

codex alimentarius commission



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
ORGANIZATION
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

WORLD
HEALTH
ORGANIZATION



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Agenda Item 5

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JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME
CODEX COMMITTEE ON RESIDUES OF VETERINARY DRUGS IN FOODS
Fifteenth Session

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REPORT ON OIE ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING THE HARMONIZATION OF TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS FOR REGISTRATION OF VETERINARY MEDICINAL PRODUCTS (VICH)

OIE and VICH future activities

Since its formal creation in April 1996, the VICH (International Cooperation on Harmonisation of Technical Requirements for Registration of Veterinary Medicinal Products) provides a forum for a constructive dialogue between regulatory authorities and the veterinary medicinal products industry on the technical requirements for product registration in the EU, Japan and the USA.

The VICH was established under the auspices of the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE).

As well as providing a forum for discussion, VICH's other objectives are identifying areas where modifications in technical requirements or greater mutual acceptance of research and development procedures could lead to a more economical use of human, animal and material resources, without compromising safety, making and implementing recommendations on practical ways to achieve harmonisation of technical requirements affecting registration of veterinary products. All these tasks are conducted by VICH in a transparent and cost-effective manner and provide the opportunity for public comment on recommendations at the draft stage.

COMISA (Confédération Mondiale de l'Industrie de la Santé Animale/World Animal Health Industry Confederation), the 'industry motor' in the VICH process, provides the VICH secretariat. The work entails preparing of documents for meetings of VICH members, publishing press releases, distributing working group documents and publishing recommendations adopted by the Steering Committee. COMISA also coordinates the positions of the three regional industry federations. The AHI (Animal Health Institute [USA]), FEDESA (Fédération Européenne de la Santé Animale) and JVPA (Japanese Veterinary Pharmaceutical Association) have responsibility for ensuring that their regional views are properly represented. They send industry experts to each working group, liaise with their regional authorities and are responsible for organising local conferences to discuss and publicise VICH recommendations.

Australia, New Zealand and Canada have observer status, with one delegate representing government authorities and one representing industry associations. An additional category of interested parties is recognised and delegates from the Committee of the Americas for the Harmonisation of Registration and Control of Veterinary Medicament (CAMEVET) and the Association of Veterinary Biological commission (AVBC) attend the Steering Committee meeting.

At its 14th Steering Committee Meeting which was held on 12-13 May 2004 in Tokyo, alongside the development of new guidelines, the Committee decided to prioritise the updating of the thirty two already implemented guidelines.

During this meeting, it was also decided that the OIE would provide the Presidency of a Special Task Force to finalise the strategies for the future activities of VICH, particularly in the field of a world wide harmonisation of regulations for registration of veterinary medicinal products, vaccines and other biological products.

Antimicrobial resistance

At the 27th session of *Codex Alimentarius* Commission, the OIE, following the recommendations of the WHO/FAO/OIE international conference in Oslo on antimicrobial resistance (March 2004), proposed the creation of a joint *Codex*-OIE task force for assessing antimicrobial resistance caused by the non-human usage of antimicrobials. As a result of discussion in the Committee the *Codex* Secretariat will prepare a circular letter including terms of reference for this task force. In anticipation of the joint task force, the OIE through its Animal Production Food Safety Working Group and the specialised *ad hoc* groups, will continue its work on OIE standards for antimicrobial resistance.