due to microbiological pathogens of animal origin and this has important implications for the veterinary profession at both the international and the national level. The possibility of chemical residues in food is also causing growing anxiety amongst consumers.

In a contemporary food safety environment, veterinarians and other health professionals have an essential and rapidly changing role in the prevention and control of food-borne zoonoses (even when animals are not clinically affected), other sources of food-borne disease and chemical contaminants of foods. In many situations, this role is achieved in parallel to prevention and control of diseases and conditions of animal health importance.

A 'production-to-consumption', risk-based approach to food control demands integrated involvement throughout the food chain<sup>1</sup>. Where zoonoses are concerned, it is clear that there is an overlap between public health and animal health objectives, and a duality of veterinary functions. Veterinary competence can also be shared even when public health and animal health objectives are separate and distinct, and a number of countries are exploring such synergies in the reform of regulatory systems.

The World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) has a SPS responsibility for elaborating standards and related texts for the prevention, control and eradication of animal diseases and zoonoses, while the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC) elaborates standards and related texts for both safety and suitability aspects of food control. CAC and the OIE have strategies and mechanisms in place to co-ordinate and integrate food safety activities across the production to consumption continuum and so enhance the safety of foods of animal origin on a world-wide basis. A part of OIE's strategy was the setting up of a permanent Working Group on Animal Production Food Safety to review, develop and/or contribute to international food safety standards and guidelines, incorporating good animal production practice (including veterinary aspects) as it relates to food safety and taking into account a risk-based 'production to consumption' approach.

With regard to strategies and mechanisms to integrate and implement food safety activities and develop good animal production practices, the OIE and the CAC work in close collaboration and with the support of the specialised services in FAO and WHO<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Production could be interpreted in such a broad manner as to cover food producing animals, feed, fertilisers, pesticides, veterinary drugs and any input of plant or animal origin, etc. If relevant for specific applications of traceability/product tracing to food.

<sup>2</sup> A tripartite FAO/WHO/OIE mechanism has been established for improved cooperation between the three organisations.

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The OIE Working Group on Animal Production Food Safety has developed a work programme to enhance the effectiveness of Veterinary Services<sup>3</sup> in improving food safety at both the international and national levels. The Working Group will advise the Director General on implementation of the OIE strategy regarding<sup>4</sup>:

- a) considering all food-borne hazards arising from animals according to global food safety priorities;
- b) reviewing OIE outputs to ensure animal production food safety is integrated in OIE Specialist Commissions and *ad hoc* Group activities;
- c) fully contributing to food standards development by CAC.

This paper proposes an approach on the inter-related roles and functionality of Veterinary Services in the outputs of OIE and CAC.

## 2. Elements of the contemporary food safety environment

### 2.1 Risk analysis

The emergence of risk-based approaches in elaboration of international standards has been highly influenced by the World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS Agreement). A primary tenet of this Agreement is that “Members shall ensure that their sanitary and phytosanitary measures are based on an assessment, as appropriate to the circumstances, of the risks to human, animal, or plant life or health, taking into account risk assessment techniques developed by the relevant international organisations”.

In developing the OIE *Terrestrial Animal Health Code*, OIE focuses on standards for specified hazards of biological origin. In contrast, CAC has primarily addressed biological hazards in food by developing general hygiene provisions e.g. codes of practice for different food commodities, as well as addressing chemical hazards by establishing maximum limits and codes of practice for the reduction of levels of chemical hazards.

Risk analysis offers new opportunities to OIE and CAC in the elaboration of optimal sanitary measures, either as international standards or as technical advice to national governments. In the case of food safety, improvements must be brought about in the face of ever-changing patterns of primary production, processing technology and consumer behaviour.

The application of a generic risk management framework is increasingly being recognised as a cross-sectoral means of bringing about a reduction in risks to human and animal health<sup>5</sup> (see below).

### 2.2 Assessment and management of hazards and risks

Consideration of all food-borne hazards and their significance in terms of risks to human health is an essential food safety activity and a core component of HACCP. Most food-borne hazards of animal origin will be either intrinsic to the live animal (as a result of production or environmental factors) or introduced during handling and processing of the product.

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<sup>3</sup> For the purposes of this paper, ‘Veterinary Services’ is an Official Inspection System as defined in the CAC Guidelines for the Design, Operation, Assessment and Accreditation of Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems. In OIE, “Veterinary Services” means the Veterinary Administration, all the Veterinary Authorities, and all persons authorised, registered or licensed by the Veterinary statutory body.

<sup>4</sup> Report of the meeting of the OIE *ad hoc* Group on Food Safety. Paris, 18-19 April 2002.

<sup>5</sup> Risk Analysis in Biosecurity for Food and Agriculture by S. C. Hathaway. *In*: Report of an Expert Consultation on Biosecurity in Food and Agriculture. FAO, Rome 10-13 September 2002.

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Food safety hazards arising from animals can be grouped into several categories e.g. zoonoses resulting from clinical disease in animals, zoonoses resulting from asymptomatic infections in animals, and chemical sources.

Hazards can also be introduced into the food chain from environmental sources, and can obviously result from occupational exposure. As some food-borne risks may occur independently of the consumption of animal products e.g. contamination via irrigation of vegetables with animal-derived pathogens, these pathways also need to be considered in terms of prevention and control.

At the same time, hazards of animal health significance that can be detected in animal populations need to be identified and managed.

Management of all these hazards by Veterinary Services needs to be carried out in a way which optimises the use of available resources.

### 2.3 'Production-to-consumption' approach

Currently, Codex General Principles of Food Hygiene and other Codex codes of practice relevant to food of animal origin constitute one expression of a 'production-to-consumption' approach to food control. However, for the most part, they only include general references to primary production at the farm level.

The Code of Hygienic Practice for Meat (CAC/RCP 58-2005) identifies a number of generic segments in the food chain and these could be used as a partial template in the elaboration of standards for veterinary<sup>6</sup> involvement in meat hygiene activities throughout the food chain. It should be noted that many aspects of meat hygiene require iterative loops between different segments in the food chain for optimal risk management. Effective functioning of good hygienic practice (GHP) and HACCP is reliant on such information exchange.

Several other OIE and Codex standards can be utilised to describe veterinary involvement in food safety throughout the food chain e.g., Principles for Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification (CAC/GL 20 - 1995), Code of Practice on Good Animal Feeding (CAC/RCP 54-2004). A range of stakeholders may be involved in the implementation of food safety controls e.g. regulatory authorities, industry and the public, and measures that are decided on may not necessarily be mandatory regulatory controls e.g. consumer education in safe food handling practices.

There should be an integrated approach to the design and implementation of regulatory systems covering the 'production-to-consumption' continuum. This approach should include:

- a) monitoring and surveillance at the farm level, including consideration of data from non-regulatory sources, and monitoring at other steps in the food chain, including meat inspection;
- b) monitoring and risk management of the use of veterinary drugs, including antimicrobial resistance;
- c) exchange of monitoring information with all interested parties;

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<sup>6</sup> The same principles that apply to *Veterinary Services* should also apply in countries where the responsibility for establishing or applying animal health measures is exercised by an organisation other than the *Veterinary Services* or by an authority or agency on behalf of the *Veterinary Services*. (See Article 1.3.3.1 of the *Terrestrial Code*.)

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- d) animal identification systems and traceability of animal products;
- e) utilisation of diagnostic tests;
- f) assessment / recognition of the competence of food safety authorities in exporting countries;
- g) certification and official assurances;
- h) emergency response capability;
- i) integrated database management, epidemiological investigations and predictive microbiology;
- j) potential effects on food safety of the transport of live animals.

**2.4 Risk assessment and risk management**Food-borne hazards to human health

At present, there is room for significant improvement in many aspects of food safety, especially in the areas of ante- and post-mortem inspection and microbiological process control. Measures should be tailor-made to the range and prevalence of hazards in the particular animal population, focused on the most significant risks to human health, and focused at those steps in the 'production-to-consumption' continuum where they have the highest likelihood of reducing food-borne risks.

Other aspects include:

- a) performance-based inspection for process control;
- b) establishing decision criteria for the outcome of risk reductions;
- c) risk-based surveillance of live animals and monitoring of animal products throughout the food chain;
- d) effective information exchange and risk communication between all interested parties.

Animal health hazards

In determining the role and functionality of Veterinary Services in food safety throughout the 'production-to-consumption' continuum, hazards of animal health significance that can be detected in animal populations must first be identified, the risks assessed and properly managed, so as to optimise use of the available resources of Veterinary Services.

Veterinarians involved in food safety can also make a significant contribution to achieving animal health goals through application of animal health measures, and the extent to which animal health risk management functions should be carried out by veterinarians involved in food safety should be fully assessed, in order to maximise benefits to both sectors.

**2.5 Food suitability**

Beyond the assessment and management of food safety risks, assuring food suitability is a component of food hygiene.



CAC describes food hygiene as all conditions and measures necessary to ensure the safety and suitability of food at all stages of the food chain, and suitability as the assurance that food is acceptable for human consumption according to its intended use. As a result, the detection and removal of abnormalities in animal products that are not of public health significance or should be integral part of food safety programmes. Other aspects of suitability relating to consumer expectations include certification requirements e.g. Codex General Guidelines for Use of the Term ‘Halal’ (CAC/GL 24-1997).

## **2.6 Functionality**

Effective food safety requires a high level of interaction and risk communication with many interested parties. Veterinarians, and other health professionals, may be called on to play a major role in these processes, especially in respect of the interface between different Veterinary Services and other government agencies that may be involved in food safety.

Further, food safety regulatory reform in a number of countries is changing the traditional roles of such parties. In an increasing number of countries, industry now has the primary responsibility for implementing food safety measures, and regulatory authorities are increasingly moving towards verification and audit roles. This provides new opportunities and responsibilities for veterinarians.

## **2.7 Animal welfare**

Although animal welfare is beyond the mandate of CAC, it is a part of the OIE’s mandate and international standards on this issue are included in the OIE *Terrestrial Animal Health Code*.

## **2.8 Multidisciplinary framework**

“Effective food control requires multidisciplinary scientific and technical inputs. Further, utilising risk assessment in a contemporary food safety environment is a multidisciplinary responsibility”<sup>7</sup>.

Any standard resulting from OIE/CAC cooperation will benefit from multidisciplinary inputs to food safety.

## **3. Standards**

OIE has identified that co-operation with CAC will enhance the scope and scientific quality of international standards, guidelines and related texts, especially in regard to food safety measures applicable at the farm level<sup>8</sup>.

According to its Statutes, CAC should “promote coordination of all food standards work undertaken by intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations” (Article 1[b]). Objective 3 of the CAC Strategic Framework recognises that CAC needed to interact closely with OIE.

The cooperation between the CAC and the OIE currently include:

- a) cooperation<sup>9</sup> through mutual exchange of information and participation in meetings;

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<sup>7</sup> Future Trends in Veterinary Public Health. Report of a WHO Study Group. WHO, Geneva 2002.

<sup>8</sup> Resolution No. XV. 70<sup>th</sup> General Session of the OIE, 2003.

<sup>9</sup> FAO, WHO and OIE also cooperate in providing expert advice on the basis of which international standards are developed both in the CAC and in the OIE.

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- b) the use of a common text in the elaboration of a standard and harmonisation of definition;
- c) cross-referencing to the other organisation's standards;
- d) the construction of complementary texts taking into account the existing standards.

**4. Development of an OIE document on Veterinary Services' involvement in food safety activities**

Building on its cooperation with the CAC, the OIE proposes to develop a document on the roles and functionality of Veterinary Services in food safety. This document should cover the involvement of Veterinary Services in food safety activities which encompass food safety and suitability and zoonoses. Activities in these areas will variably contribute to 'reducing food-borne risks to human health by preventing, eliminating or controlling hazards arising from animals prior to primary processing of animals and animal products'<sup>10</sup>. Further, the document should cover veterinary competence in other aspects of food safety risk management e.g. public health policy, integrated design of surveillance systems for chemical hazards, certification and risk communication.

In addition, functionality aspects of Veterinary Services must be considered in respect of animal health activities that have no bearing on food safety or suitability.

**4.1 Format**

The suggested format for elaboration of the OIE document is:

- a) Overarching principles for the involvement of Veterinary Services and other veterinary activities in food safety
- b) A 'code of practice' format that progresses through a 'production-to-consumption' approach to food safety
- c) Subsections that develop principles and guidelines according to the particular segment of the food chain
- d) Specific linkages to other OIE and Codex texts describing detailed aspects of possible veterinary inputs e.g. on antimicrobial resistance, animal feeding.

**4.2 Criteria**

Suggested criteria for elaboration of the OIE document are:

- a) Consideration of food-borne risks to human health as a result of hazards arising from animals prior to primary processing of animals and animal products
- b) Inclusion of animal health and welfare functions (including epidemiological surveillance) that may be carried out by veterinarians whose primary focus is food safety
- c) Representation of a 'production-to-consumption' approach to food safety
- d) Reflection on effective use of Veterinary Services and other competent authorities

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<sup>10</sup> Report of the Meeting of the OIE Working Group on Animal Production Food Safety. Paris, 18-20 November 2002.

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- e) Utilisation of risk assessment wherever possible and practical
- f) Inclusion of HACCP where appropriate
- g) Inclusion of food suitability<sup>11</sup> as well as food safety
- h) Identification of the contributions of public and private sector veterinarians, and para-professionals.

Many of the above criteria are 'horizontal' in nature will need to be applied at each segment of the 'production-to-consumption' continuum, with a description of iterative loops to veterinary inputs at other segments.

### 4.3 *Ad hoc* Groups

The Working Group is proposing that several *ad hoc* Groups be formed to draft different modules for the OIE document. Each *ad hoc* Group should apply a generic framework for managing food-borne risks to consumers and describe veterinary inputs.

Each *ad hoc* Group should consider modular and 'horizontal' aspects of:

- a) regulatory frameworks and responsibilities;
- b) veterinary activities relating to food safety and suitability, zoonoses and animal health, and welfare;
- c) the relative contributions of public and private sector veterinarians, and para-professionals, and other stakeholders;
- d) the functionality of sharing veterinary competence to meet public health and animal health goals.

The Working Group proposes that *ad hoc* Groups be set up to address specific issues:

Scope, terms of reference and membership for the *ad hoc* Groups will be developed by the Working Group as appropriate.

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<sup>11</sup> Food suitability is described by CAC 'as assurance that food is acceptable for human consumption according to its intended use'.

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## Appendix

### Generic framework for managing public and animal health risks

To the greatest extent possible and practicable, design and implementation of sanitary measures should be based on application of four components of a generic framework:

#### *Preliminary activities by the risk manager*

Following identification of a public health or animal health issue by the risk manager, this initial process may include establishment of a risk profile to place the issue within a particular context, and provide as much information as possible to guide further action. The risk manager may commission a detailed risk assessment as an independent scientific process to inform decision-making, and if so, risk assessment policy should be established<sup>12</sup>. Once a risk assessment has been received, the last step in preliminary risk management activities is to consider the results for completeness and appropriateness.

#### *Evaluation of risk management options*

This is the process whereby potential risk management options are identified, and then selected according to appropriate decision-making criteria. It will usually involve balancing expectations in light of scientific information on risks and available measures. "Optimisation" of selected measures in terms of their efficiency, technological feasibility and practicality is an important goal.

#### *Implementation of measures*

Implementation of public or animal health measures will usually involve regulatory requirements, with a particular focus on HACCP. Flexibility in choice of individual measures applied by industry is a desirable element, as long as the overall programme can be objectively shown to achieve stated goals. On-going verification of sanitary measures by the competent authority is an essential action.

#### *Monitoring and review of appropriateness of options chosen*

This is the gathering and analysing of public and animal health data. Monitoring (which includes surveillance) should identify new problems as they emerge. Where there is evidence that required public and animal goals are not being achieved, redesign of measures will be needed.

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<sup>12</sup> Risk assessment policy refers to the documented guidelines (provided by the risk manager) for policy choices and scientific value judgements that may be necessary at specific points in the risk assessment.

**TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE  
OIE AD HOC GROUP ON ANIMAL FEED**

1. Review the published scientific information on animal diseases, zoonoses and other public health hazards transmissible through animal feed of significance for international trade.
2. Using the latest scientific evidence, draft a Chapter for the OIE *Terrestrial Animal Health Code* that addresses:
  - a) feed production;
  - b) feed distribution;
  - c) animal feeding.

In doing so, take into account and reference to the existing Codex Recommended Code of Practice on Good Animal Feeding and the OIE *Terrestrial Animal Health Code* Chapters that refer to animal feed.

3. Provide a rationale for outcomes reached.
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**WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2006/2007**

The Working Group discussed issues identified at its previous meeting and which still needed to be addressed at some stage in the work programme. The following priorities for 2006/2007 were agreed:

- 1) Horizontal issues
  - a) animal identification and traceability – underway through an OIE *ad hoc* Group
  - b) certification – Terrestrial Code Commission to update the current OIE model certificates – underway with Working Group to follow up
  - c) antimicrobial resistance – Working Group to follow up Codex, FAO, WHO and OIE developments
  - d) alternative approaches in risk management of zoonoses – listing (*ad hoc* Group on disease notification) or alternative approaches (*ad hoc* Group on emerging zoonoses, tripartite FAO/OIE/WHO GLEWS mechanism)
  - e) good farming practices – *ad hoc* Group jointly with the FAO to advance the document including the use of veterinary drugs and animal feeding
    - subtopic: reduction of chemical hazards of public and animal health significance at the farm level
  - f) guidelines for animal feeding addressing the animal health issues and complementing the existing CAC international standards.
- 2) Disease-specific OIE texts
  - a) Chapters of the *Terrestrial Animal Health Code* on brucellosis – underway for possible adoption
  - b) Food-borne zoonoses (starting with salmonellosis) – convene an *ad hoc* Group to address on-farm issues complementary to Codex (CCFH) and WHO work on risk reduction
- 3) Continue to strengthen relationship between OIE and Codex by:
  - a) encouraging enhanced OIE input into Codex texts
  - b) developing a method for the most effective utilisation of Codex expertise in the work of OIE *ad hoc* Groups.
- 4) Development of new texts
 

Develop a document on the role and functionality of Veterinary Services in food safety in order to describe the involvement of Veterinary Services in food safety activities which encompasses both public and animal health objectives

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**MEETING OF THE OIE ANIMAL PRODUCTION FOOD SAFETY WORKING GROUP****Paris, 30 January-1 February 2006**

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***Modus operandi***

1. In accordance with Resolution No. XV of the 70<sup>th</sup> OIE General Session, the terms of reference for the Animal Production Food Safety Working Group include:
  - a) consideration of all food-borne hazards arising from animals before slaughter,
  - b) a primary focus on food safety measures applicable at the farm level,
  - c) consideration of food safety measures applicable elsewhere, for example during animal transport and harvesting of wild animals for food,
  - d) work criteria and priorities that take into account global food safety priorities and current work programmes of relevant international organisations, especially the CAC,
  - e) the taking into account of the food safety standards developed and under development by relevant international organisations, especially the CAC,
  - f) support for the work of the OIE Specialist Commissions on pre-slaughter animal production food safety,
  - g) advising the Director General of the OIE on the implementation of the OIE strategy regarding:
    - i) establishing *ad hoc* Groups to address specific tasks,
    - ii) linking at the working level with the CAC, FAO and WHO,
    - iii) ensuring pre-slaughter animal production food safety is integrated in Specialist Commissions' and *ad hoc* Groups' activities,
    - iv) providing technical input into the review of OIE disease notification criteria,
    - v) enhancing communications, information sharing and consultation.
2. Within these terms of reference, the Working Group sees its role as:
  - a) providing advice to the OIE Director General on policy and strategic issues relating to the OIE's work on animal production food safety which has the goal of 'reducing food borne risks to human health by preventing, eliminating or controlling hazards arising from animals prior to primary processing of animals and animal products'. The priorities are:
    - i) identifying and addressing gaps, contradictions, areas where harmonisation is necessary and duplications in the work of the OIE and other international/intergovernmental organisations (in particular Codex) involved in food safety standards,

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- ii) strengthening the relationship to other relevant standard-setting organisations (in particular Codex), through enhanced information exchange,
  - iii) improving coordination between competent authorities with animal health and food safety responsibilities at the national and regional levels,
  - iv) recommending a work programme to address the mandate of the OIE on animal production food safety;
- b) acting in a steering group capacity, as required by the OIE Director General, regarding the work of OIE expert groups:
- i) advising the Director General on membership, scope and terms of reference for expert groups,
  - ii) reviewing texts arising from relevant expert groups for consideration by the relevant Specialist Commissions.
3. Intended outputs addressed to the Director General and the relevant Specialist Commissions include:
- a) discussion papers;
  - b) policy documents;
  - c) reports.
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