

# codex alimentarius commission



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE  
ORGANIZATION  
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

WORLD  
HEALTH  
ORGANIZATION



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Agenda Item 2 (b)

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## JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

### AD HOC INTERGOVERNMENTAL CODEX TASK FORCE ON ANIMAL FEEDING

#### Third Session

Copenhagen, Denmark, 17 - 20 June 2002

### REPORT ON FAO, WHO AND OIE ACTIVITIES

#### FAO

1. FAO (Animal Production and Health Division) continues to provide extensive information on animal feeds and feeding through its Animal Feed Resources Information System (AFRIS) on the Internet, and associated publications and documents. In particular, it provides a Food and Feed Safety Gateway<sup>1</sup> with links to official information from international and national organizations on BSE and transboundary zoonotic diseases, contaminants, antibiotics, etc. This was developed initially as an information resource for the joint WHO/FAO/OIE technical consultation on BSE: public health, animal health and trade, held from 11-14 June 2001 in Paris. The final report of that meeting is now available<sup>2</sup>. Other international meetings included the Joint FAO/WHO Global Forum of Food Safety Regulators, Marrakech, 28-30 January 2002<sup>3</sup>, and the Pan-European Conference on Food Safety and Quality, Budapest, 25-28 February 2002<sup>4</sup>.

2. Recently, an Expert Consultation and Workshop on Alternative Protein Sources for the Animal Feed Industry was held in Bangkok, 29 April-3 May 2002<sup>5</sup>, with support from the International Feed Industry Federation. This meeting, which was attended by 70 participants from 26 countries, reached a number of important conclusions, including amongst others: that safety of animal feed was of paramount importance and codes of practice should be developed; the feeding of ruminant meat meal to ruminants should be banned everywhere because of BSE; if MBM is banned in domestic animal feed, exports should also be banned; specialization of feed mills was identified as an important step to avoiding cross-contamination and this was supported by representatives of the feed industry; correct protein nutrition is important not only for performance but also to minimize nitrogen excretion and reduce pollution; there is a serious disposal problem if animal by-products are not to be used for pigs and poultry, or for aquaculture. In this context, 'meat meal' should be reclassified in the FAOSTAT database into more detailed categories and by species to provide a clearer picture of production, use and trade; the collection of adequate quantitative and qualitative information on all protein feeds is required; more information is required on alternative, locally available plants as sources of protein, and to clearly identify the reasons for relatively low adoption in the past; and FAO should set up 'country profiles' of feed production by species and feed resources by countries. These conclusions represent advice by the invited experts for action by FAO. They also highlighted the different needs of developed, developing and transition countries.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.fao.org/livestock/AGAP/FRG/Feedsafety/feedsafety.htm>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.fao.org/livestock/AGAP/FRG/Feedsafety/events/meet111401.htm>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.foodsafetyforum.org/global/>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.foodsafetyforum.org/paneuropean/>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.fao.org/livestock/workshop/feed/faoc2002.htm>

3. FAO is involved in consultation with stakeholders in the development of guidelines for good farming practices in the context of Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development (SARD).
4. FAO continues to work with countries through its Technical Cooperation Programmes (TCP) and General Cooperation Programmes (GCP) to assist with the development of the feed industry, feed information and utilization of locally available feed resources. In addition, projects are being implemented for capacity building for surveillance and prevention of BSE and other zoonotic diseases, including elements of risk analysis, surveillance and diagnosis, as well as training of persons in the feed and meat industries.
5. A web-based international information system on standards, regulations and other official texts related to food safety, animal and plant health is under development with the support of the governments of the Netherlands and USA. The system, of which a prototype was presented at the above-mentioned Pan-European Conference on Food Safety and Quality, is expected to be operational towards the end of 2002.
6. Following the joint FAO/WHO/OIE/WTO/WB statement issued at the 2001 WTO Ministerial Meeting in Doha, Qatar, on “the participation of developing countries in the development and application of international standards, guidelines and recommendations on food safety, animal and plant health” an inter-agency working group has been established to ensure the exchange of information on relevant programmes and activities and co-ordinate their implementation. Project proposals for capacity building integrating the 3 components (food safety, animal and plant health) have been prepared for submission to potential donors.

## **WHO**

### WHO Consultation on Methods and Principles for the Monitoring of Antimicrobial Usage in Food Animal Production for the Protection of Human Health (September 2001, Oslo, Norway).

7. A WHO Consultation on Methods and Principles for the Monitoring of Antimicrobial Usage in Food Animal Production for the Protection of Human Health was held 10-13 September 2001 in Oslo, Norway. This following the recommendations of the WHO Consultation on the Medical Impact of the Use of Antimicrobials in Food Animals (October 1997, Berlin, Germany) and the WHO Global Principles for the Containment of Antimicrobial Resistance in Animals intended for Food (June 2000, Geneva, Switzerland). For the WHO Global Principles see the following website: [http://www.who.int/emc/diseases/zoo/who\\_global\\_principles/index.htm](http://www.who.int/emc/diseases/zoo/who_global_principles/index.htm). The Consultation was held with the participation of FAO and OIE. Monitoring of antimicrobial consumption in food animals has been identified as being essential for the identification of risk factors for the emergence of antimicrobial resistance in zoonotic bacteria and the evaluation of public health intervention for their containment. This Consultation focused on this issue, to develop models for national and international monitoring of antimicrobial usage in food animals for the protection of human health, and to make recommendations to support governments, national authorities, the pharmaceutical industry, international organizations and other stakeholders in their endeavours to establish national antimicrobial usage monitoring programmes. Existing data on the non-human antimicrobial usage, national experiences and approaches in the setting up of antimicrobial usage monitoring systems was reviewed.

8. Main element of the recommendations are that countries should establish a national monitoring programme of the usage of antimicrobial agents in food animals and that they should have a regulatory approval and control system for antimicrobial agents and products containing antimicrobial agents. Data should be collected on the total amounts of each antimicrobial agent and these data should be reported in kilograms of active ingredient on an annual basis. The antimicrobial usage data should be linked with antimicrobial resistance data. The Recommendations and guidelines will be published soon.

### WHO Training Courses on antimicrobial susceptibility testing

9. WHO provides various technical assistance to Member States with a particular focus on strengthening national capacities for assessing and responding to foodborne diseases including antimicrobial resistance and their risks. These activities are carried out by the WHO Headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland and the six WHO Regional Offices (Americas, Africa, Europe, Eastern Mediterranean, Western Pacific and South-East Asia). Through WHO Global Salm-Surv program training courses are offered for the national reference laboratories in different regions to strengthen the capacities of WHO Member States for the surveillance of foodborne diseases including antimicrobial susceptibility testing. So far, nine training courses have been organized in South east Asia, Central America, South America, Middle and Eastern Europe, China and the

Mediterranean. Future courses are planned in the Caribbean, Russia and Africa. Regional centers of excellence for surveillance and antimicrobial resistance have been established in Bangkok, Thailand and Buenos Aires, Argentina.

WHO present work on chemical contamination monitoring – future potential for feeds.

10. Since 1976 WHO under the Global Environment Monitoring System/Food Contamination Monitoring and Assessment Programme (GEMS/Food) has been monitoring levels and trends of chemical contaminants in food and the total diet. Working through its network of participating institutions and WHO Collaborating Centres located in over 70 countries around the world, WHO has been collecting population-based, health-oriented monitoring data which is now being made available on the WHO SIGHT (Summary Information on Global Health Trends) Web site. WHO has developed software programs (OPAL I-III) for the electronic submission and management of contaminant data, both aggregate and individual. Because this software uses the Codex Classification of Foods and Feeds (Codex Alimentarius, Volume 2), GEMS/Food would be in position to collect, collate and evaluate monitoring data on contaminants in feed, if so requested. The Codex Committees on Food Additives and Contaminants and Codex Committee on Pesticide Residues already use GEMS/Food protocols for collecting information on contaminants in food for use in exposure assessment and in setting of maximum limits in foods.

**OIE**

11. Since its formation in 1924, the OIE has been involved in the development of standards and the dissemination of information on zoonoses. The current OIE Strategic Plan addresses the request of OIE Member Countries that the OIE strengthen its activities in the food safety area, particularly in consultation with the World Health Organization and the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC).

12. The Chairman of the CAC and the Director-General of the OIE have met on several occasions and have drafted an informal document identifying specific areas of mutual interest as well as committees where each organization will invite representatives from the other to ensure a seamless interface between the two standard-setting organisations. This document has been shared with both organisations and with the WTO SPS Committee and the two leaders have addressed meetings of their counterpart organisations on the importance of collaboration.

13. The OIE Ad hoc Group on food safety met at the OIE Headquarters from 18-19 April 2002. The Ad hoc expert group was made up of five experts, three of which were Codex members, including the Chairman of the CAC. Dr Vallat requested that the Ad hoc Group draft recommendations on ways the OIE could work more effectively with the CAC, the scope of OIE involvement in food safety and priorities for that work, and on a modus operandi for the OIE's work. The Ad hoc Group's recommendations will be discussed by Member Countries at the May 2002 General Session. The Ad hoc Group believed that a clear definition of OIE's role in food safety and co-ordination with the CAC would enhance the scope and scientific quality of international standards, guidelines and related texts, facilitate risk-based approaches, and genuinely address the "production-to-consumption" exposure pathway for food-borne hazards.

14. OIE was present at the Codex Commission on General Principles meeting held in April 2002 and participated in the discussion on Cooperation between Code Alimentarius Commission and other International Intergovernmental Organizations. OIE mentioned that both organizations have identified food safety among the highest priorities in their respective strategic plans. The delegates attending Codex and OIE meetings have been clear in stating that this work cannot be done without the close collaboration between Codex and OIE.

15. A joint WHO/FAO and OIE consultation on bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) in public health and trade was held in June 2001. Participants in the meeting included BSE and food safety specialists, NGOs, stakeholder organizations, consumer associations, other international organizations, developing countries, and national health and food authorities. The principal goal of the Consultation was to provide better information to Member Countries, to enable them to determine the actions necessary to avoid or reduce risks to human and animal populations, and to export trade. The Consultation also reviewed some of the most important international BSE problems.

16. The OIE International Animal Health Code Commission continues to improve the BSE chapter in the Animal Health Code, based on comment received from Member Countries and experts in the Ad hoc Group.

The chapter contains detailed recommendations on the feeding of various animal products to animals. The Code Commission has also improved its recommendations on surveillance and monitoring to improve the security of human food, and is about to address the issue of combining testing of various at-risk sub-populations and the use of rapid diagnostic tests.

17. Based on a meeting of international experts, the OIE has also published information on the hypothetical presence of BSE in sheep.

#### **WHO/FAO/OIE WORK IN RELATION TO TSES**

#### **JOINT WHO/FAO/OIE TECHNICAL CONSULTATION ON BSE, PUBLIC HEALTH AND TRADE (PARIS, FRANCE 11-14 JUNE 2001)**

18. A joint WHO FAO and OIE consultation on BSE in public health and trade was held in Paris on 11-14 June 2001, at OIE Headquarters.

19. Participants in the meeting included subject specialists, NGOs, representative of stakeholder organizations, consumer associations, other international organizations, participants from developing countries, and national health and food authorities.

20. The principal goal of the Consultation was to provide more quality information to Member Countries, especially for those that do not have experience of BSE and vCJD. This would enable national authorities to determine the actions necessary within their own borders to avoid or reduce risk to human and animal populations, and to export trade. Furthermore, it is important from the international perspective that countries should not export materials that could be contaminated with the BSE agent.

21. A secondary goal of the Consultation was to provide a forum for the review of some of the most compelling problems in international BSE control, namely: detection, prevention and elimination of the disease, coupled with appropriate risk management.

22. The consultation adopted the following main recommendations:

- All countries are encouraged to evaluate their potential exposure through systematic assessment of trade data and possible risk factors. These assessments are essential to identify risks that need to be addressed to protect public health and prevent further national and international dissemination of infectivity among susceptible species.
- Food can be regarded as safe from BSE only if all appropriate measures to minimise human exposures to the BSE agent are fully implemented and monitored. Although much is known and considerable efforts have been made to control BSE, scientific uncertainty remains. In order to introduce appropriate measures to protect public and animal health, national authorities should take into account the risk of BSE infection in the cattle population and the risk of human exposure to the BSE agent.
- To better assess the risk of human exposure to BSE, the Consultation recommended an analysis of the pathways along which the BSE agent could be transferred from animals to humans, in particular via food. The evaluation of the pathways should include a comprehensive approach that would include both public health policy and livestock management. Such a pathway analysis will provide the basis for assessing the human exposure risk and to manage that risk, even if an exact quantification remains unlikely.
- The Consultation reviewed the commodities that are currently listed in the OIE International Animal Health Code (OIE Code) as 'unrestricted in terms of international trade' and concluded that there was no new scientific information to justify modifications to the list. The OIE Code also establishes a list of tissues and products that, depending upon the BSE-status of a country, should not be traded internationally. The Consultation concluded that, for the time being, there is no need to modify this list.
- International risk management strategies should be commensurate with the level of BSE risk for regions, countries and zones. Risk management strategies must be science-based, transparent and not more trade restrictive than necessary for health protection. The choice of the specific risk management strategies must consider the practicality of implementation and means of auditing compliance in each country.
- The WHO, FAO and OIE should work to increase world-wide awareness of the clinical signs, epidemiology and relevant risk factors for BSE and vCJD.

- The consultation considered that BSE contaminated MBM will have been fed to some sheep and goats and that these species may have been infected with BSE agent. It is recommended that individual countries assess the risk that BSE infection could be present in their native sheep and goat populations. The Consultation further recommended that efforts to investigate and detect the presence of natural BSE in sheep and goats be pursued.
23. The prevention of BSE is a responsibility shared among all those involved in the food and feed chains from farm to fork. Risks are dynamic. Therefore, to detect changes in risk, risk assessment must be ongoing and risk management must be based on the results of these risk assessments.
24. Ongoing education and extension programmes for all those involved in the food and feed chains should be introduced to minimize exposure and increase awareness and reporting. Animal and human health authorities should work together closely for these purposes.
25. A full report of the conclusions and key recommendations of the meeting is available at: <http://www.who.int/emc-documents/tse/whocdscsraph20018c.html> and [http://www.oie.int/eng/publicat/en\\_rapports.htm](http://www.oie.int/eng/publicat/en_rapports.htm)