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June 2012

MEETING OF THE FAO-OIE RINDERPEST JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

FAO Headquarters, Rome, 14 – 15 June 2012

The first FAO-OIE Rinderpest Joint Advisory Committee (hereinafter JAC) meeting was held at FAO Headquarters, Rome on 14-15 June 2012.

1. JAC Meeting 14-15 June

The representatives of FAO and OIE welcomed members of the JAC explaining the mandate and objectives of the Committee. Upon establishment of the JAC, the former joint committee (Joint FAO/OIE Committee for the Global Rinderpest Eradication) that had been established in 2009 and produced its final report in 2011 was formally disbanded. This final report contained a number of recommendations for the post-eradication era, including the establishment of a JAC, as well as guidelines for rinderpest virus (RPV) sequestration. Accordingly, the Resolutions adopted at the World Assembly of OIE Delegates and the FAO Conference in 2011 entrusted a set of oversight functions to FAO and OIE, and the new JAC is expected to guide actions taken by FAO and OIE by providing advice on technical matters.

The Secretariat presented the JAC with Terms of Reference, and members of the JAC signed a declaration of interest, and a FAO/OIE Internal Rules document for the JAC.

2. OIE International Standards

The JAC was informed by the OIE representative that, to account for necessary changes following the eradication of rinderpest, which had been officially recognised in 2011, the OIE World Assembly of Delegates adopted an updated rinderpest chapter in the OIE *Manual of Diagnostic Tests and Vaccines* during their 80th General Session. Following further review by OIE Specialist Commissions a revised rinderpest chapter of the OIE *Terrestrial Animal Health Code* was expected to be adopted at the OIE General Session in 2013. The changes would account for the possibility of a reoccurrence of rinderpest, its impact on the concept of global freedom, and the steps needed to regain global freedom following a reoccurrence. The draft chapter would also describe the obligation for OIE Member Countries to notify OIE of remaining rinderpest virus containing material, RPV, vaccines and other designated material on an annual basis. The draft was reviewed by the JAC and further comments and suggestions will be shared with the OIE Scientific Commission for Animal Diseases (the Scientific Commission) and OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Standards Commission (the Code Commission), which will finalise the text in August/September 2012.

3. Rinderpest re-introduction risk assessment

The FAO representative advised the JAC that in order to address and mitigate the risk of RPV re-introduction, questionnaires had been submitted to FAO and OIE Members in 2010 to map out the facilities that were holding RPV and vaccine strains. In 2010, FAO signed a letter of agreement with the Royal Veterinary College (UK) and Ausvet (Australia) to conduct a risk assessment on re-introduction of rinderpest infection. Although there was a high degree of uncertainty, owing to information gaps and assumptions used to overcome these, the questionnaire and the risk assessment concluded that the live RPV and virus-containing materials were currently held in a number of countries in laboratories with varying levels of biocontainment, and the risk of re-introduction was not considered to be negligible. Therefore, ensuring RPV destruction and sequestration, and response preparedness would be essential.

It was evident that destruction of virus and sequestration of virus would significantly reduce the risk of a reoccurrence of RPV infection. The JAC had a number of queries about the risk assessment and decided that it should closely review the content of the current risk assessment before final conclusion can be drawn. At the same time, the JAC agreed that the absence of a more accurate quantitative risk assessment should not prevent FAO and OIE from taking necessary steps, without delay, to accelerate virus sequestration and to develop contingency plans.

4. Limiting the number of laboratories holding RPV

The JAC agreed that the lowest risk scenario would be for very few facilities to store RPV; ideally the number should be very low i.e. 2 laboratories world-wide. The most effective way to ensure that countries destroyed or sequestered (sent virus for storage in approved high biocontainment facilities) remaining stores of RPV would be to advocate the benefits of doing this, to provide an enabling environment, and to strongly encourage countries to do so. For many countries and laboratories, the advantages of destroying RPV would far outweigh any advantages of retaining it. Communication should be well managed so that issues such as sovereignty and national pride would not constitute a barrier for virus destruction and sequestration. To allow laboratories to assess whether any material in their possession was likely to contain RPV it should be necessary to provide guidance on the nature of biological materials and diagnostic/surveillance samples, including serosurveillance samples for other diseases, some of which might contain RPV. The guidance should also account for the conditions under which the samples have been stored.

Legal or administrative issues around transfer of potential rinderpest virus containing material to an approved high containment facility could delay sample shipment. These issues should be dealt with on a case by case basis. Priority should be given to minimising barriers and to destroying or sequestering RPV quickly, safely, and efficiently.

To avoid the need for production and storage of RP vaccine, other options could be considered and further investigated, including the possibility of using PPR or modified PPR vaccines.

5. Approving RPV storage facilities

Although the guidelines for RPV sequestration recommended by the former joint committee and endorsed by the World Assembly of OIE Delegates (Resolution no.18/2011) contained provisions for technical conditions to be observed for RPV storage, the JAC agreed that there was a need to define more specific criteria for designating approved storage facilities for rinderpest vaccine or RPV. The JAC would use these criteria as a basis for review of applications from laboratories and to recommend facilities for approval by FAO and OIE. Any facility wishing to be designated, including the current OIE Reference Laboratories for rinderpest, would need to submit an application to OIE and FAO to become appointed as an approved facility.

A standardised questionnaire –adapted to the nature of the material being stored i.e. vaccine strains vs. field and prototype RPV – would be used for the preliminary assessment of institutes/facilities wishing to apply for approval. The JAC should evaluate incoming applications according to the established criteria and formulate recommendations to FAO and OIE, which would be charged with making the final decision and jointly designating approved facilities.

6. RPV destruction and sequestration guidelines

The JAC noted that the above mentioned guidelines for RPV sequestration contained in the OIE Resolution no. 18 (2011), may need to be complemented with specific guidance, for instance on how to safely destroy actual or suspect RVC. It was suggested that the members of the JAC review these, and provide further comments with a view to developing practical guidance to facilitate destruction and sequestration of RPV. This should cover all materials that may contain RPV, also accounting that some material, such as sera, might be considered as a valuable asset. FAO and OIE would promote this guidance for use in Member Countries.

The final decision on whether to destroy or sequester RPV would be made by the country. However, the JAC strongly recommended that destruction would be the preferred option. Priority for sequestration in approved high containment facilities should be given to prototype vaccine seed strains with the option of maintaining ownership to the country of origin if that was required.

It was noted that destruction of RPV should always take place under the authority of the Veterinary Services irrespective of the affiliation of the institute where the RPV was stored; destruction must ensure safe and complete inactivation of virus.

7. Reporting and transparency

The new draft rinderpest chapter of the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code, due for adoption in May 2013, would require OIE Member Countries to report on the status of RPV stores in their country on an annual basis. The information would be communicated to the OIE World Assembly of Delegates each year at the OIE General Session. The JAC agreed that transparency was essential and that non-respondents should be put under pressure.

It was noted that not all laboratories currently storing RPV necessarily reported to the National Veterinary Services of their country. Good inter-ministerial collaboration and communication would therefore be important.

8. Database

It was agreed that there was a need for two databases 1) indicating the global status of countries in relation to stores of RPV, and 2) an inventory of RPV in approved laboratories holding RVCVM.

The country status database would be managed by OIE and populated with data gathered from the annual questionnaire to OIE Member Countries. FAO would have open access to these data. It was noted that WHO have a similar database for smallpox, and OIE could liaise with WHO when developing the OIE database.

It was agreed that FAO and OIE should have a dialogue with the Institute of Animal Health, Pirbright (UK) and CIRAD (France) to look into development of an inventory that could be used to catalogue viruses stored in approved high containment laboratories.

9. Preparedness and surveillance

The JAC agreed that there is a need to maintain vigilance in the post rinderpest eradication period, particularly in countries holding RPV in laboratories. Rinderpest would remain an OIE listed disease and the obligation to maintain preparedness and to continue to report occurrences of rinderpest would be covered by the OIE's International Standards.

One way to incentivise destruction or sequestration of RPV would be to introduce obligatory surveillance in countries holding RPV stores.

It was also suggested that specific guidelines on surveillance for rinderpest might be useful. Such surveillance could take a syndromic approach. Surveillance could also be targeted to areas of greater risk. The JAC was in line with the conclusion of the risk assessment analysis that *a priori* and in general, the risk of reoccurrence was greater in countries maintaining rinderpest virus containing material at an in-country facility. The actions to be taken on positive and false-positive findings must be fully considered when designing and implementing surveillance.

10. Control measures and contingency plans

The JAC noted that a distinction should be made between national and international contingency plans. National contingency plans would be of particular importance for countries that retained stocks of RPV.

It was agreed that the FAO should develop a global contingency plan to prevent, detect, respond, and eradicate the disease, should the virus be re-introduced.

The contingency plan should also identify the criteria for taking action i.e. action might be taken when there is high suspicion of an outbreak. Many of the components that would make up a response or contingency plan would already exist (e.g. GLEWS, CMC-AH, OIE Standards, Reference Centres). It should be important to show how these components interact and what role they would play in preparedness and response.

Maintaining diagnostic capability would be important for early and accurate detection, and immediate response. The JAC noted OIE Resolution no.33/2012, which called for possible designation of new Reference Laboratories for rinderpest for a better worldwide coverage of diagnostic services, given that both the current Reference laboratories were located in Western Europe.

Vaccines would also play an important part in the response. Advice on the maintenance of real and virtual stockpiles of quality vaccine at sufficient inventory should be considered. This would also involve determining the quantity and whereabouts of current vaccines stocks. Options for vaccines that do not use RPV could also be considered. Global funds would be needed to maintain preparedness, and trigger criteria should be defined for release of those funds. OIE and FAO should approach donors for funding. Funding should be calculated on a scenario basis and scenarios should include all possibilities including release from a known source and release from an unknown source.

Drafting of a contingency plan would be too large a task for the JAC. Instead the FAO would take the responsibility of drafting a contingency plan and the JAC would play a role in reviewing it.

11. Bioterror threats

The negative impact of a deliberate release of RPV to a susceptible population would be considerable and global. So long as RPV remains stored in several locations under varying degrees of biosecurity, there would be a risk of RPV use as a bioweapon. This risk would be reduced when RCVM are sequestered in limited numbers of approved high containment facilities.

12. Research

The JAC agreed that the OIE and FAO must communicate to all Member Countries and relevant scientists that research involving the manipulation of live RPV should not be allowed without pre-approval, in accordance with the aforementioned FAO and OIE Resolutions, adopted in 2011. The JAC considered that, in line with these Resolutions, it would be beneficial to remind countries and researchers about the moratorium on all research involving the manipulation of RPV and that any proposals should be submitted to the OIE and FAO. The JAC noted that it had been given the mandate to advise on the criteria and mechanism for evaluation and approval of research applications.

It was also agreed that there might be a need for further rinderpest related research in maintaining vigilance. The JAC should advise on any future research priorities.

13. Work plan

The JAC agreed on a work plan) to be completed before the next meeting.

14. Next meeting

The next meeting of the JAC would take place at OIE Headquarters in Paris on 2-3 October 2012.

.../Appendices

**MEETING OF THE FAO-OIE RINDERPEST JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
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Agenda



14 June 2012

09:10-09:30	Welcoming remarks – FAO and OIE	<i>B. Tekola (FAO), J. Lubroth (FAO) and K. Miyagishima (OIE)</i>
09:30-09:40	Introduction of committee members and Joint Secretariat	<i>All</i>
	SESSION 1: Current state of play	
09:40-09:55	Review OIE and FAO Resolutions and guidelines on sequestration	<i>OIE/FAO</i>
09:55-10:10	Status of OIE Terrestrial Code and Manual	<i>OIE</i>
10:10-10:30	Coffee break	
10:30-11:00	Review FAO Report on risk assessment: re-introduction of Rinderpest Discussion towards developing an action plan	<i>FAO</i>
	SESSION 2: Discussion towards developing an action plan	
	SESSION 2A: Destruction and sequestration of Rinderpest virus	
11:00-11:15	Laboratories holding Rinderpest stocks and samples and institutes holding Rinderpest vaccines	<i>FAO</i>
11:15-11:30	Limiting the number of institutes holding virus – process, targets	<i>FAO</i>
11:30-13:00	Lunch	
13:00-13:20	Roles of OIE/FAO Reference Centres	<i>OIE/FAO</i>
13:20-13:40	Assess the need for additional guidelines on sequestration, destruction and storage of Rinderpest virus	<i>OIE</i>
13:40-14:00	Encouraging transparency (undeclared Rinderpest virus stores and vaccines)	<i>OIE/FAO</i>
14:00-14:20	Approval of facilities (develop criteria and protocol for approval)	<i>OIE</i>
14:20-14:40	Database for inventory and managing virus repository and reserve stock of vaccine	<i>OIE</i>
14:40-14:50	Annual reporting to FAO and OIE and management of data	<i>OIE/FAO</i>
14:50-15:10	Coffee break	
	SESSION 2B: Preparedness	
15:10-15:30	Surveillance	<i>FAO</i>
15:30-15:50	Education	<i>FAO</i>
15:50-16:10	Risk communication	<i>FAO</i>
	SESSION 3: Contingency plans	
16:10-16:30	Control measures –culling and restocking (country buy-in) and vaccination policy	<i>FAO</i>
16:30-16:50	Regaining free status	<i>FAO</i>
16:50-17:10	Vaccine stocks and emergency production plans (including the role of PPR vaccines)	<i>FAO</i>
17:10-17:25	Biothreat alert and prevention	<i>OIE</i>
17:25-17:40	Discussion	<i>All</i>



15 June 2012

09:15-09:30 Nominate Chair and Vice-Chair for the Committee *FAO/OIE*

SESSION 4: Oversight of research

09:30-10:00 Mechanism for oversight (develop criteria and protocol for approval and reporting) *Chair*

10:00-10:30 Research priorities in regard to Rinderpest post eradication era *Chair*

10:30-10:50 **Coffee break**

SESSION 5

10:50-12:15 Committee work plan for 2012-2014 *Chair*

12:15-13:00 **Lunch**

SESSION 6: Meeting wrap-up

13:00-13:15 FAO/OIE book on the history of Rinderpest eradication *FAO*

13:15-13:45 Adoption of the Committee report by correspondence *Secretariat*

13:45-14:00 Dates and venues of next meeting *All*

WORKING DOCUMENTS

- Terms of Reference of the Committee Members
- Internal Rules for signature by committee members
- Final Report of the Joint Committee 2011
- Risk assessment – reintroduction of rinderpest
- OIE Resolution 18/2011 (with Appendix – Sequestration Guidelines)
- OIE Resolution 33/2012 (The OIE Role in Maintaining World Freedom from Rinderpest)
- FAO Resolution 4/2011
- Draft OIE Code Chapter (proposal due for adoption in May 2013)
- OIE Manual of Diagnostic Tests and Vaccines for Terrestrial Animals Chapter (adopted May 2012)

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Appendix III

MEETING OF THE FAO-OIE RINDERPEST JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

FAO Headquarters, Rome, 14 – 15 June 2012

Terms of reference of the Committee

Under the overall authority of the Director General of the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), and the Chief Veterinary Officer of the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations and taking into account the recommendations of the Joint FAO/OIE Committee for the Global Rinderpest Eradication, the resolutions on the Declaration of Global Freedom from Rinderpest and Implementation of Follow-up Measures to Maintain World Freedom from Rinderpest adopted by the 37th FAO Conference and the 79th and 80th Sessions of the World Assembly of Delegates of the OIE, the FAO-OIE Rinderpest Joint Advisory Committee will advise FAO and OIE:

- 1) On the implementation of the recommendations of the Joint FAO/OIE Committee on Global Rinderpest Eradication and the resolutions adopted by both organisations. More specifically:
 - On the rinderpest virus sequestration policy and on the approval/de-listing by FAO and OIE facilities that can hold rinderpest virus containing materials and rinderpest virus vaccine strains;
 - On the vaccine development, production and storage policy for the purpose of maintaining preparedness against re-emergence of rinderpest;
 - On the approval process of requests for research involving rinderpest virus and on the evaluation of the outcome of such research.
- 2) On the conduct of periodic visits organised by the FAO, OIE, Animal Production and Health Sub-programme of the Joint FAO/IAEA Division for facilities holding rinderpest-virus containing material, including the protocol for implementing and evaluating such visits, to ensure that storage is secure and that safe operating conditions are met.
- 3) On the preparedness and contingency plans.
- 4) On the implementation of the post eradication activities and on relevant related subjects.

The Committee may set up sub-committees to undertake specific activities. The sub-committees will report to the Committee.

This FAO-OIE Rinderpest Joint Advisory Committee will consult and liaise with FAO Committee on Agriculture through the Animal Health Service (office of the CVO) and the Scientific Commission for Animal Diseases and the Biological Standards Commission of the OIE in their respective areas of technical expertise, as appropriate.

MEETING OF THE FAO-OIE RINDERPEST JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
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Internal Rules

ARTICLE 1

The Joint FAO/OIE Advisory Committee on Rinderpest (hereinafter, Advisory Committee) is established by the Agreement between FAO and OIE, signed on 14 June 2012. Its Secretariat is ensured jointly by FAO and OIE.

ARTICLE 2

The Advisory Committee shall each consist of nine Members, of whom a Chairperson, a Vice-Chair-person and two Joint Secretaries (appointed *ex officio* from the FAO and OIE staff members).

ARTICLE 3

Members of the Advisory Committee are appointed for a period of three years and can be re-appointed. Consideration should be given, to the extent possible, to a geographically balanced representation and to the need for relevant expertise.

For five Member positions, FAO and OIE jointly agree on the expertise and other profile required for each position and select incumbents. For the remaining four positions, FAO and OIE select two incumbents each and submit them to approval by the other Organisation; two members among them shall serve as Joint Secretaries on behalf of FAO and of OIE. The Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson are nominated by FAO and OIE.

In the case that a member of the Advisory Committee fails to participate in two consecutive meetings of the Advisory Committee without adequate justification, the position held by that member shall be declared vacant.

In the case of a position falling or being declared vacant, a new member is appointed jointly to complete the term of office of the previous member.

ARTICLE 4

Members of the Advisory Committee shall provide FAO and OIE with a statement covering potential conflicts of interest with any commercial entity or research initiatives in accordance with the applicable rules in FAO and OIE. Members of the Advisory Committee shall respect the legitimate confidentiality of information with which they may be entrusted in the performance of their functions and shall submit such an undertaking to FAO and OIE.

ARTICLE 5

The Advisory Committee shall meet at least once a year, and as often as necessary. The venue of meetings shall be the FAO or OIE Headquarters on a rotating basis; the Advisory Committee may meet in another location if FAO and OIE so agree. Travel expenses and daily subsistence allowance (per diem) of the members of the Advisory Committee shall be defrayed by FAO and OIE as appropriate in accordance with the applicable financial rules of FAO and OIE. No honorarium shall be paid to the members of the Advisory Committee in conjunction with their attendance at the meetings of the Committee.

ARTICLE 6

The Advisory Committee, through its Chairperson, reports to the Committee on Agriculture in FAO through its secretariat and to the OIE World Assembly of Delegates through the Relevant Specialist Commissions of the OIE. The reports should be made available in official languages of FAO and OIE.

ARTICLE 7

Where appropriate, FAO or OIE staff, specialists chosen by FAO and OIE from national, regional, or international organisations or from OIE or FAO Reference Centres may attend as observers certain parts of meetings of the Advisory Committee relating to their fields of competence. Such specialists shall respect the legitimate confidentiality of information with which they may be entrusted in the performance of their functions and shall submit such an undertaking to FAO and OIE.

ARTICLE 8

After each meeting of the Advisory Committee, the Chairperson, with assistance from the Joint Secretaries, shall provide the Director General of the OIE and the Chief Veterinary Officer of FAO with a report on the proceedings of the meeting, a draft of a work programme and the proposed dates for the next meeting.

ARTICLE 9

All formal correspondence between the Advisory Committee and the entities external to FAO and OIE shall be handled through FAO and OIE.

ARTICLE 10

The Headquarters staff of FAO and OIE shall assist the Joint Secretaries in recording meetings of the Advisory Committee and preparing draft reports, notably by providing secretarial support and translation services.
