

**JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME****CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION***Thirty-fourth Session***Geneva, Switzerland, 4-9 July 2011****COMMUNICATION FROM OIE
(report on activities relevant to Codex work)¹**

1. The World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) thanks the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC) for the invitation to participate in meetings of its Commission, Committees and expert groups. OIE Members strongly support this collaboration.
2. In the past year, OIE representatives have attended the following Codex meetings:
 - CAC 33rd Session (July 2010);
 - 19th Session of the Codex Committee on Residues of Veterinary Drugs in Food (September 2010);
 - 4th Session of the Codex *ad hoc* Intergovernmental Task Force on Antimicrobial Resistance (October 2010);
 - 42nd Session of the Codex Committee on Food Hygiene (December 2010);
 - Physical Working Group on the Proposed Draft Principles and Guidelines for National Food Control Systems (March 2011)
 - Codex Committee on Fish and Fishery Products 31st Session (April 2011);
3. The OIE appreciates the ongoing participation of the Codex Secretariat in OIE meetings, notably, the OIE Working Group on Animal Production Food Safety (November 2010).

Joint OIE/Codex standards

4. At the 33rd Session of the CAC, the OIE reiterated that it wished to strengthen the relationship with the CAC, including through the proposed joint development by the OIE and the CAC of standards relevant to the production of safe foods of animal origin, where appropriate. Such standards would address areas of common interest, such as the control of pathogens transmitted through food products of animal origin; the prudent use of antimicrobials in food producing animals; traceability, and certification of animal products in international trade.
5. The OIE noted that the Codex Secretariat distributed a circular letter, including the CAC Working Document, to national Codex Contact Points in late 2010 on the topic of joint OIE-CAC standards and that the Secretariat requested comments from members to inform discussion at the 27th Session of the CCGP in 2012.
6. The OIE looks forward to further discussion and will continue to work with the Codex Secretariat on this matter.
7. Collaboration between CAC and OIE at the international level is important. Furthermore, collaboration at the regional and national levels could also be improved, and the OIE is strongly supportive of the actions of the SPS Committee to encourage collaboration at the national level. The list of OIE Permanent Delegates is available at: <http://www.oie.int/en/about-us/our-members/delegates/>

¹ This document has been prepared by and under the responsibility of the OIE.

8. The OIE was pleased to collaborate with the FAO and WHO in the production of the 'FAO-OIE-WHO Collaboration, A Tripartite Concept Note' validated by Directors General of these organisations and announced at the 7th International Ministerial Conference on 'Animal and Pandemic Influenza: The Way Forward' in Hanoi (April 2010). This document sets the strategic direction for FAO, OIE and WHO to a long term framework for international collaboration aimed at coordinating global activities to address health risks at the human-animal-ecosystem interfaces including zoonoses.

9. The Concept Note also establishes a complementary agenda with new synergies between FAO, OIE and WHO, which will include normative work, public communications, pathogen detection, risk assessment and management, technical capacity building and research development, as well as a global conference of the Ministers of Health and of Agriculture.

Private standards

10. The growth of private standards for animal health and animal welfare in international trade continues to be of concern to OIE Members, particularly developing countries. Private standards may be established by private companies in a non-scientific and non-transparent manner, without reference to established official standards. At the request of Members, the OIE strategy is to establish mechanisms for collaboration (including, as appropriate, official agreements) with global private standard setting bodies to help gain an understanding of the implications of private standards and to encourage these bodies to avoid conflicts with official standards – including, for example, by making specific reference to the OIE and Codex standards, as appropriate.

11. The OIE has been invited to provide advice to the Board of the Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI) and is developing a formal agreement for possible implementation in 2011. The OIE has held a number of meetings with GlobalG.A.P. and continues to explore opportunities for closer collaboration.

12. The OIE will continue to collaborate with the SPS Committee and the CAC on this issue.

OIE work programme on animal production food safety

13. The OIE Animal Production Food Safety (APFS) Working Group functions as a steering committee for the OIE's work programme on standards to protect consumers from food-borne hazards arising at the production phase of the food chain. Current and former high level officials of the FAO, WHO and CAC are members of the Working Group. The Working Group held its 10th meeting in November 2010. The report of this meeting was published as Annex 35 (pp 579-611) to the report of the Terrestrial Code Commission meeting of February 2011.

http://www.oie.int/fileadmin/Home/eng/International_Standard_Setting/docs/pdf/A_TAHSC_Feb_2011_Part_B.pdf

14. At the OIE 79th General Session in May 2011, the World Assembly of Delegates unanimously adopted Resolution No. 21 on APFS work priorities of the OIE (available at: <http://www.oie.int/en/about-us/key-texts/resolutions-and-recommendations/resolutions-adopted-by-the-oie-international-committee/>).

15. At the 33rd Session of the CAC, the OIE reported on the findings of a discussion paper on 'Animal Production Food Safety: priority pathogens for standard setting by the OIE' prepared at the request of the APFS Working Group. The objective of this paper was to develop a priority list of pathogens for which the OIE would develop standards to be included in the OIE *Terrestrial Animal Health Code* and *Aquatic Animal Health Code*. The recommended priorities for future standard setting were: for bacterial diseases, *Salmonella* spp. in animals other than poultry and *E. coli* 0157:H7; and for parasitic diseases, the OIE listed diseases, *Echinococcus* spp., *Taenia solium* and *Trichinella spiralis* and the non listed parasite, *Taenia saginata* (salmonella in poultry being already covered).

16. The OIE convened an expert *ad hoc* Group on Zoonotic Parasites, which held its first meeting in October 2010. As the scope of the Group's work is broader than food safety, the OIE invited participation from the WHO and FAO and not from Codex directly. The Group updated the OIE *Terrestrial Code* chapter on trichinellosis and developed recommendations on *E. granulosus*, a zoonotic parasite that is not associated with food but whose transmission can be prevented using good hygiene measures. At subsequent meetings, the Group will draft a new chapter on *Taenia solium* (and consider making recommendations on the management of *C. bovis*).

17. The revised draft *Terrestrial Code* Chapters 8.13 (Trichinellosis) and 8.4. (*E. granulosus*) were reviewed by the Terrestrial Animal Health Code Commission and were circulated to OIE Members for comment at Annex 34 (pages 563 – 578) of the Commission's report:

http://www.oie.int/fileadmin/Home/eng/International_Standard_Setting/docs/pdf/A_TAHSC_Feb_2011_Part_B.pdf

18. The OIE noted that a Codex Physical Working Group will meet in Ireland in July 2011 to develop 'Guidelines for Control of Specific Zoonotic Parasites in Meat: *Trichinella spiralis* and *Cysticercus bovis*'. OIE were invited to participate, which should help to ensure a co-ordinated approach between the CAC and the OIE in this area of work.

19. With respect to the prioritisation of future standard setting for bacterial diseases, the OIE is reviewing the scientific literature on *Salmonella* spp. in food producing animals other than poultry (i.e. pigs, cattle, small ruminants) and on verotoxigenic *E.coli* (VTEC) in food-producing animals. The objective is to determine the usefulness and feasibility of developing OIE advice on the control of these pathogens in the production phase to reduce foodborne illness. The APFS Working Group will examine these reviews at its meeting in November 2011 and make recommendations on next steps.

20. In 2011, the OIE continued to work on a text addressing hygiene and biosecurity practices in poultry farms to prevent food borne illness in humans. The revised Chapter 6.4. Biosecurity Procedures in Poultry was adopted by the World Assembly of Delegates at the 79th General Session in May, 2011. The OIE notes that the CAC will consider adoption of Draft Guidelines for the Control of *Campylobacter* and *Salmonella* spp. in Chicken at the 34th CAC and wishes to acknowledge the effective collaboration, which has resulted in aligned OIE and Codex standards on salmonellosis in poultry.

21. In the important field of biotechnology, an OIE *ad hoc* Group has been actively reviewing a number of chapters in the OIE *Manual of Diagnostic Tests and Vaccines for Terrestrial Animals*. Chapter 1.1.7a. 'The application of biotechnology to the development of veterinary vaccines' was adopted by the OIE World Assembly in May 2010. Chapter 1.1.7. 'Biotechnology in the diagnosis of infectious diseases and vaccine development' will be split into two chapters, one on new and emerging diagnostic technologies and one on vaccines. A new chapter 'Biotechnology in the diagnosis of infectious diseases' is under development. Chapter 1.1.8. 'Principles of veterinary vaccine production' will be revised to include information on benefit-risk assessment of veterinary vaccines, including genetically engineered vaccines, and a specific section on safety including food safety will be added to the introduction. All new and revised texts will be circulated for Member comment and hopefully proposed for adoption in May 2012.

22. The OIE participated as an observer to the Codex *ad hoc* Intergovernmental Task Force on Antimicrobial Resistance and will actively participate in the follow up of the work in collaboration with WHO and FAO, respecting the mandate of each organisation. Taking into account the outcome of the Task Force, OIE has convened a new *ad hoc* Group on Antimicrobial Resistance with the participation of WHO and FAO to update the existing chapters in the OIE *Terrestrial Animal Health Code* and *Manual of Diagnostic Tests and Vaccines in Terrestrial Animals* related to antimicrobial resistance. The OIE list of important veterinary antimicrobials that is published on the OIE Website will also be updated in 2012.

23. The OIE continues to actively help countries to build and implement effective legislation to assure the quality, safety and efficiency of veterinary medicinal products and is an associated Member of the VICH (International Co-operation on Harmonisation of Technical Requirements for Registration of Veterinary Medicinal Products). OIE is actively promoting the need for harmonisation in the approval and registration process for veterinary medicinal products and has implemented a programme for capacity building to enhance awareness and to improve the governance related to veterinary medicinal products covering production, distribution and use, adapted to the needs of Member Countries.

24. As a follow up to the October 2009 meeting of the OIE/FAO/WHO Consultative *ad hoc* Group on Collaborative activities on antimicrobial resistance, OIE and WHO will work on joint communication strategies that can be used by both organisations in future training.

25. On 7 April 2011 (World Health day) the OIE Director General participated in the High Level Panel organised by WHO on Antimicrobial Resistance, to express OIEs commitment to combating antimicrobial resistance.

26. The OIE is encouraging all Members to nominate National Focal Points, under the authority of the OIE Delegate, for six strategic issues, one of which is Veterinary Products. Please see additional information on OIE Focal Points in paragraphs 36-37 below.

Work on aquatic animals

27. In 2009, the mandate of the Aquatic Animal Health Standards Commission was expanded to address animal production food safety. Currently, the Commission is engaged in the development of chapters for the *Aquatic Animal Health Code* on antimicrobial resistance. In 2011, the World Assembly of Delegates adopted Chapter 6.3 in the *Aquatic Animal Health Code* 'Principles for responsible and prudent use of antimicrobial agents in aquatic animals'. This chapter provides guidance with the aim of protecting both animal and human health.

CAC Guidelines for National Food Control Systems

28. The OIE attended the meeting of the Codex Physical Working Group on the Proposed Draft Principles and Guidelines for National Food Control Systems, held in March 2011. The OIE wishes to reiterate that the standards and guidelines of the OIE are the legal basis for the quality of veterinary services and aquatic animal health services, and that these cover animal production food safety and related activities, including the legislative framework. OIE Members and donors have strongly supported the OIE PVS Pathway, a global initiative to strengthen veterinary services and aquatic animal health services, based on the use of the OIE PVS Tool (see para. 31-34). PVS assessment addresses food safety, including veterinary inspection at abattoirs and food processing facilities and the certification of animal products for trade.

29. Given the strong support of OIE Members (especially developing countries) for the OIE PVS Pathway in the strengthening of national infrastructures, the OIE urges the CCFICS to take full account of this initiative as it proceeds to review the Proposed draft Principles and Guidelines for National Food Control Systems (N06-2009) at the 19th Session of CCFICS to be held in October, 2011.

CAC work on Animal Feed

30. The OIE noted the establishment of a Codex *ad hoc* Intergovernmental Codex Task Force on Animal Feeding. The OIE will be pleased to participate in the next meeting, to be held in 2012, to ensure a co-ordinated approach in this important area of work.

Capacity Building for OIE Members

PVS activities and PVS Follow-up activities

31. As part of the OIE global initiative for Good Governance of Veterinary Services, and at a Member's request, the OIE conducts assessments of the quality of Veterinary Services using the OIE PVS Tool (Performance of Veterinary Services). Subsequent steps in the PVS Pathway include PVS Gap analysis, Veterinary Legislation missions and PVS follow up missions, to help improve compliance of the veterinary infrastructure with the OIE quality standards set out in the *Terrestrial Code*. To date the OIE has received 113 requests and 101 missions have been completed. Relevant information may be found at:

<http://www.oie.int/support-to-oie-members/pvs-pathway/>

32. The OIE also addresses the specialised needs of Aquatic Animal Health Services, via assessments using a modified PVS Tool for the evaluation of Aquatic Animal Health Services. This Tool is available on request from the OIE.

33. In the face of increasing global trade, climate change and the emergence and re-emergence of diseases that can rapidly spread across international borders, Veterinary Services need an effective legislative framework to fulfil their key functions. The OIE is aware that in many developing countries the veterinary legislation is inadequate to address the challenges of today and of the future. To address this gap, the OIE has published guidelines on the essential elements to be covered in veterinary legislation (refer to:

http://www.oie.int/eng/OIE/organisation/A_Guidelines_Vet%20Leg.pdf

34. OIE Members that have received an OIE PVS Evaluation may benefit from a follow-up mission to provide advice and assistance in modernising the national veterinary legislation. To date the OIE has received 31 official requests for missions and 19 have been completed.

35. Further recognising the importance of effective and modern veterinary legislation, the OIE held the First OIE Global Conference on Veterinary Legislation, in Djerba Tunisia in December 2010. The CAC Secretariat made a presentation at the conference on food safety and international trade. The resolutions of the conference may be found at: <http://www.oie.int/en/conferences-events/all-oie-world-conferences/presentationsrecommendations/>

National focal points

36. The creation of OIE National Focal Points for animal production food safety and for veterinary products, under the overall authority of the OIE National Delegate, will contribute to OIE expertise and help to improve communication between the OIE, its Members and members of the INFOSAN network on these important topics.

37. Specific training for OIE National Focal Points in APFS and veterinary products is underway worldwide, on a region by region basis. To date, APFS Focal Point seminars have been held in all OIE regions of the world (Europe, the Middle East, Africa and South America, and Asia). Training workshops for Focal Points on veterinary products have been held in Europe the Americas, Africa and in the Asia-Pacific. In line with the 'One Health' concept, the WHO has been invited to participate in these training activities and will also be involved in the second cycle of training that starts in autumn 2011.