WORLD ORGANISATION FOR ANIMAL HEALTH

Protecting animals, preserving our future

23rd Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas

Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia,
14 - 18 November 2016

FINAL REPORT

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ANNEXES

List of Abbreviations

ALA	American Poultry Association
CAMEVET	American Committee on Veterinary Medicines
CAN	Andean Community
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CONFEAGRO-CAO	National Agricultural Confederation of Bolivia–Chamber of Agriculture of Eastern Bolivia
CONGABOL	Confederation of Livestock Producers of Bolivia
CSF	Classical swine fever
CVP	Permanent Veterinary Committee of the Southern Cone
ELISA	New enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FEGABENI	Federation of Livestock Producers of the Beni region
FMD	Foot and mouth disease
IICA	Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture
OIE	World Organisation for Animal Health
OIRSA	Regional International Organization for Animal and Plant Health (Organismo Internacional Regional de Sanidad Agropecuaria)
PAHO	Pan American Health Organization
PANAFTOSA	Pan American Foot and Mouth Disease Center
PHEFA	Program for the Eradication of Foot and Mouth Disease
PVS	OIE Tool for the Evaluation of Performance of Veterinary Services
RR	Regional Representation
RSR	Sub-Regional Representation
SENASAG	Bolivia's National Service for Animal and Plant Health and Food Safety
USDA APHIS	Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service of the United States Department of Agriculture
WAHIS	OIE World Animal Health Information System
WHO	World Health Organization

Introduction

1. Following the kind invitation of the Government of Bolivia, the 23rd Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas was held in Santa Cruz de la Sierra from 14 to 18 November 2016.

2. A total of 78 participants, including OIE Delegates and/or representatives from 20 Members and 1 observer country and senior officers from 9 regional and international organisations, attended the Conference. In addition, representatives of the private sector as well as private veterinary organisations from the region and from the host country were present. (List of participants available in Appendix 1).

   Members of the Commission: Argentina, Barbados, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, France, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, United States of America and Uruguay.

   International/regional organisations: ALA[1], CAN[2], CARICOM[3], CVP[4], FAO[5], IICA[6], OIRSA[7], PAHO-PANAFTOSA[8], WCO[9]

3. The Conference was also attended by the following Bolivian senior officials: H.E. Mr César Cocarico Yana, Minister for Rural Development and Land; Mr Mauricio Ordoñez Castillo, Chief Executive Officer of Bolivia's food safety authority (SENASAG); Mr José Luis Vaca Roque, President of the Confederation of Livestock Producers of Bolivia (CONGABOL); Mr Fredy Suarez, Representative of the National Agricultural Confederation of Bolivia–Chamber of Agriculture of Eastern Bolivia (CONFEAGRO–CAO); Mr Luis Alberto Alpire, Secretary for Productive Development of the Autonomous Government of Santa Cruz, Mr Absdon Nacif, President of the Federation of Livestock Producers of the Beni region (FEGABENI), Dr Javier Ernesto Suárez Hurtado, Delegate of Bolivia to the OIE. OIE officials included: Dr Monique Eloit, Director General of the OIE; Dr Botlhe Michael Modisane, Delegate of South Africa and President of the World Assembly of OIE Delegates; Dr Guilherme H. Figueiredo Marques, Delegate of Brazil and President of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas; Dr Gastón Funes, Vice-President of the Terrestrial Animal Health Standards Commission (Terrestrial Code Commission); Dr Mark Schipp, Delegate of Australia and Vice-president of the of the World Assembly of OIE Delegates, in quality of observer; Dr François Caya, Head of the OIE Regional Activities Department; Dr Luis Barcos, OIE Regional Representative for the Americas; and Dr Laure Weber-Vintzel, Head of the OIE Status Department. The Rapporteurs for Technical Items I and II – Mr Eric Aubin, National Manager of the Livestock Identification and Traceability Program of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency and Dr Michael David, Director of the National Center for Import and Export of the United States Department of Agriculture – also honoured the Conference with their presence.

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1 ALA: Latin American Poultry Association

2 CAN: Andean Community

3 CARICOM: Caribbean Community

4 CVP: Permanent Veterinary Committee of the Southern Cone

5 FAO: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

6 IICA: Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture

7 OIRSA: Organismo Internacional Regional de Sanidad Agropecuaria

8 PAHO: Pan American Health Organization – PANAFTOSA: Pan American Foot and Mouth Disease Center

9 WCO: World Customs Organization

Opening Ceremony

4. The following senior figures gave a welcome address:

   - Mr Mauricio Ordoñez Castillo, Chief Executive Officer of SENASAG;
   - Dr Guilherme Henrique Figueiredo Marques, Delegate of Brazil to the OIE and President of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas;
   - Mr José Luis Vaca Roque, President of the Confederation of Livestock Producers of Bolivia (CONGABOL);
   - Mr Fredy Suarez, Representative of the National Agricultural Confederation of Bolivia–Chamber of Agriculture of Eastern Bolivia (CONFEAGRO–CAO);
   - Dr Luis O. Barcos, OIE Regional Representative for the Americas;
   - Dr Botlhe Michael Modisane, Delegate of South Africa to the OIE and President of the OIE World Assembly of Delegates;
   - Dr Monique Eloit, OIE Director General;
   - His Excellency César Cocarico Yana, Minister for Rural Development and Land.

5. In a moving opening ceremony, producers' representatives from the Plurinational State of Bolivia stressed how important it was for governments to work to ensure their countries' compliance with OIE standards in order to secure safe and sustainable trade, and hence global supply, which is one of the biggest concerns of our day. Both His Excellency César Cocarico Yana, Minister for Rural Development and Land, and producers were proud to emphasise the position that Bolivia had achieved in the international arena in terms of agricultural production and exports. The Minister also affirmed that Bolivia would continue working to guarantee food sovereignty and security for its people. He noted that, to prevent risks to health, governments should ensure healthy food in compliance with OIE regulations, all of which had been approved by its Member Countries. In this regard, the Minister stressed that Bolivia would continue to work towards achieving foot and mouth disease freedom without vaccination.

6. Dr Monique Eloit, OIE Director General, addressed a welcome message highlighting the commitment of Bolivia in supporting OIE activities. She also commended Bolivia for having undertaken the Veterinary Legislation reform as well as for its overall commitment with the OIE. Other OIE senior officials extended sincere thanks to the Government of the Plurinational State of Bolivia for hosting the Regional Conference and wished participants a productive week.

Adoption of the Agenda and Timetable

7. The Provisional Agenda and Timetable were adopted. (Programme available in Appendix 1);

The role of the Regional Commissions and Council in supporting the mandate of the OIE

8. Subsequent to the presentation of Dr Monique Eloit, OIE Director General, on the role of the Regional Commissions and Council in supporting the OIE mandate and their interconnection with OIE Headquarters (HQ) and the OIE Regional and Sub-Regional Representations (RR/SRR);

9. The OIE Regional Commission for the Americas concluded that:

- a clear and closer relationship between the Council, Bureau members, OIE Headquarters and the OIE Regional and Sub-Regional Representations is of paramount importance for the success of OIE activities;

- as communication between members of the Bureau of the Regional Commission should be progressively strengthened, it is important to consider the possibility of more frequent meetings (prior to the General Session or Council meetings for instance), either online or face to face;

- the Regional Commissions and Council should take advantage of meetings already scheduled (Regional Conferences and Regional Commission meetings during the General Session) to discuss topics of mutual interest;

- The OIE should consider providing trainings to the newly elected Members of the Bureau and the Council;

- the Regional Commission should seize the opportunity provided by the OIE Sixth Strategic Plan and the OIE's proposed new dynamic of open dialogue to engage in clear discussions and define priorities for the region in which short- and medium-term efforts should be invested to achieve the desired success, including embarking on a process of reflection ahead of the next General Session;

- it is vitally important for the Regional Commission to consider setting indicators to measure progress on selected priority activities conducted in the region, in order to arrive at a qualitative analysis of these activities and so establish a clear vision of the desired outcomes;

- the Council and Bureau members should be involved in discussions regarding the plan of activities for the region to provide inputs to the OIE for addressing regional needs more effectively;

- Member Countries in the region should communicate their needs and concerns to Bureau members and the Council clearly to enable them to better advise the OIE;

- Member Countries in the region should be conscious of the full meaning of OIE membership, not only to understand and fulfil any obligations this may entail but also to realise their prerogatives, including use of OIE tools to strengthen the capacity of Veterinary Services;

- as members of the Bureaux of Regional Commissions are key actors in the work of the OIE, they should act as a bridge between the OIE and countries in the region, in order to support the implementation of OIE activities at national level and to help increase countries' technical and/or financial contribution to OIE activities;

- the Regional Commission should continue to rely on the Regional Representation for planning and developing its activities;

- Delegates should bear in mind the key support role of Focal Points in helping them to meet their OIE obligations;

- it is vitally important to involve in OIE activities countries in the region that are not yet OIE Members and to continue working to raise awareness and provide support to promote their membership.

Regional and Sub-Regional Representations' Roadmap: regional ownership of the OIE Sixth Strategic Plan

10. Dr Luis Barcos, OIE Regional Representative for the Americas, presented the draft roadmap of the OIE Regional Representation for the Americas and the preceding discussion and preparation process aimed at securing regional ownership of the OIE Sixth Strategic Plan. He explained that the roadmap would be developed in line with the objectives of the Strategic Plan and sought to support the Headquarters roadmap and to ensure that all the region's specific characteristics and priority activities were taken into account.

11. To this end, the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas concluded that it was important to plan measurable, realistic and time-adjusted measures in order to:

- build the capacity of Veterinary Services, by participating in training for Delegates and National Focal Points and promoting implementation and dissemination of the OIE Pathway for the evaluation of performance of Veterinary Services (PVS Pathway) and analysis of results therefrom;
- optimise the review and comment-submission process to support OIE standard-setting;
- promote official recognition of animal disease status (and official control programmes), as well as activities for the control and eradication of FMD, rabies, classical swine fever and other priority diseases in the region;
- ensure that Member Countries in the region comply with the obligation to notify diseases to the OIE in a timely manner and to provide other relevant information;
- increase financial contributions to the OIE, both institutional and voluntary;
- improve the visibility of the OIE and Veterinary Services by means of communication actions and public-private interaction, promoting institutional relations at different levels;
- promote progress in the priority areas defined by the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas, including diagnostic laboratories, antimicrobial resistance and animal welfare.

Presentation by Bolivia on implementation of the OIE PVS Pathway

12. Following the presentation by Dr Hernán Oliver Daza, Representative of the Government of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, on his country's ownership of the OIE PVS Pathway, the OIE Director General and the OIE Regional Commission commended Bolivia as a glowing example of how a tool developed by the OIE for its Member Countries can have successful outcomes that provide a useful baseline for advancing the process of disease freedom recognition, especially by updating and adopting an appropriate legislation.

TUESDAY 15 NOVEMBER 2016

Appointment of the Conference Committee

13. The Conference Committee was elected by participants as follows:

Chairperson:	Dr Javier Ernesto Suárez Hurtado (Bolivia)
Vice-Chairperson:	Dr Bernardo Jaén (Costa Rica)
Rapporteur General:	Dr Mark Trotman (Barbados)

Appointment of Session Chairpersons and Rapporteurs

14. Chairpersons and Rapporteurs were designated for the Technical Items and the Animal Health Situation as follows:

Item I:	Dr Carlos Correa Messuti (Uruguay), (Chairperson) Dr Guilherme Henrique Figueiredo Marques (Brazil), (Rapporteur)
Item II:	Dr Joaquín Braulio Delgadillo Álvarez (Mexico), (Chairperson) Dr Miguel Quevedo Valle (Peru), (Rapporteur)
Animal Health Situation:	Dr Jose Ignacio Gomez Meza (Chile), (Chairperson) Dr Dwight Walrond (Guyana), (Rapporteur)

Analysis of the Animal Health Situation

15. Following the presentation on the analysis of the animal health situation in the region by Dr Paolo Tizzani, Veterinary Epidemiologist at the OIE World Animal Health Information and Analysis Department (report available in Appendix 2);

16. The OIE Regional Commission for the Americas concluded that:

- the new approach for analysing animal health is extremely useful to Member Countries because it gives a much clearer and more accurate picture of the animal health situation in the region. The results of the animal health report show that accurate reporting by countries can be very helpful in managing animal disease risk. It is therefore important for Member Countries to provide detailed spatial and temporal information on all OIE listed diseases to allow for an accurate analysis, including trends analysis, to be made with a view to improving animal health and facilitating appropriate decision-making;

- assessment of the spatial relationship between the presence of a disease and selected risk factors allows reliable risk maps to be drawn up and the right choice of control and prevention measures to be made to ensure that diseases are stopped from spreading;

- assessment of seasonal patterns of disease in the region can provide useful information for improving preparedness and prevention, particularly with regard to increasing and allocating resources in high-risk areas;

- Member Countries should enhance up surveillance and control efforts and observe the principle of transparency in order to manage diseases in the region successfully;

- with regard to avian influenza, all countries in the region have a leading role to play in preventing avian influenza because of their direct exposure to it as a result of the migratory routes of birds, which might vary unexpectedly owing to different factors, including climate change;

- with regard to classical swine fever, the region has made very good progress;

- with regard to glanders:
  - pursuing efforts to ensure optimum surveillance is seen as one of the main challenges for the region;
  - it is important for countries to continue analysing the development of appropriate diagnostic tests leading to more sensitive and specific diagnoses, including serological and mallein tests, as well as new enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay (ELISA) trials;
  - first and foremost, countries should avail themselves of the tools made available by the OIE through the Biological Standards Commission;

- it is considered essential to have an OIE Reference Laboratory in the region that is able to meet Member Countries' needs;
- it is necessary to promote audits by international exports who can critically evaluate glanders control programmes, as well as to promote joint studies with PANAFTOSA and other organisations for developing scientific publications that will bring about change and help to control glanders, including new diagnostic tests;

- with regard to infectious hypodermal and haematopoietic necrosis of crustaceans, the size of the shellfish industry in countries of Central America makes it crucial for the region to improve reporting of this disease;

- with regard to canine rabies:
  - the disease remains a challenge for the region for various reasons. On the one hand, control measures need to be reassessed because pressure from animal protection societies is making the killing of dogs increasingly unfeasible. On the other hand, rabies outbreaks are still a problem in urban areas because of inward migration of owners with their dogs;
  - dog population control (sterilisation) could be considered as a more viable option for reducing population size and hence the risk of canine rabies;
  - solidarity between countries is, and always will be, key to controlling the disease, especially considering that the number of human cases appears to be underestimated;

- with regard to small hive beetle infestation:
  - the view is that countries in the region should pay more attention to small hive beetle infestation, which affects honey bees and so jeopardises a key means for ensuring the planet's food security;
  - it is very important to educate and raise awareness among beekeepers about the disease;
  - it would be useful to consider strategies for controlling small hive beetle infestation, such as replacing European bees with Africanised bees, which are more resistant to the disease.

The OIE standard-setting process:
active participation of the region

17. Following the presentation by Dr Gastón Funes, Vice-President of the Terrestrial Animal Health Standards Commission, explaining the OIE standard-setting process and the importance of active participation by Members in the region;

18. The OIE Regional Commission for the Americas concluded that:

- it is vital to enhance participation by countries in the region in the OIE standard-setting process and to comply with OIE deadlines for submitting comments;

- Members of the Regional Commission should continue to consider the possibility of implementing new mechanisms to encourage the submission of comments from the region, including holding meetings prior to the General Session;

- Member Countries in the Americas should seek to support one another as a region. Countries that are more advanced in the comment-submission process could support countries that have not yet managed to embark on the process, including through the OIE References Centres. One of the proposed options is for comments to be submitted by blocs of countries (sub-regions);

- the region urges regional organisations to continue to support countries in analysing texts sent by the OIE and in preparing comments;

- it is necessary to discuss priority issues for the region internally and to coordinate them in order to submit harmonised, well-founded comments (including bibliography where appropriate), as well as to consider the possibility of a common position for the region. The members of the Bureau of the Regional Commission are key in coordinating these internal discussions and are supported by the Regional and Sub-Regional Representations;

- OIE Focal Points play an important role in helping their Delegate to analyse reports from the Specialist Commissions and in preparing comments or proposed standards;

- it is recommended to use the resources provided by the OIE Regional Representation for the Americas (WebEx) for holding coordination meetings to prepare comments;

- if in any doubt, Member Countries should be mindful of the importance of consulting the OIE before submitting comments or proposals. Such queries should be made through the Bureau of the Regional Commission and with the support of the Regional Representation for the Americas;

- it is advisable to analyse the work plan of the Terrestrial Code Commission and to put forward issues relevant to the region for inclusion in the plan, when deemed necessary.

OIE procedure for official recognition versus self-declaration

19. Following the presentation of Dr Laure Weber-Vintzel, Head of the OIE Status Department, on the OIE Procedure for official recognition versus self-declaration, providing details on current OIE work in reviewing the procedures for official recognition and self-declaration, increasing the visibility of self-declarations and strengthening the procedure for maintaining official status;

20. The OIE Regional Commission for the Americas concluded that:

- Member Countries should consider whether they could apply for official recognition of disease free status, particularly for FMD and classical swine fever, as well as for diseases historically absent from the region;

- Member Countries should provide the relevant information supporting annual reconfirmation in November each year, including any supporting information deemed necessary, as prescribed in the *Terrestrial Animal Health Code*;

- as, for obvious logistical reasons, it is unfeasible to conduct annual OIE missions to reconfirm animal disease status in all the countries involved, in the future the OIE will communicate the country selection factors for reconfirmation missions;

- work to strengthen the OIE annual reconfirmation procedure does not require countries to provide additional new information. They need to produce exactly the same information as the OIE has always requested in the past and all that has changed is use of the online tool;

- Member Countries should consider the implications in terms of human, technical and financial resources of requesting the addition of diseases to the current list of six diseases notifiable to the OIE;

- Member Countries should identify the terrestrial and aquatic diseases for which their country could benefit from self-declaration of freedom at compartment, zone or country level. Regional approaches could be considered, always bearing in mind that self-declaration is the direct responsibility of the Delegate;

- the OIE Regional and Sub-Regional Representations should identify the countries that could apply for official recognition and/or self-declaration and explore whether support for the procedure is needed, including training requirements;

- Member Countries have pointed out that global recognition of official disease status adopted by the World Assembly, following consultation of OIE Member Countries, is not automatically endorsed by all trading partners and that this concern must be addressed in order to ensure the compliance of trading partners with official health status;

- Member Countries in the region applaud the work initiated by the OIE to improve transparency, clarity and acceptance of OIE standards.

Contribution of the Americas to the Global Foot and Mouth Disease Control Strategy: towards a free continent

21. Following the presentation by Dr Ottorino Cosivi, Coordinator of the Veterinary Public Health Project and Director of the Pan American Health Organization's Pan American Foot and Mouth Disease Center (PAHO-PANAFTOSA), on the Americas' contribution to the Global FMD Control Strategy for achieving an FMD-free continent;

22. The OIE Regional Commission for the Americas concluded that:

- it is important to continue using the tools developed and implemented during the process of FMD control and eradication in the Americas, including the vesicular disease diagnostic network, FMD risk characterisation and laboratory tests for differentiating infected from vaccinated populations, which are key to designing animal health intervention strategies;

- a high-level political commitment, supported by a strategic and technical framework for coordinated country action, including public-private partnerships and a long-term vision, are key to FMD control and eradication in the region;

- an animal health approach based on routine vaccination of at-risk populations, coupled with control of animal movements and disease outbreaks is equally crucial to achieving FMD eradication;

- Plan of Action 2011-2020 of the Hemispheric Program for the Eradication of Foot and Mouth Disease (PHEFA) could be seen as the Americas' tangible contribution to the Global FMD Control Strategy;

- it is important to strengthen animal health management at borders between countries and in epidemiological risk areas, which contributes not only to inter-country cooperation and solidarity but also to building ever greater mutual trust between countries and between the public and private sectors;

- it is vitally important to continue, or even increase, activities to build the capacity of Veterinary Services in the region, as not only are they key to achieving the goal of eradication, they also play a critical role in the transition to FMD-freedom without vaccination and in achieving the kind of animal health management that sustains the new disease status;

- it is necessary for countries to undertake a cost-benefit analysis to inform the highest-level political authorities of the advantages of prevention. Discussion of this subject will continue with FAO, IICA, OIE, OIRSA, PANAFTOSA, and other relevant organisations;

- despite the impact of FMD on animals and the obstacles it poses to international trade, FMD control and eradication actions have led to significant improvements in the region in terms of establishing animal health databases to support growing exports of livestock products, bringing socio-economic progress to countries in the region.

Technical Item I (with questionnaire):
Implementation and maintenance of animal traceability in the Americas:
overview of current status and impact for international trade

23. Technical Item I on "*Implementation and maintenance of animal traceability in the Americas: overview of current status and impact for international trade*", presented by Mr Eric Aubin, National Manager of the Livestock Identification and Traceability Program of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, prompted stimulating discussion among participants that enabled the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas to draft a recommendation in accordance with OIE General Rules. (Recommendation available in Appendix 4).

Antimicrobial resistance:
contribution of the Americas

24. In response to a direct request from Members of the Bureau of the Regional Commission for the Americas, Dr Andrea Ellis, Veterinary Science Advisor to the Delegate of Canada to the OIE, made a presentation that included information from the OIE on the subject of antimicrobial resistance and, in particular, the Americas' contribution to this increasingly important issue for the region and the world at large.

25. The OIE Regional Commission for the Americas concluded that:

- Member Countries in the region should prepare national action plans, in collaboration with public health and other relevant sectors, to address the issue of antimicrobial resistance in the most appropriate manner;

- Member Countries in the region should build their surveillance capacity in order to implement OIE's standards on antimicrobial resistance;

- it is vitally important to ensure appropriate legislation and systems for regulating prescribing practices and to collect data on the resistance to antimicrobial agents;

- Veterinarians and stakeholder awareness on antimicrobial resistance should be raised using OIE communication tools;

- it is important to consider the Committee of the Americas for Veterinary Medicines (CAMEVET) as a useful tool covering the public and private sectors in supporting the coordination of antimicrobial resistance related activities;

- it is important to start thinking about a regional action plan, based on the "One Health" approach, which is in line with the Global Action Plan on Antimicrobial Resistance and activities under the FAO/OIE/World Health Organization (WHO) Tripartite Agreement. This entails the development of national action plans, including awareness-raising campaigns for which the OIE has provided communication materials;

- the Tripartite is the most appropriate platform for implementing antimicrobial resistance actions, with each partner organisation required to comply with its own scope and remit. Consideration should be given to strengthening the Tripartite at regional level before turning to other coordination mechanisms.

Technical item II (without questionnaire):
Highly pathogenic avian influenza:
challenges encountered and measures for preventing its spread

26. Dr Michael David, Director of International Animal Health Standards in the Veterinary Services of the United States Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, presented Technical Item II on *"Highly pathogenic avian influenza: challenges encountered and measures for preventing its spread"*. The presentation was followed by an animated discussion among participants that enabled the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas to draft a recommendation in accordance with OIE General Rules. (Recommendation available in Appendix 5).

Depopulation and/or movement of animal populations
during animal health emergencies and natural disasters:
experience in the region

27. Dr Emerio Serrano Ramirez, on behalf of Dr Pastor Alfonso Zamora, Head of the OIE Collaborating Centre on Reduction of the Risk of Disasters in Animal Health (Cuba) and Ing. Hans Peter Elsner Schiffer of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, made a joint presentation on depopulation and/or movement of animal populations during animal health emergencies and natural disasters, describing experience in the region.

28. In this regard, the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas concluded that:

- resilience to natural disasters and disease contingencies of interest to animal health should be achieved primarily at local level, under the leadership of governments, and by integrating the disaster reduction and management plans of Veterinary Services into the corresponding national platform. Cross-sector and multi-disciplinary collaboration are also key;

- the territorial nature of disaster occurrence requires disaster reduction plans be developed and implemented in partnership with all stakeholders, down to the primary levels of technical and administrative organisation (municipal, farmer organisations and livestock farms) under a strong governance;

- the cornerstones of resilience are the development and implementation of forecasting models to promote early warning of major hazards, risk-based prioritisation and land-use planning to reduce vulnerabilities;

- it is important to promote and encourage preventive animal health programmes to significantly reduce the risk of disease outbreaks in times of natural disaster;

The OIE PVS Pathway: evolving beyond the myths

29. Following the presentation by Dr François Caya, Head of the OIE Regional Activities Department, entitled "The OIE PVS Pathway: evolving beyond the myths", which countered four PVS Pathway myths, outlined the emerging PVS Pathway governance framework and described four options for evolving the PVS Pathway to enhance its value to Member Countries, and following the working group sessions and open discussion by the Commission on the four potential options for PVS Pathway evolution;

30. The OIE Regional Commission for the Americas concluded that:

- the OIE should continue to further develop and consult on the four specific options for PVS Pathway evolution, as presented and discussed at the meeting, and take into account the following outcomes of the working group discussion:

    - Option 1: PVS Pathway training with a view to PVS Self-Evaluation

        - Self-evaluation can be a very good, low-cost expert assessment tool for working at sub-national level with the various provinces and states. The degree of acceptance of self-evaluation by national authorities and entities might vary depending on the subject addressed. In addition, self-evaluation would enable a broader spectrum of the national veterinary sector to be covered, making it easier to compare the different reports within and outside the country. National experts from different entities could be involved and, at the same time, it would encourage the involvement of different stakeholders at national level.

        - As it is a self-evaluation that has not been endorsed by an international body, it could present a problem of credibility, objectivity, acceptance and participation.

        - Taking into account the broad nature of the PVS Tool, self-evaluation might be more easily applied to a PVS Evaluation than to a PVS Gap Analysis. However, the OIE should consider developing and fleshing out the details of the PVS Gap Analysis tool for self-evaluation.

        - Self-evaluation would allow better follow-up of findings. It could even take the form of an ongoing evaluation of findings that could be seen as a follow-up process to accompany the different stages in the evaluation process.

    - Option 2: formal integration of the PVS Pathway into national strategic planning cycles

        - Most Member Countries already have strategic planning cycles for their Veterinary Services and input the benefits of PVS Pathway results into this planning.

        - Member Countries with scarce human resources see some advantages in formally integrating the OIE PVS Pathway into the strategic planning cycles of Veterinary Services. In addition, most believe that the OIE should focus on maintaining and building its capacity to provide technical assistance, through its experts, and political support, through its Representations.

    - Option 3: dedicated content on priority topics within future PVS Pathway missions

        - There was a strong consensus that a 'normal' initial PVS Evaluation mission should remain the fundamental starting point for any country embarking on the OIE PVS Pathway.

        - While some countries opposed dedicated content on priority topics within future PVS Pathway missions, others supported this new concept, which could take place during a PVS Evaluation mission, PVS Gap Analysis mission or specific *ad hoc* PVS Evaluation Follow-Up mission. However, it was suggested that such missions be deployed in support of an existing national, regional or global strategy.

        - While each country should decide on the priority topic, the Bureau of the Regional Commission would coordinate the proposed topics at regional level, submitting them at global level. It was questioned whether this option might require the development of specific tools, with their associated cost and development time, and a greater need and availability of experts.

- Option 4: a PVS Pathway capacity-building programme coordinated by national PVS Focal Points
    - Member countries underlined the great difficulties faced in organising follow-up activities after PVS Pathway missions and the need for greater involvement of all stakeholders.
    - The nomination of a National Focal Point on the PVS Pathway could be helpful for many countries, provided that their role is clearly defined by the OIE and they act under the Delegate's authority. This would require specific training on standards and their links with the OIE PVS Pathway through a dedicated training programme that also provides experience-sharing opportunities.

31. Member Countries are in favour of the OIE continuing to lead the exploration of options to reinvigorate and evolve the OIE PVS Pathway, including as part of preparations for an OIE PVS 'Think Tank' scheduled for the first half of 2017, to which selected Delegates may be requested to contribute.

Outcomes of the National Bridging Workshop on International Health Regulations (IHR) and OIE Performance of Veterinary Services (PVS) Pathway, held in San José, Costa Rica, from 8 to 10 March 2016

32. Dr Bernardo Jaén Hernández, Delegate of Costa Rica to the OIE, described the outcomes of the National Bridging Workshop on International Health Regulations (IHR) and OIE Performance of Veterinary Services (PVS) Pathway, held in San José, Costa Rica, from 8 to 10 March 2016, thanks to the financial contribution of the Canadian Government. The presentation was prepared jointly with Dr Roxana Céspedes from the Ministry of Health.

33. In this regard, the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas concluded that:

- it is important to recognise the sensitivity of the animal/human health interface in order to develop joint working arrangements between countries' animal health and public health services;
- financial resources remain a critical element and possible solutions should be considered because of the potential disadvantage of a funding shortfall in an emergency;
- national prioritisation and definition of diseases (zoonoses) are required, coupled with the implementation of joint surveillance protocols for investigating outbreaks (at national operational level) and for communication (risk communication team);
- coordination between authorities and technical agents, as well as between institutions, is key to achieving continuity and sustainability;
- it is important to produce a joint communication protocol to include such aspects as the nomination of contact points and the definition of channels, mechanisms and objectives;
- the OIE should continue to work closely with WHO to implement concrete collaborative actions between veterinary and public health services. To this end, materials developed by the OIE and WHO are available to Member Countries, including the Communication Handbook for Veterinary Services;
- Member Countries should adopt the intersectorial collaboration model presented by Costa Rica. The National Bridging Workshop was held up as a fine example of a small concrete action that has had a big impact within the "One Health" framework.

Discussion of recommendations

34. Draft Recommendations 1 and 2 on the two Technical Items of the Conference were presented to participants and put forward for discussion. Both draft Recommendations will be submitted for adoption at the Friday session with amendments as per participants' suggestions and discussions.

35. Following adoption by the Regional Commission, the recommendations will be submitted for endorsement by the World Assembly of OIE Delegates in May 2017. Once endorsed by the Assembly, they will serve as an important guideline for Member Countries of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas, as well as for the Organisation as a whole.

Proposal of date and venue of the 24th Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas

36. The President of the Commission asked Delegates present if any of their countries wished to host the 24th Conference of the OIE regional Commission for the Americas.

37. Although Costa Rica was already identified as host country of the next Regional Conference, due to internal political reasons, the Delegate preferred to withdraw the candidature of his country.

38. In that context, the Delegate of the Dominican Republic expressed the wish for her country to host the next Conference, to be held in November 2018.

39. The proposal of the Dominican Republic was endorsed unanimously.

THURSDAY 17 NOVEMBER 2016

Cultural visit

40. Participants and their guests greatly appreciated the cultural visit organised for the day by the host country. Sincere thanks were extended to the organisers for their kind hospitality.

FRIDAY 18 NOVEMBER 2016

Proposed system for elections to the OIE Specialist Commissions

41. OIE Director General, Dr Monique Eloit, stressed the importance of the Specialist Commissions, saying that they played a key role in the OIE's mandate for international standard-setting and official recognition of animal disease status, making it vital to have highly effective Specialist Commissions. To this end, she explained to the Regional Commission the proposal for elections to the OIE Specialist Commissions, as presented to the OIE Council in September 2016. The Director General said that the new selection process had been developed with a view to achieving a better and fairer selection of experts, aligning the selection process with the objectives of the OIE Sixth Strategic Plan and assessing the credentials of experts more fully. She added that it was a transparent process, with clear criteria for candidates, a clearly established timetable for nominations and an effective management process.

42. The OIE Regional Commission for the Americas concluded that:

- the proposed new expert selection process was a major step forward because it would ensure transparency and achievement of the objectives of the Sixth Strategic Plan;
- it was important for the region to consider holding a virtual meeting before March 2017 to discuss the proposal in detail prior to submitting it to the Council for approval;
- consideration should be given to including interpretation in Specialist Commission meetings as language continued to be a problem, with many experts in the region who, despite their great technical and scientific expertise, could not currently be considered for reasons of language. Should this possibility be considered, financial aspects would need to be discussed with the Council.

"Addressing the challenges of international trade in animals and products of animal origin: how to engage all interested parties?"– Statements and panel discussion with international and regional organisations

43. Following a panel discussion involving a group of regional and international organisations, including the Latin American Poultry Association (ALA), the Permanent Veterinary Committee of the Southern Cone (CVP), the Federation of Rural Associations of MERCOSUR (FARM), the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), the International Regional Organisation for Plant and Animal Health (*Organismo Internacional Regional de Sanidad Agropecuaria* (OIRSA)), and the World Farmers' Organisation (WFO), with the aim of facilitating a debate on the challenges of international trade in animals and animal products, including commercial activities relating to the OIE (and its standards), the challenges posed and opportunities to improve cooperation between the OIE and its partners;

44. The OIE Regional Commission for the Americas took note of the following:

- OIE standards provided a harmonised approach, based on transparent and democratic procedures, which helped to prevent the spread of disease and to promote safe international trade in animals and animal products, while facilitating international trade by preventing the creation of unnecessary trade barriers;
- the plan proposed by the OIE to develop a standards observatory to ensure the transparency of standards was welcomed by the entire region. Several countries had confirmed their willingness to support such an observatory for which a draft plan was expected to be developed in 2017 for approval by the World Assembly of OIE Delegates and subsequent implementation in 2018;
- the OIE Pathway for the evaluation of performance of Veterinary Services (OIE PVS Pathway) was the best mechanism for ensuring Veterinary Services' compliance with international standards and hence ensuring that countries were able to meet the challenges of international trade;
- standards enforcement called for effort, investment and rigour in the day-to-day activities of producers. Many exporting countries faced difficulties, especially in securing recognition for countries' official disease status and for zoning, which created barriers to trade, even in cases where it was legitimate to use zoning;
- it was a matter of concern for the region that, despite having voted for OIE standards, when it came to implementing them, some Member Countries did not always comply, thereby hindering the flow of trade;
- communication with all stakeholders and their active participation in the OIE standard-setting process were essential to ensuring mutual understanding of standards, which would ensure safe trade that guaranteed the quality and safety of goods and hence protected global consumers;

- it was crucial for representatives from both the official and private sectors to join forces to work with the OIE, secure recognition and support countries in implementing international standards and the World Trade Organization Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS Agreement) in the context of international trade, making it possible to resolve disease problems in trade and to guarantee the quality and safety of goods;
- the establishment of national trade facilitation committees for implementing the new WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) could improve border controls. The national committees represented an opportunity for countries to bring together all stakeholders, including the private sector, to work on improving the management of national borders and on international coordination. The national committees should become coordinating structures to facilitate enhanced dialogue prior to meetings of the WTO Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS Committee) and Committee on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT Committee);
- once the national committees were up and running, Member Countries would be able to identify the specific areas where they needed technical assistance on exports. These committees provided an opportunity for OIE Delegates to be more active at national level. If funding were available, workshops could be held for customs services and national Veterinary Services;
- universal recognition of a country's animal disease status was a problem facing the OIE. The organisation was currently working on two aspects to improve the situation. First, it was endeavouring to adapt the official recognition and self-declaration procedures to ensure that they were even more rigorous. Second, on the basis of analyses by various panels dealing with animal health matters within WTO, the OIE was working to secure recognition for all OIE standards, guidelines, resolutions and recommendations previously approved by the World Assembly of Delegates, as a single block designated "OIE standards";
- bilateral agreements between neighbouring countries were always a good option for protecting borders and ensuring safe trade;
- Member Countries in the region had the necessary tools to implement TFA whose main objective was to facilitate border control. There were three key factors in implementing TFA. The first was to have common legislation, which all countries already had: the OIE Codes. The second was to have an immediate reporting platform, which already existed, and all countries needed to do was to make use of it: the World Animal Health Information System (WAHIS). Lastly, there needed to be trust between countries irrespective of their animal disease status, for which the best tool was the PVS Pathway, which all countries were invited to comply with and support. In conclusion, the best way to facilitate secure trade was to use WAHIS, implement the OIE Codes and support the PVS Pathway.

Adoption of the Draft Final Report and Recommendations

45. Dr Monique Eloit, OIE Director General, explained the procedures for adopting the report and recommendations of the Conference. Delegates could submit comments or suggestions for consideration during the session dedicated to the adoption of the report. Further comments on the report received at the OIE Headquarters by 5 December 2016 would also be taken into consideration in the final version of the report. However, the recommendations had to be adopted during the current session and could not be changed subsequently.

46. As requested by some Delegates of the Region, an electronic version of the draft final report will be provided to all Delegates and Representatives of Delegates that attended the Conference in order to facilitate the comments to the report.

47. The report was adopted with minor additional modifications.

48. The two draft recommendations were also adopted, with minor amendments taking into account participants' suggestions and discussions.

Closing Ceremony

49. The President and Members of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas, the President of the World Assembly of OIE Delegates, the OIE Director General and delegation members, country representatives, representatives of regional and international organisations and observers expressed their deep gratitude to the Bolivian authorities for the warm welcome, for all the support provided to participants during their stay in Santa Cruz de la Sierra and for the excellent organisation of the conference.

50. OIE Director General, Dr Monique Eloit, gave special thanks to the Minister for Rural Development and Land for all the support provided to the OIE to facilitate the organisation and success of such an important event for the region and for his excellent address to the conference. She also congratulated Dr Javier Ernesto Suárez Hurtado, Delegate of Bolivia to the OIE, and the staff of Bolivia's National Service for Animal and Plant Health and Food Safety (SENASAG), thanking them for their work and dedication and for their cooperation with the OIE throughout the organisation of the conference. Dr Eloit stressed that the success of the conference had been assured by the excellent teamwork between Bolivia and the OIE. She also took the opportunity to acknowledge with gratitude that the conference had been a success on both a professional and personal level. She thanked the participants for their openness to the new conference dynamic and for their active participation in group discussions and work, which had led to the development and adoption of two important recommendations for the region, as well as to the preparation of an accurate and fairly straightforward report summarising the main conclusions of the week's discussions.

51. Dr Botlhe Michael Modisane, President of the World Assembly of OIE Delegates, reiterated his thanks and congratulations to the Government of Bolivia for the excellent organisation of the conference and the warm welcome and hospitality extended to participants.

52. Dr Javier Ernesto Suárez Hurtado, Delegate of Bolivia to the OIE, expressed the gratitude of his government and himself to all participants, rapporteurs and the OIE for their active participation in all the conference activities. He also thanked SENASAG colleagues and OIE staff for their excellent work in ensuring the success of the conference. He wished everyone a good trip home.

53. Dr Javier Ernesto Suárez Hurtado declared the 23rd Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas officially closed at 11:30 a.m.

Annex 1

23rd Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas
Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia. From November 14-18, 2016

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Annex 2

PROGRAMME

MONDAY 14 NOVEMBER 2016

10: 00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.	Registration of participants and document distribution
2:00 p.m.	Opening Ceremony
2:40 p.m.	Adoption of the Agenda and Timetable
2:45 p.m.	Group Photo / Break
3:15 p.m.	The role of the Regional Commissions and Council in supporting the mandate of the OIE (Dr Monique Eloit, OIE Director General)
3:45 p.m.	Panel discussion on the role of the Regional Commissions and Council (OIE Director General and Members of the Bureau and the Council)
4:15 p.m.	Regional and Sub Regional Representations' Roadmap: regional ownership of the OIE Sixth Strategic Plan (Dr Luis Barcos, OIE Regional Representative for the Americas)
4:45 p.m.	Presentation by Bolivia on implementation of the OIE PVS Pathway
5:15 p.m.	Introduction to the Posters Session
5:30 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.	Posters Session

TUESDAY 15 NOVEMBER 2016

9:00 a.m.	- Appointment of the Conference Committee (Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and General Rapporteur) - Appointment of Session Chairpersons and Rapporteurs (Technical items and Animal Health Situation)
9:15 a.m.	Analysis of the Animal Health Situation (Dr Paolo Tizzani, Veterinary Epidemiologist, OIE World Animal Health Information and Analysis Department)
10:00 a.m.	Discussion
10:30 a.m.	Break
11:00 a.m.	The OIE Standard Setting process: active participation of the region (Dr Gastón Funes, Vice-President, OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Standards Commission)
11:30 a.m.	Discussion
12:00 p.m.	OIE Procedure for official recognition versus self-declaration (Dr Laure Weber-Vintzel, Head of the OIE Status Department)
12:30 p.m.	Discussion
1:00 p.m.	Lunch

2:15 p.m. Contribution of the Americas to the Global Foot and Mouth Disease Control Strategy: towards a free continent (Dr Ottorino Cosivi, Coordinator Veterinary Public Health, Director Pan American Center for Foot and Mouth Disease (PANAFTOSA)-Pan American Health Organization/WHO)

2:45 p.m. Discussion

3:15 p.m. Technical item I (with questionnaire): Implementation and maintenance of animal traceability in the Americas: overview of current status and impact for international trade (Mr Eric Aubin, National Manager, Livestock Identification and Traceability Program, Canadian Food Inspection Agency)

4:00 p.m. Discussion

4:30 p.m. Break
(Preparation of Recommendation No. 1 by designated small group)

5:00 p.m. Antimicrobial resistance: contribution of the Americas (Dr Andrea Ellis, Veterinary Science Advisor to the OIE Delegate of Canada)

5:30 p.m. Discussion

6:00 p.m. End of the session

7:30 p.m. Reception hosted by Bolivia

WEDNESDAY 16 NOVEMBER 2016

9:00 a.m. Technical item II (without questionnaire): Highly pathogenic avian influenza: challenges encountered and measures for preventing its spread (Dr Michael David, Director, International Animal Health Standards, Veterinary Services, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Services, U.S. Department of Agriculture)

09:45 a.m. Discussion

10:15 a.m. Break
(Preparation of Recommendation No. 2 by designated small group)

10:45 a.m. Depopulation and/or movement of animal populations during animal health emergencies and natural disasters: experience in the region (Dr Pastor Alfonso Zamora, Head of the OIE Collaborating Centre for Reduction of the Risk of Disasters in Animal Health (Cuba) / Ing. Hans Peter Elsner Schiffer, Bolivia)

11:15 a.m. Discussion

11:45 p.m. The OIE PVS Pathway: evolving beyond the myths (Dr François Caya, Head of the OIE Regional Activities Department)

12:30 p.m. Lunch

2:00 p.m. Working group Session on the PVS Pathway

3:00 p.m. Feedback of the working group session and discussion

3:30 a.m. Outcomes of the National Bridging Workshop on International Health Regulations (IHR) and OIE Performance of Veterinary Services (PVS) Pathway held in San José, Costa Rica, from 8 to 10 March 2016 (Dr Bernardo Jaén Hernández, OIE Delegate of Costa Rica)

4:00 a.m. Discussion

4:30 p.m. Break

5:00 p.m. Discussion of recommendations

6:00 p.m. Proposal of date and venue of the 24th Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas

7:30 p.m. Reception hosted by the OIE

THURSDAY 17 NOVEMBER 2016

Cultural visit

FRIDAY 18 NOVEMBER 2016

09:00 a.m. Proposed system for elections to the OIE Specialist Commissions
(Dr Monique Eloit)

09:15 a.m. Discussion

09:30 a.m. "Addressing the challenges of international trade of animals and products of animal origin: how to engage all interested parties?"- Statements and panel discussion with international and regional organisations (previously selected)

11:00 a.m. Break

11:30 a.m. Adoption of the Draft Final Report and Recommendations

12:00 a.m. Closing ceremony

Annex 3

ANALYSIS OF THE ANIMAL HEALTH SITUATION IN MEMBER COUNTRIES IN THE REGION DURING 2015 AND 2016

This report is based on information obtained from six-monthly reports, annual reports and immediate notifications and follow-up reports submitted to the OIE by Member Countries of the Regional Commission for the Americas up to 26 August 2016. Special attention is given to the 2015 and 2016 reporting period.

The report reviews the situation in the Americas regarding some specific diseases notified during this period: infection with avian influenza viruses, infection with rabies virus, classical swine fever, small hive beetle infestation, glanders and Infectious hypodermal and haematopoietic necrosis.

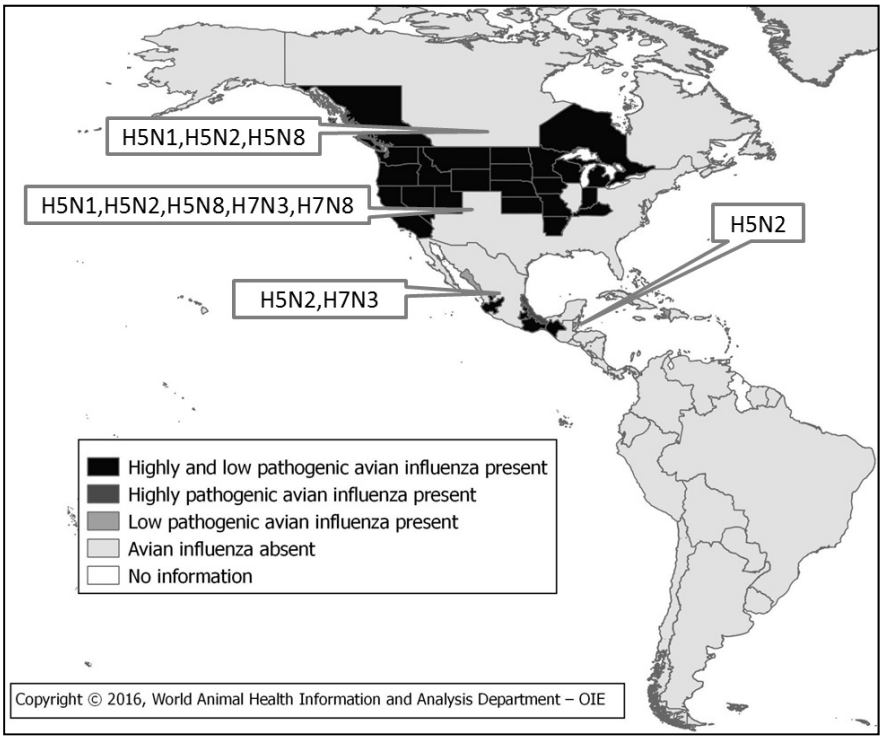
1. Infection with avian influenza viruses

The avian influenza virus situation in the Region is presented in relation to Technical Item II "Highly pathogenic avian influenza – challenges encountered and measures for preventing its spread". Moreover, during the 83rd and 84th General Sessions, the Member Countries of the Americas requested the OIE to evaluate the risk associated with migratory flyways, as a major route of transmission of the disease in the continent, in order to improve preparedness. The recent geographical distribution of infection with avian influenza viruses in Member Countries of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas, during the period 1 January 2015 to 26 August 2016, is shown in Figure 1. During this period, a total of 29 Member Countries provided information on the disease, which was reported present by 17% (5[1]/29) of them. Belize and Haiti reported infection with avian influenza viruses of low pathogenicity (LPAI), while Canada, Mexico and the United States of America reported both LPAI and infection with avian influenza viruses of high pathogenicity (HPAI). Subtype H5N2 was reported by the highest number (four) of Member Countries during the period of interest, followed by subtypes H5N1, H5N8 and H7N3 (two countries each). Finally, subtype H7N8 was reported only by the United States of America.

During this period, infection with avian influenza viruses was reported by means of immediate notifications by four Members. Among all the notifications, several first occurrences were reported. Belize reported the first occurrence of LPAI in the country, starting from December 2014, Mexico reported the first occurrence of HPAI in the area of Chiapas starting from April 2015 and the first occurrence of LPAI in the area of Sinaloa starting from July 2015. These three events were closed the same year.

[1] Belize, Canada, Haiti, Mexico and the United States of America

Figure 1. Distribution of infection with avian influenza viruses in Member Countries of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas in 2015 and 2016 (up to 26 August 2016) – labels show the subtypes identified in the country



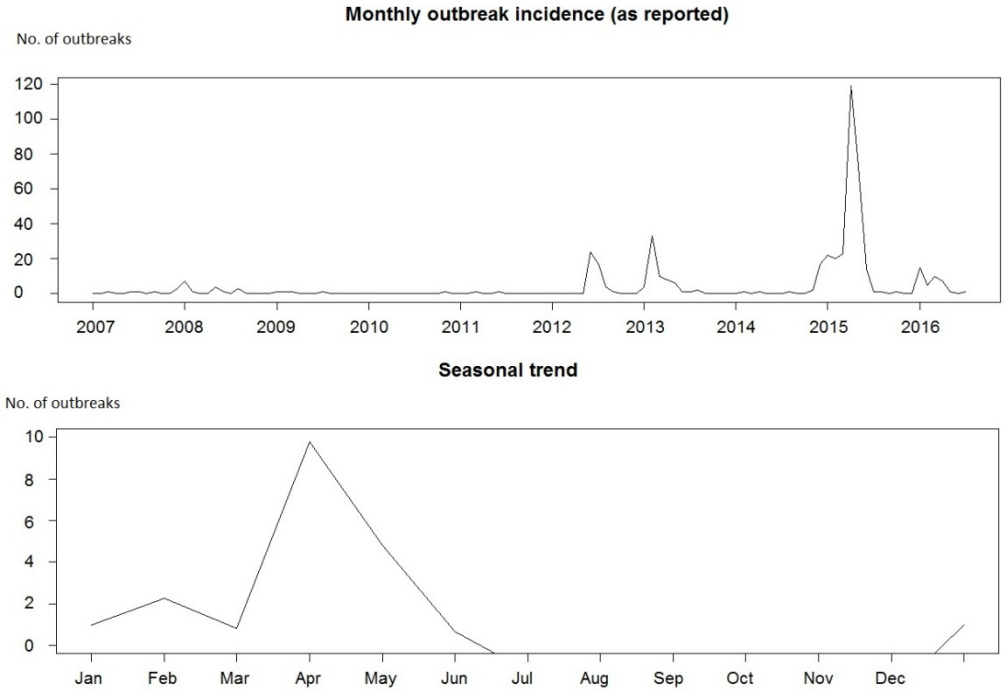
The following analysis focuses on avian influenza outbreaks reported to the OIE between 2007 and 2016 (up to 26 August 2016) by countries in the Americas. A seasonal trend was extracted from time series data on monthly disease outbreak incidence (over the nine years of the analysis) using a seasonal-trend decomposition procedure based on loess (STL)[2]. The results are shown in Figure 2.

Incidence peaks were observed in 2012, 2013 (both mainly due to HPAI in Mexico) and 2016 (mainly due to HPAI in Mexico and LPAI in the United States of America), but the largest peak was observed in 2015 (mainly due to HPAI in the United States of America).

Over the period of the analysis, avian influenza incidence showed a bi-modal seasonal pattern, with a first, small peak between mid-December and February (largest peaks observed in Belize, Canada and the Dominican Republic), and a larger peak between March and mid-July (largest peaks observed in Haiti, Mexico and the United States of America). The maximum incidence in the Region was observed in April.

[2] Cleveland R.B., Cleveland W.S., McRae J.E. & Terpenning I. (1990). – STL: A Seasonal-Trend Decomposition Procedure Based on Loess. *Journal of Official Statistics*, 6 (1), 3–73 http://www.wessa.net/download/stl.pdf

Figure 2. Avian influenza monthly outbreak incidence in the Americas from 2007 to 2016 (up to 26 August 2016) and seasonal-trend decomposition



Wild birds are the major reservoir hosts for avian influenza viruses; in particular, wild waterfowl are recognised as the most important source of the long range diffusion of the disease[3]. For this reason, understanding how the virus can spread within continents is critical to the development of successful strategies to reduce the impact of influenza outbreaks[4]. On the other hand, the distribution of the outbreaks within a country is determined by the organisation of the poultry industry. In order to determine the relationship between these factors and the occurrence of avian influenza, the spatial occurrence of avian influenza outbreaks in domestic animals and wildlife since 2007 was investigated, using spatial multivariate logistic regression analysis. The occurrence of the disease was used as dependent variable, considered as a binomial factor (presence/absence of the disease): the 463 outbreaks (n) reported to the OIE for both LPAI and HPAI were considered as presence points, while the negative points were randomly generated in a GIS system, to model the absence of the disease (2xn points were randomly generated for a total number of 926 negative points). The negative points were not necessarily generated in production areas, since association of outbreaks with poultry density was tested in the model. As independent variables, the following risk factors were considered:

[3] Hill, S. C., Lee, Y. J., Song, B. M., Kang, H. M., Lee, E. K., Hanna, A. & Pybus, O. G. (2015). – Wild waterfowl migration and domestic duck density shape the epidemiology of highly pathogenic H5N8 influenza in the Republic of Korea. *Infection, Genetics and Evolution*, 34, 267-277.

[4] Fourment M., Darling A.E. & Holmes E.C. (2016). – The Impact of Migratory Flyways on the Spread of Avian Influenza Virus in North America. *bioRxiv* 074583; doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1101/074583

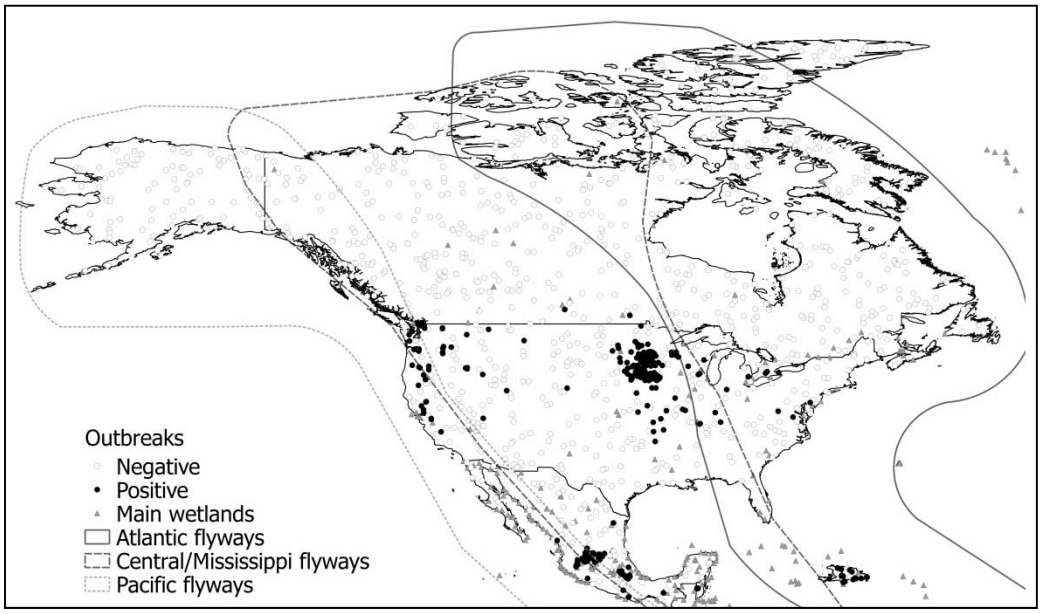
- **The Americas bird flyways from the BirdLife International[5] database (categorical variable)**: For the purpose of this analysis, the Central and Mississippi flyways were grouped together[6].

- **The proximity to the main wetlands as described in the Ramsar Sites Information Service[7] (geographic distance – continuous variable)**

- **Chicken and farmed duck density as reported in FAO GeoNetwork[8] (continuous variable)**.

Since 2007, avian influenza outbreaks are reported to have occurred in six[9] countries of North or Central America. For this reason, and in order to avoid spatial biases, the analysis and the investigation of the relationship with environmental (flyways and wetlands) and anthropic variables (chicken and duck density) focus specifically on this area (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Avian influenza outbreaks and relationship with bird flyways and main wetlands



A Generalised Linear Model (GLM) with binomial family distribution was used to evaluate the relationship between the occurrence of the disease and the selected independent variables (or risk factors). Model selection was performed using a backward elimination process, the model chosen being the one with the lowest Akaike information criterion (AIC) value[10].

The selected model included all the risk factors presented above as significant risk factor, and was able to explain 30% of the deviance of the null model. Details of the model selected are presented in Table 1.

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5 BirdLife International, http://www.birdlife.org/

6 Buhnerkempe, M.G., Webb, C.T., Merton, A.A., Buhnerkempe, J.E., Givens, G.H., Miller, R.S. & Hoeting, J.A. (2016). Identification of migratory bird flyways in North America using community detection on biological networks. *Ecological Applications*, 26 (3), 740-751.

7 https://rsis.ramsar.org/

8 http://www.fao.org/geonetwork

9 Belize, Canada, Dominican Republic, Haiti, Mexico, United States of America

10 Akaike, H. (1973). "Information theory and an extension of the maximum likelihood principle", in Petrov, B.N.; Csáki, F., 2nd International Symposium on Information Theory, Tsahkadsor, Armenia, USSR, September 2-8, 1971, Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, pp. 267-281.

Table 1. Environmental and anthropic factors affecting the occurrence of avian influenza outbreaks: Odds Ratio values of the selected variables.

	OR	2.5 %	97.5 %	p-value
(Intercept)	0.2	0.1	0.3	1.76e-10
Flyways: Atlantic and Central/Mississippi	1.3	0.5	3.2	0.5156
Flyways: Central/Mississippi	9.6	6.2	15.7	< 2e-16
Flyways: Central/Mississippi and Pacific	6.4	3.5	12.0	2.12e-09
Flyways: Pacific	4.6	2.4	8.7	2.82e-06
Chicken density	1.1	1.1	1.1	7.06e-10
Duck density	1.1	0.9	1.1	0.3390
Proximity to main wetlands	1.4	1.4	1.7	< 2e-16

The factor that most influenced the occurrence of avian influenza outbreaks was the flyway. In particular, the Central/Mississippi flyways presented an Odds Ratio value equal to 9.6 (taking as reference the Atlantic flyways). In other words, in the Central/Mississippi flyways, the risk of occurrence of an avian influenza outbreak is statistically higher than in all the other flyways. Also the presence of wetlands, aggregation areas for aquatic birds, increased the risk of occurrence of the disease. In particular, there is a linear positive relationship between proximity to wetlands and disease occurrence. Finally, as is clearly understandable, the density of chicken and ducks were selected in the model.. As demonstrated in other studies, the combination of high poultry densities and waterfowl migration predisposes to the occurrence of avian influenza outbreaks[11].

The results of the spatial analysis and the evaluation of the quantitative relationship between the dependent (presence of the disease) and independent variables (anthropic and environmental factors) can be used to derive reliable risk maps to target control and preventive measures and stop further spread of avian influenza. In addition to spatial risk factors, the seasonal pattern of the disease in the Region can provide useful information for improving preparedness and prevention, particularly with regard to the strengthening and allocation of the often limited resources in high-risk areas. Therefore, the OIE recommends that its Member Countries continue to provide detailed spatial and temporal information.

2. Infection with rabies virus

The rabies virus situation in the Region is presented in relation to the global goal for elimination of dog-mediated human rabies, which was presented at the World Health Organization (WHO)/OIE Conference on rabies in December 2015[12].

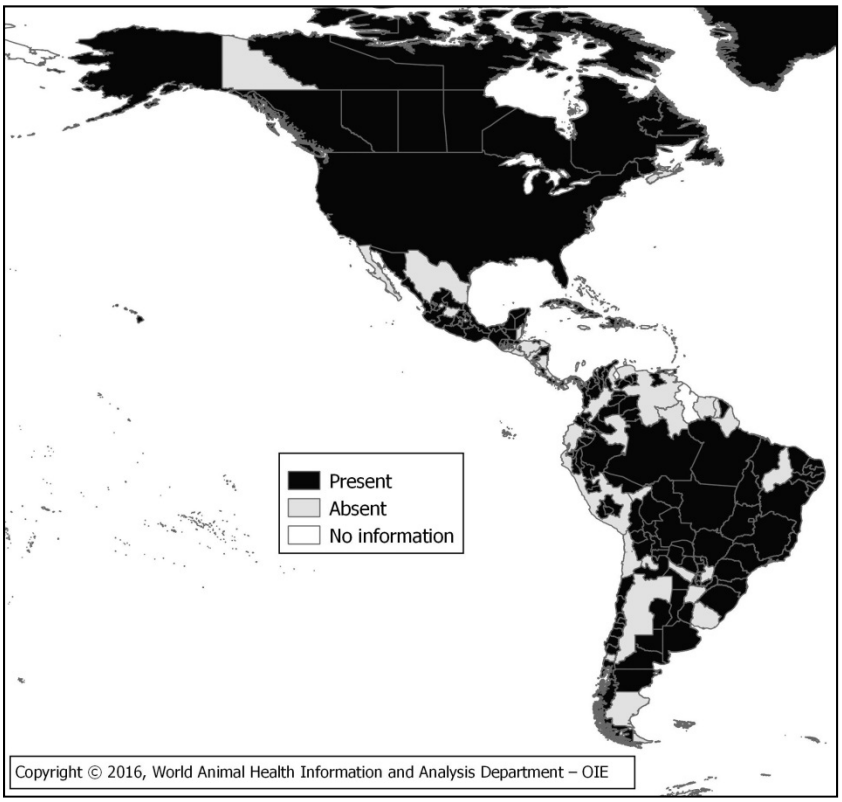
[11] Bui, C. M., Gardner, L., & MacIntyre, C. R. (2016). Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza Virus, Midwestern United States. Emerging infectious diseases, 22(1), 138.

[12] Global elimination of dog-mediated human rabies, WHO/OIE Conference on rabies in December 2015 - http://www.oie.int/eng/RABIES2015/index.html

The recent geographical distribution of infection with rabies virus in animals in Member Countries of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas, during the period 1 January 2015 to 26 August 2016, is shown in Figure 4. During this period, a total of 29 Member Countries provided information on the disease, which was reported present by 79% (23[13]/29) of them. Forty-one percent (12[14]/29) of Member Countries reported cases in dogs, while 14% (4[15]/29) reported cases in vampire bats (*Desmodus rotundus*).

During this period, infection with rabies virus was reported by means of immediate notifications by two Members. In 2015, Honduras reported a reoccurrence of rabies in the area of Lempira in January and the first occurrence of the disease in the area of Colon in March; bats were identified as the source of infection in cattle and equids. A reoccurrence of the disease was also reported in August 2015 in the area of Cayenne in French Guiana. Similarly, the virus isolated in the affected dog was of "vampire bat rabies" type.

Figure 4. Distribution of infection with rabies virus in Member Countries of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas in 2015 and 2016 (up to 26 August 2016)



[13] Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, France (French Guiana affected), Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Trinidad and Tobago, United States of America, Uruguay and Venezuela

[14] Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Cuba, Dominican Republic, France (French Guiana), Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico and Trinidad and Tobago

[15] Brazil, Mexico, Paraguay and Venezuela

During the WHO/OIE Conference, the tremendous decrease in dog-mediated human cases in the Americas over the last two decades was highlighted, based on information collected by the Pan American Foot-and-Mouth Disease Center (PANAFTOSA). The number of dog-mediated human cases decreased significantly from more than 300 cases/year in the early 1980s to fewer than 20 cases/year in the early 2010s, showing the success of the regional strategy[16]. The Americas provide a great example of proof that elimination of dog-mediated rabies is feasible. According to WHO, dog-mediated human rabies has been eliminated in many Latin American countries, including Chile, Costa Rica, Panama, Uruguay, most of Argentina, the states of São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro in Brazil, and large parts of Mexico and Peru[17].

As highlighted in the conclusions of the Conference, this result was due to a combination of the following:

- the application of mass vaccination to cover 70% of the dog population targeted,
- active communication campaign targeting dog owners,
- the control of dog populations in accordance with intergovernmental OIE standards,
- raising of awareness to prevent dog bites, and
- the treatment of human victims and the use of appropriate post-exposure prophylaxis[18].

A total of 19[19] countries/territories reported information to the OIE on human cases in 2015 through their annual report. In total, only 12 human cases[20] from seven countries were reported for the year, and none of them by countries listed by WHO as free from dog-mediated rabies.

However, bats represent another important source of human infection in the Americas. According to WHO, bats are currently the source of most human deaths due to rabies in the Region[17] and, as presented during the WHO/OIE Conference on rabies, the number of cases remained relatively stable over the last decade, with around 30 cases/year[16].

This bat-mediated transmission of rabies virus occurs only in the Americas[21], and it maintains the circulation of the virus. In Latin America, there is a geographical overlap of the two main epidemiological cycles: (a) the terrestrial cycle, where the dog is the main terrestrial vector and (b) the aerial cycle, in which bats constitute the main vector[22].

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16 The long and tortuous way to rabies elimination: experience from the Americas countries - Ottorino Cosivi (Pan American Foot-and-Mouth Disease Centre - Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization), presented during the WHO/OIE Conference on rabies in December 2015 - http://www.oie.int/eng/RABIES2015/presentation/Session_3.2_Americas.pdf

17 World Health Organization – rabies fact sheet, updated March 2016 - http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs099/en/

18 Conclusions of the WHO/OIE Conference on rabies held in December 2015 - Global elimination of dog-mediated human rabies -http://www.oie.int/eng/RABIES2015/conclusion/conferencerabies_conclusion_final.pdf

19 Argentina, Bahamas, Barbados, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Falkland Islands, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Suriname and Uruguay

20 In Bahamas, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Cuba, Dominican Republic and Haiti

21 E. Escobar, L., Peterson, A. T., Favi, M., Yung, V., & Medina-Vogel, G. (2015). – Bat-borne rabies in Latin America. *Revista do Instituto de Medicina Tropical de São Paulo*, 57(1), 63-72.

22 Loza-Rubio E. et al., Discrimination between epidemiological cycles of rabies in Mexico., Arch Med Res. 1999 Mar-Apr;30(2):144-9.

Antigenic variants of rabies can be identified by monoclonal antibodies techniques[23] and differ between dog rabies and bat rabies. However, bat antigenic variants have also been found in domestic and wild carnivores, with successful shift to novel host species with viral persistence and adaptation for transmission[24]. Therefore, although dog-mediated rabies is currently very low in the majority of countries in the Americas, countries of this Region should not reduce their efforts aimed at preventing dog-mediated rabies. Dog vaccination is essential and 42% (12/29) of Member Countries in the Region reported the implementation of official vaccination in 2015, in other words a vaccination programme that is approved and supervised by the Veterinary Authority (excluding vaccination in response to an outbreak). Other countries have applied dog vaccination carried out by private practitioners under the supervision of other relevant Authorities. Member Countries are encouraged to continue their efforts, with the aim of achieving total elimination of dog-mediated human rabies by 2030.

In addition to the OIE's own actions, an effective rabies control strategy can only be achieved through the effective coordination of partners applying the same strategies. At global level, the OIE works closely with WHO, GARC (Global Alliance for Rabies Control) and FAO to develop international recommendations aimed at greater intersectoral collaboration and global implementation of the most appropriate strategies in the different regions. During the last WHO/OIE Conference on rabies, the importance of regional strategies was also highlighted, to take into consideration regional and local contexts.

3. Classical swine fever

Classical swine fever (CSF) has high economic and socio-economic impacts on production systems in some countries of South and Central America, and some Caribbean islands, where it is considered endemic[25]. The disease is really important for the Region due to its big economic impact, and an eradication programme has been in place since 2000[26]. Implementation of an eradication programme is an important step towards achieving official OIE recognition of CSF free status.

The recent geographical distribution of CSF in Member Countries of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas, during the period from 1 January 2015 to 26 August 2016, is shown in Figure 5. During this period, a total of 29 Member Countries provided information on the disease, which was reported present by only 28% (8[27]/29) of them.

Colombia reported a reoccurrence of CSF by means of an immediate notification. The event was reported to have started in June 2013; in March 2015, the country declared that the CSF event was sufficiently stable for it to stop submitting weekly information and to report information only through six-monthly reports.

[23] Gibbons RV. Cryptogenic rabies, bats, and the question of aerosol transmission. Ann Emerg Med. 002;39:528-36.

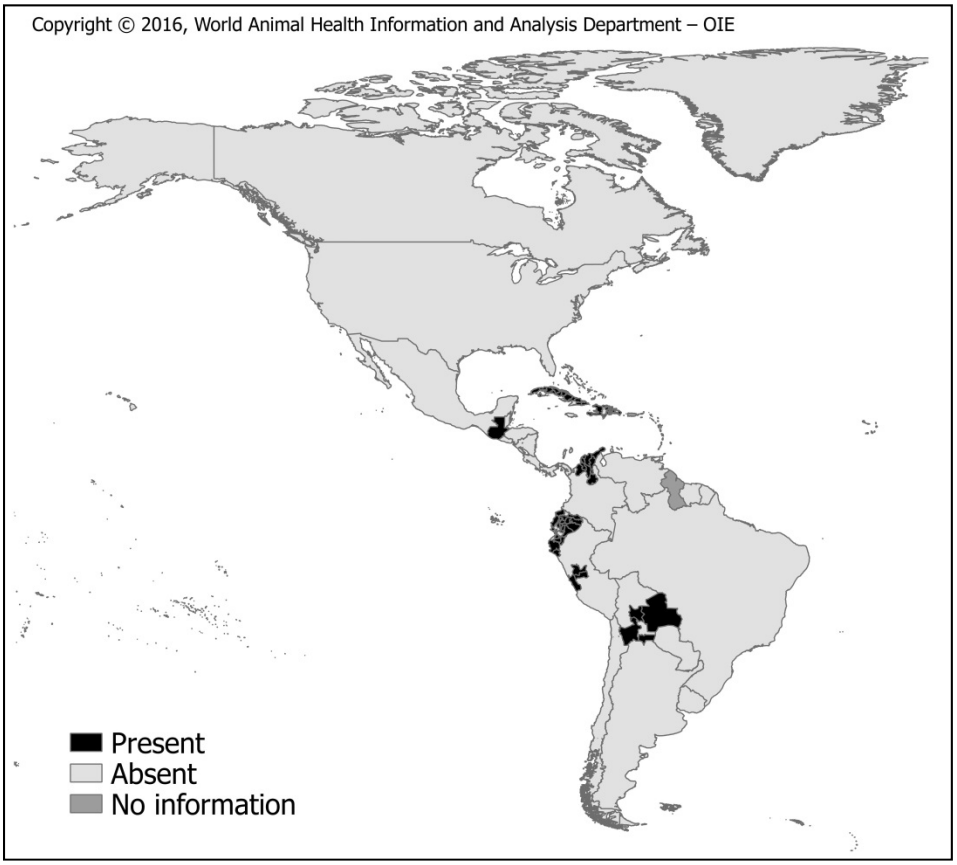
[24] Luis E. Escobar,et al., Bat-borne rabies in Latin America, Rev Inst Med Trop Sao Paulo. 2015 Jan-Feb; 57(1): 63–72.

[25] The Center for Food Security and Public Health, Classical swine fever factsheet, last updated October 2015, http://www.cfsph.iastate.edu/Factsheets/pdfs/classical_swine_fever.pdf

[26] Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, The Classical swine fever eradication plan for the Americas, October 2000, http://www.fao.org/3/a-ai048e.pdf

[27] Bolivia, Colombia, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Haiti and Peru

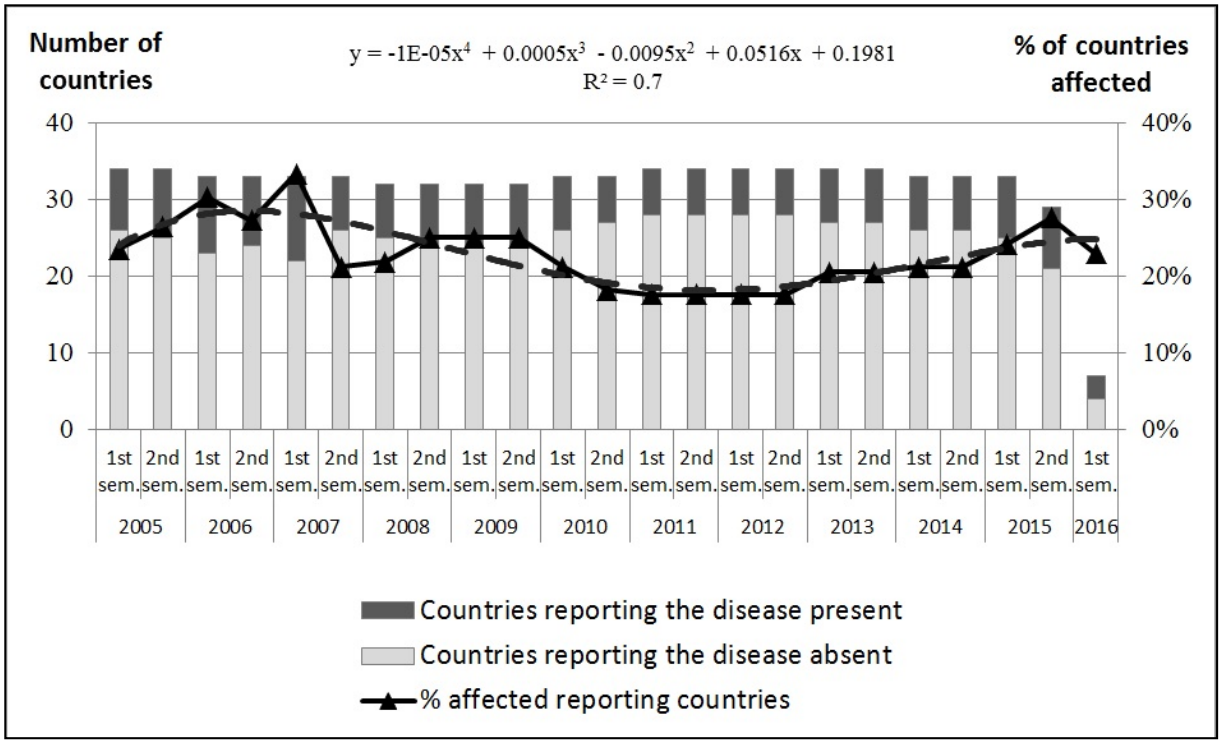
Figure 5. Distribution of classical swine fever in Member Countries of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas in 2015 and 2016 (up to 26 August 2016)



The trend of the disease between the first semester of 2005 and the first semester of 2016 is presented in Figure 6. There was a significant decrease in the percentage of countries reporting the disease present, as shown by the Spearman's rank correlation test (S = 2849.3, p-value = 0.05, rho=-0.41).

Even if the general trend shows a reduction of the prevalence in the Region, a gradual increase in the percentage of countries reporting the disease present has been observed since 2012, due to the reoccurrence of the disease in Colombia (2013) and the Dominican Republic (2015). This trend needs to be closely monitored in the near future and should stimulate Member Countries and/or the Region to invest greater efforts in CSF prevention and control taking into account the regional situation. Such efforts have already been undertaken by Panama in 2015 and Brazil in 2016, including simulation exercises designed to strengthen Veterinary Services' preparedness to deal with any occurrence of CSF.

Figure 6. Percentage of the reporting countries/territories for each semester between 2005 and 2016 that notified classical swine fever present (information received up to 26 August 2016)



During the 81st General Session (2013), the World Assembly of Delegates of the OIE adopted Resolution No. 29, which amended the *Terrestrial Animal Health Code* chapter on CSF. Updates included standards providing a pathway for Member Countries to be recognised by the OIE as free from CSF. Two years later, during the 83rd General Session (2015), the Assembly adopted Resolution No. 15, which updated the procedure for Member Countries to follow to achieve official recognition and maintenance of status for certain animal diseases, including CSF. That year, in May, the first list of Member Countries recognised as CSF free was published and included 24 Member Countries. The list was then updated in 2016 and, as of 26 August 2016, five Member Countries of the Americas[28] were recognised as free from the disease and one was recognised as having free zones[29].

The official recognition of disease status is of great significance for international trade and is one of the most important legal links between the OIE and the World Trade Organization (WTO). By acquiring and maintaining its official status, a country demonstrates transparency and helps to promote animal health worldwide. For these reasons the OIE encourages Member Countries of the Regional Commission for the Americas to apply for official status if they comply with the requirements specified in Article 15.2.3. of the *Terrestrial Animal Health Code*.

[28] Canada, Chile, France (including French Guiana, Guadeloupe and Martinique), Mexico and the United States of America

[29] Brazil

4. Small hive beetle infestation

The following report on the situation in the Region regarding infestation with *Aethina tumida* (small hive beetle) is provided on account of its rapid spread in recent years.

In November 1996, the first occurrence of the disease in the Americas was recorded with the collection of small hive beetle specimens in South Carolina in the United States of America[30]. Since then, infestation with *Aethina tumida* has become well established across the country[31]. The disease then spread to Canada in 2002[32] and to Jamaica in 2005[33]. The disease was added to the OIE List and became notifiable to the OIE in 2006. The spread of infestation with *Aethina tumida* continued in the Americas with the following countries reporting their first occurrence of the disease to the OIE: Mexico in 2007, Cuba in 2012, El Salvador in 2013 and Nicaragua in 2014.

The recent geographical distribution of infestation with *Aethina tumida* in Member Countries of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas, during the period from 1 January 2015 to 26 August 2016, is shown in Figure 7. During this period, a total of 24 Member Countries provided information on the disease, which was reported present by 33% (8[34]/24) of them.

During this period, infestation with *Aethina tumida* was reported by means of immediate notifications by three Member Countries. Brazil notified the first occurrence in the country, which started in March 2015; as of 26 August 2016, the event was still continuing. This was the first occurrence of the disease in South America.

Costa Rica also reported the first occurrence of the disease in the country, near the border with Nicaragua, which started in August 2015. In June 2016, the situation was declared sufficiently stable to stop submitting weekly follow-up reports and to report the evolution of the disease only through six-monthly reports. Lastly, Nicaragua reported the reoccurrence of the disease in the area of León, starting in March 2016; the event is still ongoing.

[30] Hood, W.M. (2000). – Overview of the small hive beetle, *Aethina tumida*, in North America. *Bee World*. 81, 129–137.

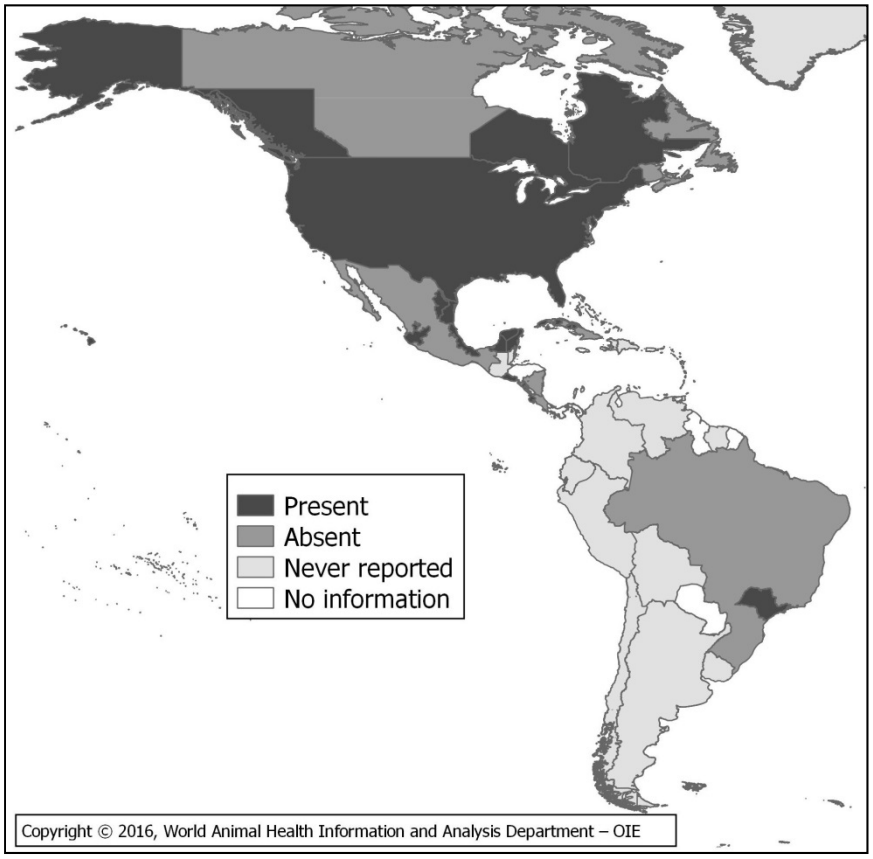
[31] Neumann, P., Pettis, J.S. & Schäfer, M.O. (2016). – Quo vadis *Aethina tumida*? Biology and control of small hive beetles. *Apidologie*, 47, 427. doi:10.1007/s13592-016-0426-x

[32] Clay, H. (2006). – Small hive beetle in Canada. *Hivelights*. 19, 14–16.

[33] FERA (Food and Environment Research Agency) (2010). The Small Hive Beetle: a serious threat to European apiculture. Sand Hutton, UK: Food and Environment Research Agency, 23 pp

[34] Brazil, Canada, Costa Rica, Cuba, El Salvador, Mexico, Nicaragua and United States of America

Figure 7. Distribution of infestation with *Aethina tumida* (small hive beetle) in Member Countries of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas in 2015 and mid 2016 (up to 26 August 2016)



There is a risk of the disease spreading to currently free countries within the Region. A total of 67% (16[35]/24) of Member Countries in the Americas have never reported infestation with *Aethina tumida*, and some of these countries are significant exporters of honey according to the 2015 data recorded in the United Nations Comtrade Database[36], such as Argentina, which was the world's third highest natural honey exporter in terms of US dollar value[37] (exports valued at USD 163 603 035), Uruguay (exports valued at USD 40 627 435) and Chile (exports valued at USD 39 317 011).

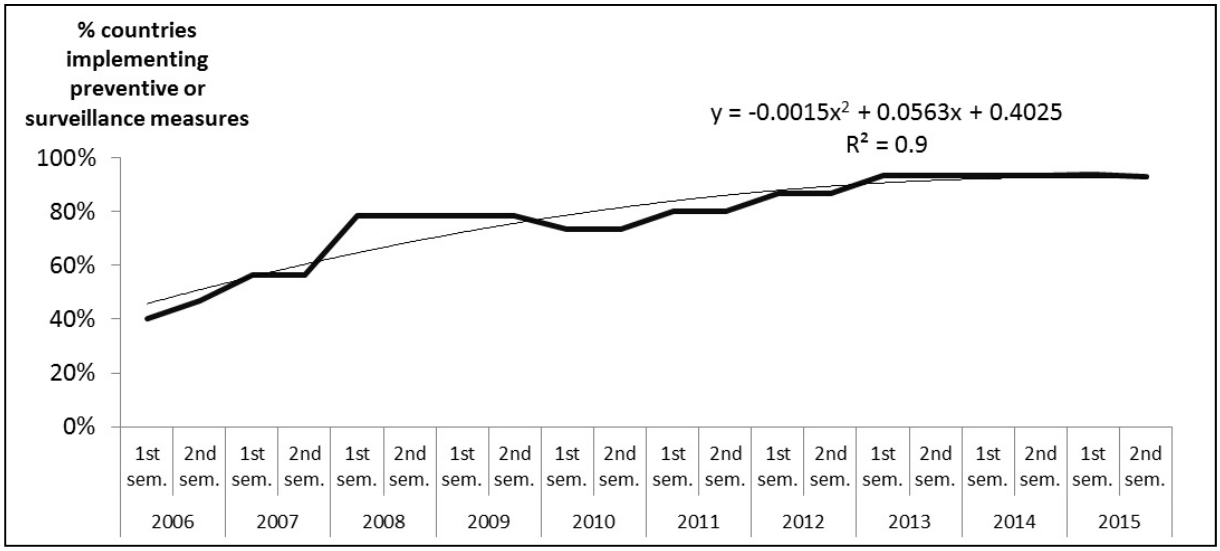
Nevertheless, the spread of the disease in the Region has raised awareness. The following analysis focuses on the 16 Member Countries of the Region that have never reported the disease. Figure 7 shows the trend in the percentage of these countries that notified the implementation of preventive or surveillance measures over time (i.e. disease notification, precautions at borders, general surveillance, targeted surveillance, screening or monitoring). As shown in the figure, the percentage increased considerably between 2006 and 2015, from 40% in the 1st semester of 2006 to 93% in the 2nd semester of 2015 (Spearman's rank correlation - S = 91, p-value <0.01; rho = 0.9). The trend followed a quadratic regression model, as shown in Figure 8 (p-value < 0.01 for all models).

[35] Argentina, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Haiti, Peru, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay and Venezuela

[36] United Nations Comtrade Database - International Trade Statistics, http://comtrade.un.org/

[37] World's Top Exports – 2015 - http://www.worldstopexports.com/natural-honey-exporters/

Figure 8. Percentage of the reporting Member Countries where infestation with *Aethina tumida* (small hive beetle) has never occurred that notified the implementation of preventive or surveillance measures, for each semester between 2006 and 2015 (information received up to 26 August 2016)



This section has highlighted the recent spread of infestation with *Aethina tumida* to two newly affected Member Countries in the Americas, and especially its first occurrence in South America, with the event reported by Brazil in 2015. Since 1996, infestation with *Aethina tumida* has become a threat to both apiculture and wild bee populations in the Region and, despite comprehensive efforts, it continues to spread.

It appears difficult to trace back the actual transport mechanism to specific areas, but it seems plausible to assume that imports of package bees, honeybee and bumblebee colonies, queens, hive equipment and/or even soil constitute potential invasion pathways for the small hive beetle[38,39]. The pattern of small hive beetle spread is dominated by long-distance jump dispersal as in other invasive species[40].

Therefore, the OIE recommends that these particular concerns should be addressed in the Americas, and especially in countries currently still free from infestation. As shown in Figure 7, countries even though they are free are actively implementing preventive or surveillance measures. In some cases, these have even included a simulation exercise on the infestation, as in Panama. The OIE strongly encourages countries to maintain a high level of surveillance to avoid further spread of the disease in the Region.

[38] Brown, M.A., Thompson, H.M., Brew, M. (2002) – Risks to UK beekeeping from the parasitic mite *Tropilaelaps clareae* and the small hive beetle, *Aethina tumida*. *Bee World*. 83, 151–164.

[39] Neumann, P., Pettis, J.S. & Schäfer, M.O. (2016). – Quo vadis *Aethina tumida*? Biology and control of small hive beetles. *Apidologie*, 47, 427. doi:10.1007/s13592-016-0426-x

[40] Nentwig, W. (2007) – Biological invasions (W. Nentwig, Ed.). Springer Verlag, Berlin Heidelberg

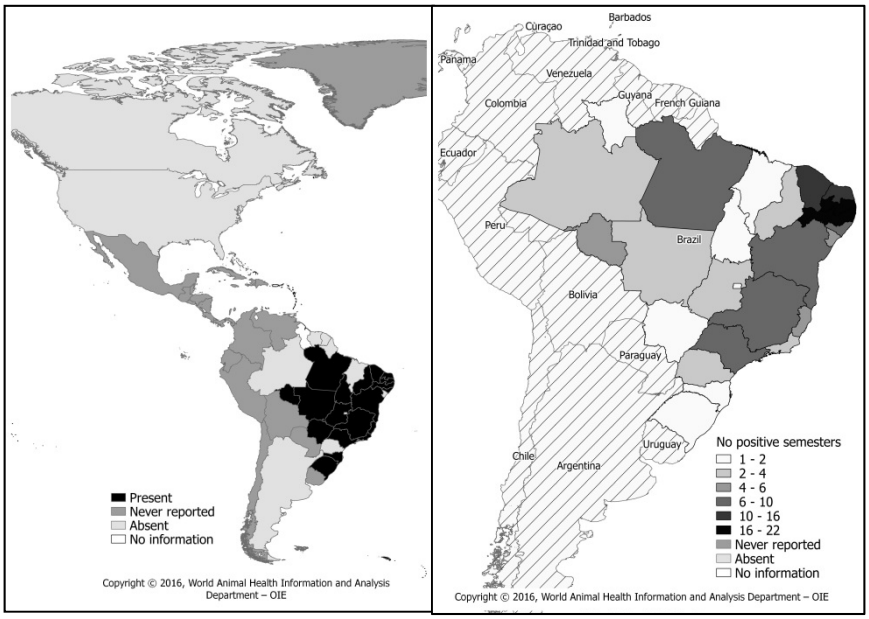
5. Glanders

Glanders is one of the oldest known diseases in equids, and the number of outbreaks has followed an increasing trend in the last 20 years at global level[41]. During this period, a total of 29 Member Countries in the Region provided information on glanders. The disease has mainly been eradicated in the Americas, with 79% (23[42]/29) of the Member Countries notifying it as "never reported" and 17% (5[43]/29) as "absent". The last occurrence of the disease in Canada was in 1938 and in the United States of America in 1942. The last occurrence of glanders in humans in the Region was reported to the OIE by Martinique (France) in 2007 through the annual report.

The glanders situation in the Region is presented with a particular emphasis on the considerable efforts recently made by Brazil to manage the disease.

The recent geographical distribution of glanders in animals in Member Countries of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas, during the period 1 January 2015 to 26 August 2016, is shown in Figure 9. During this period, a total of 29 Member Countries provided information on the disease in animals, which was reported to be present by only one country, Brazil.

Figure 9. Distribution of glanders in Member Countries of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas in 2015 and 2016 (up to 26 August 2016), and glanders situation in Brazil cumulated for the period between the 1st semester of 2005 and the 2nd semester of 2015



According to information submitted to the OIE, glanders was absent in Brazil between 1968 and 1998, before a reoccurrence in 1999. According to Mota et al. (2000), this reoccurrence was in the state of Pernambuco e Alagoas[44]. From this area, the disease progressively spread within the country. The

[41] Khan, I., Wieler, L.H., Melzer, F., Elschner, M.C., Muhammad, G., Ali, S. & Saqib, M. (2013). Glanders in animals: a review on epidemiology, clinical presentation, diagnosis and countermeasures. *Transboundary and Emerging Diseases*, 60(3), 204-221.

[42] Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay and Venezuela

[43] Argentina, Canada, France (French Guiana), Suriname, United States of America

[44] Mota R.A., Brito M.F., Castro F.J.C., & Massa M. (2000). – Mormo em eqüídeos nos Estados de Pernambuco e Alagoas. [Glanders in horses and mules of the states of Pernambuco and Alagoas, Brazil.] *Pesquisa Veterinária Brasileira* 20, 155-159..

disease was reported in 30% of Brazil's administrative divisions in the first semester of 2005, while in the 2nd semester of 2015, 70% of the administrative divisions were affected by glanders. Between 2005 and 2015, 93% (25/27) of Brazil's administrative divisions were affected at least once; also, the number of cases reported progressively increased (from 55 cases in 2005 to 429 in 2015).

The spatial and epidemiological data show a progressive increase in the number of cases and the number of states affected in Brazil despite major efforts to control the disease.

Glanders was thought to manifest in only acute or chronic presentations, but it is now demonstrated that it can also produce latent infections, sometimes not detectable by current diagnostic tests[45]. The diagnostic test recommended by the OIE is the complement fixation test (CFT), but the sensitivity and specificity of this test has been shown to depend on the antigen and methodology used. In particular, false negative results may lead to the reintroduction of the disease in free areas. Gaps in knowledge of the epidemiology of glanders, low reliability of the diagnostic tests and the increased movement of equids pose a major risk for the spread of the disease to other parts of the Region.

Considering the above, the control and elimination of glanders in Brazil constitute an important step towards achieving the eradication of the disease, both in the Region and globally.

6. Infectious hypodermal and haematopoietic necrosis

Infectious hypodermal and haematopoietic necrosis (IHHN) is one of the most common aquatic diseases in the Americas affecting crustaceans. The importance of the disease for the Region is related to the devastating outbreaks caused by the virus, with mortality approaching in some cases 100% of the infected animals[46]. In 2014, the Americas accounted for 10% of global crustacean aquaculture production[47].

The recent geographical distribution of IHHN in Member Countries of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas, during the period 1 January 2015 to 26 August 2016, is shown in Figure 10. During this period, a total of 20 Member Countries provided information on the disease, which was reported present by 50% of them (10[48]/20). No immediate notification was submitted for this disease during the period of analysis.

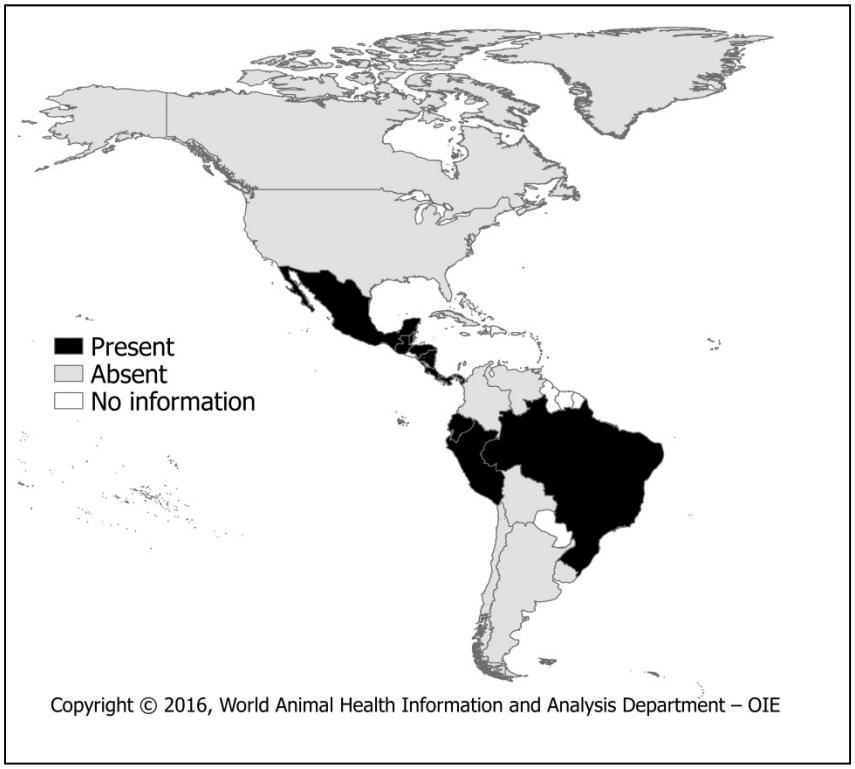
[45] Kettle, A.N.B., & Wernery, U. (2016). – Glanders and the risk of introduction through the international movement of horses. *Equine Veterinary Journal*. 48, 654-658.

[46] OIE (2016). – Manual of Diagnostic Tests for Aquatic Animals http://www.oie.int/index.php?id=2439&L=0&htmfile=chapitre_ihhn.htm

[47] FAO (2016) – The state of World Fisheries and Aquaculture, 2016 http://www.fao.org/3/a-i5555e.pdf

[48] Belize, Brazil, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama and Peru

Figure 10. Distribution of infectious hypodermal and haematopoietic necrosis in Member Countries of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas in 2015 and 2016 (up to 26 August 2016)



One of the main issues relating to aquatic animal diseases in the Americas Region, as in several other Regions, concerns underreporting. While 97% (29/30) of the Member Countries in the Americas Region have submitted information to the OIE for terrestrial animal diseases for 2015 or 2016, only 80% (24/30) have submitted information for aquatic animal diseases for the same period. In continuing its efforts to improve aquatic animal disease reporting, the OIE has developed a new infographic that outlines a decision-making process for veterinarians and aquatic animal health professionals involved in aquatic animal disease notification. The infographic highlights the critical points that have to be addressed to increase the quality of aquatic disease reporting: better coordination between the Veterinary Services and national institutions dealing with information on aquatic animal diseases, better coordination between the Focal Point for Disease Notification and the Focal Point for Aquatic Animals and independent access to WAHIS for the Focal Point for Aquatic Animals (the Delegate to the OIE should provide them with an independent password).

For its part, the OIE organises specific training for Focal Points for Disease Notification and for Focal Points for Aquatic Animals, aimed at increasing the quality of reports and reducing underreporting. It is expected that if the aforementioned decision-making process is correctly followed, notification of information on aquatic animal health through WAHIS, surveillance and preparedness will improve and ultimately reduce the risk of spread of aquatic diseases in the Region. Absence of disease and control measures in place are among the parameters notifiable to the OIE and are important steps towards achieving freedom from diseases.

Final

Recommendation No. 1

Implementation and maintenance of animal traceability in the Americas: overview of current status and impact for international trade

CONSIDERING THAT:

1. Based on the response to the questionnaire, the level of development and performance of animal traceability system varies greatly among Member Countries of the Americas;

2. Many Member Countries of the Americas have not yet adopted national legislation on animal traceability;

3. The vast majority of Member Countries of the Americas believe that animal traceability is a priority and this topic will remain a worldwide priority in the coming years;

4. Across the Americas, the levels of development, interest and readiness for animal traceability amongst species are, in order from highest to lowest: bovine, porcine, poultry, equine, ovine, and caprine;

5. In the Americas, of the three important components of animal traceability, the lowest level of performance is in domestic movements registration, whereas performance for animal identification/registration, the quality of import/export information, and establishment registration is generally stronger;

6. The vast majority of Member Countries of the Americas consider that a very important outcome of animal traceability is to support disease control and surveillance activities;

7. The main impediments in the development of an animal traceability system identified by the Member Countries of the Americas are, in decreasing order, the lack of: financial resources to support implementation, interest from industry, infrastructure to read, report and collect animal traceability information, legislative support, technical support and willingness to modify current practices;

8. The OIE *Terrestrial Code*'s chapters 4.1 on "General principles on identification and traceability of live animals" and 4.2 on "Design and implementation of identification systems to achieve animal traceability" provide key elements for the development and implementation of an animal traceability system;

9. The OIE PVS Tool identifies "Identification and Traceability" as a Critical Competency and an essential component in the quality of Veterinary Services; and

10. The International Organization for Standardization (ISO) provides complimentary standards relevant to the development and implementation of animal traceability systems.

THE OIE REGIONAL COMMISSION FOR THE AMERICAS

RECOMMENDS THAT:

1. The Member Countries include in the development of their animal traceability systems, including related national legislation, the principles of animal traceability found in Chapter 4.1 and 4.2 of the OIE *Terrestrial Code* with the purpose of supporting disease control and surveillance activities*;*

2. Member Countries use the OIE standards and cooperate in ensuring that traceability requirements for both imports and exports are appropriate in ensuring safe trade;

3. Member Countries improve their capacity for the traceability of terrestrial and aquatic animals as well as for beehives prioritising aspects providing more obviously favourable benefit-cost and/or industry support, including initial lower cost options such as export market, species/production system, vaccination, zoning or 'book-end' (origin, death, import, export) only traceability systems;

4. Member Countries assess and share lessons learned and best practices on traceability for terrestrial and aquatic animals as well as for beehives;

5. Member Countries take advantage of the OIE PVS Pathway and request missions of this programme in order to assess their compliance with OIE standards and get support on their animal health strategies, including for animal traceability;

6. Member Countries encourage the establishment of a Collaborating Center on animal identification and traceability which could provide and coordinate capacity building activities on animal traceability to Member Countries, including at regional level;

7. Member Countries consider the implementation of other relevant international standards such as those of ISO in their animal traceability systems, noting that the adoption of such standards is free and can support the interoperability of traceability systems at regional and international levels;

8. The OIE work with OIE Delegates to advocate the importance of animal traceability systems to high level decision-makers so to trigger proper resourcing; and

9. The OIE continue to provide proper resourcing of the PVS Pathway in order to provide Member Countries with missions to improve their Veterinary Services, including for identification and traceability, in a timely manner.

Final

Recommendation No. 2

Highly pathogenic avian influenza
Challenges encountered and measures for preventing its spread

CONSIDERING THAT:

1. The global human population continues to grow and become wealthier, and the demand for animal protein, particularly for poultry meat and eggs, is correspondingly increasing;

2. Highly pathogenic influenza (HPAI) continues to have a significant impact on poultry health and production across the globe;

3. Many countries worldwide are experiencing or have experienced unprecedented HPAI events which threaten animal health, public health, food security, agricultural productivity, farming community livelihoods and global trade;

4. While geographical barriers may still help in preventing the spread of avian influenza, strains of the virus have now been shown to spread intercontinentally by wild waterfowl and other wild birds;

5. The understanding of how avian influenza viruses can spread within continents is critical to the development of successful strategies to reduce the impact of influenza outbreaks in commercial poultry;

6. The proximity to the aquatic wild bird flyways and the presence of wetlands as aggregation areas for aquatic birds, increases the risk of epidemiological contacts and introduction of avian influenza in domestic poultry, such as evidenced during the 2014/2015 outbreak of HPAI in the United States of America;

7. The implementation of effective biosecurity measures prevents and reduces the risk of introduction and subsequent spread and amplification of the avian influenza virus in domestic poultry;

8. Early detection of HPAI virus is key to rapid control and eradication of the virus;

9. During the 2014/2015 outbreak of HPAI in the United States of America, depopulation of commercial poultry premises and disposal of carcasses were the most demanding disease control response activities in terms of human resources;

10. The OIE has adopted numerous standards for the prevention, detection, and control of avian influenza, including those related to zoning and compartmentalization

THE OIE REGIONAL COMMISSION FOR THE AMERICAS

RECOMMENDS THAT:

1. Member Countries conduct active wild bird surveillance to track and monitor avian influenza viruses in the wild bird population, in particular in aquatic wild birds, and the poultry producers be informed of meaningful results, on a timely manner, to strengthen their biosecurity;

2. Member Countries continue to provide detailed spatial and temporal information on avian influenza occurrence in both domestic poultry and wildlife through WAHIS;

3. Member Countries develop contingency plans for disease control activities and ensure adequate material and sufficient human resources are available for HPAI disease control activities, notably for depopulation of commercial farms and disposal of carcasses;

4. Member Countries assess and share lessons learned and best practices on the application of the relevant OIE standards in the management of HPAI outbreaks;

5. Member Countries promote the implementation, by the poultry sector, of appropriate biosecurity measures in line with the *OIE Terrestrial Code's* Chapter 6.4 on "Biosecurity procedures in poultry production", by the development of specific biosecurity plans jointly with the industry;

6. Member Countries submit avian influenza samples to Reference Laboratories for sequencing and strain collation in support to the joint OIE and FAO worldwide scientific network for the control of animal influenza (OFFLU);

7. The OIE encourage the identification of the multifactorial determinants of animal health risk needed to support risk analysis, surveillance and intervention strategies, including updated evaluations on the risk associated with migratory flyways and that the enhancement of this capacity be considered in the upgrade of WAHIS;

8. The OIE undertake joint capacity building seminars dedicated to Wildlife, Animal Disease Notification, and Laboratory National Focal Points in order to favour synergy at national level in terms of notification of wildlife diseases such as avian influenza; and

9. The Member Countries strongly consider the establishment of bilateral and multilateral agreement on the recognition of zones and compartments to facilitate trade during outbreaks implementing the principles defined in Chapter 4.3 of the *Terrestrial Animal Health Code* on "zoning and compartimentalisation".