



**WORLD ORGANISATION FOR ANIMAL HEALTH**

*Protecting animals, preserving our future*

24th Conference of the  
OIE Regional Commission for the Americas  
Punta Cana, Dominican Republic,  
19 - 23 November 2018

**FINAL REPORT**



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## List of Abbreviations

ALA:	Latin American Poultry Association
AMR:	Antimicrobial resistance
ASF:	African swine fever
CaribVET:	Caribbean Animal Health Network
CARICOM:	Caribbean Community
CIRAD:	Agricultural Research Centre for International Development
CISARA:	Caribbean Integrated Surveillance System on Antimicrobial Resistance in Agriculture
COSALFA:	South American Committee for the Control of Foot and Mouth Disease
CVP:	Permanent Veterinary Committee of the Southern Cone
EC:	European Commission
EMC-AH:	Emergency Management Centre for Animal Health
EU:	European Union
FAO:	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FARM:	Federation of Rural Associations of MERCOSUR
FEI:	International Equestrian Federation
FMD:	Foot and mouth disease
GEMP:	Good Emergency Management Practice
GF-TADs:	Global Framework for Progressive Control of Transboundary Animal Diseases
HHP:	High health, high performance
HPAI:	Highly pathogenic avian influenza
IHR:	International Health Regulations
IICA:	Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture
IT:	Information Technology
LPAI:	Low pathogenic avian influenza
LSD:	Lumpy skin disease
OIE:	World Organisation for Animal Health
OIRSA:	<i>International Regional Organism for Plant and Animal Health</i> (Organismo Internacional Regional de Sanidad Agropecuaria)
PAHO:	Pan American Health Organization

PANAFTOSA:	Pan American Foot and Mouth Disease Center
PHEFA:	Hemispheric Programme for the Eradication of Foot and Mouth Disease
PPP:	Public-Private Partnerships:
PVS:	OIE Tool for the Evaluation of Performance of Veterinary Services
SG-CAN:	Secretary General Andean Community
SPS:	Sanitary and Phytosanitary
USDA:	United States Department of Agriculture
USDA-APHIS:	Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service of the USDA
USDA-ARS:	Agricultural Research Service of the USDA
WAHIS:	World Animal Health Information System
WHO:	World Health Organization

## Introduction

1. Following the kind invitation of the Government of Dominican Republic, the 24th Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas was held in Punta Cana from 19 to 23 November 2018.
2. On the Monday morning before the Conference, a workshop was held on veterinary paraprofessionals to facilitate the ensuing regional discussions concerning veterinary paraprofessionals and their key role in supporting Veterinary Services.
3. A total of 89 participants, including OIE Delegates and/or representatives from 23 Members and 1 observer country and senior officers from 12 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, Cuba, Curaçao, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, France, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Saint Lucia, United States of America and Uruguay.

International/regional organisations: ALA<sup>1</sup>, CaribVET<sup>2</sup>, CARICOM<sup>3</sup>, CVP<sup>4</sup>, EC<sup>5</sup>, FAO<sup>6</sup>, FARM<sup>7</sup>, FEI<sup>8</sup>, IICA<sup>9</sup>, OIRSA<sup>10</sup>, PAHO/WHO-PANAFTOSA<sup>11</sup>, SG-CAN<sup>12</sup>

4. Also present were officials from the Dominican Republic, His Excellency Osmar Benítez, Minister for Agriculture, Dr Duarte Contreras Contreras, Director General of Livestock and Dr Nimia Lissette Gómez Rodríguez, Director of Animal Health and Delegate of the Dominican Republic to the OIE. Representing the OIE were: Dr Monique Eloit, OIE Director General; Dr Mark Schipp, President of the OIE World Assembly of Delegates and Delegate of Australia to the OIE; Dr Mark Trotman, Delegate of Barbados and President of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas; Dr François Caya, Head of the OIE Regional Activities Department; Dr Luis Barcos, OIE Regional Representative for the Americas; and Dr Montserrat Arroyo, OIE Sub-Regional Representative for Central America. The Conference was also honoured to welcome the Rapporteurs of Technical Items I and II: Dr Hernán Rojas, Director of CERES BCA and former Chief Veterinary Officer of Chile; and Dr Jaime Romero, International Expert on Agricultural Health and Food Safety at IICA.

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<sup>1</sup> ALA: Latin American Poultry Association

<sup>2</sup> CaribVET: Caribbean Animal Health Network

<sup>3</sup> CARICOM: Caribbean Community

<sup>4</sup> CVP: Permanent Veterinary Committee of the Southern Cone

<sup>5</sup> EC: European Commission

<sup>6</sup> FAO: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

<sup>7</sup> FARM: Federation of Rural Associations of MERCOSUR

<sup>8</sup> FEI: International Equestrian Federation

<sup>9</sup> IICA: Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture

<sup>10</sup> OIRSA: *Organismo Internacional Regional de Sanidad Agropecuaria*

<sup>11</sup> PAHO:OMS: Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization – PANAFTOSA: Pan American Foot and Mouth Disease Center

<sup>12</sup> SG-CAN: Secretary General Andean Community

### **Opening Ceremony**

5. The following senior figures gave a welcome address:
- Dr Luis O. Barcos, OIE Regional Representative for the Americas;
  - Dr Mark Trotman, Delegate of Barbados to the OIE and President of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas;
  - Dr Mark Schipp, Delegate of Australia to the OIE and President of the OIE World Assembly of Delegates;
  - Dr Monique Eloit, Director General of the OIE;
  - His Excellency Osmar Benítez, Minister for Agriculture of the Dominican Republic.

### **Appointment of the Conference Committee**

6. The Conference Committee was elected by participants as follows:
- |                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| Chairperson:        | Dr Nimia Lissette Gómez Rodríguez (Dominican Republic) |
| Vice-Chairperson:   | Dr Mercedes Lucia Flores Cancino (Peru)                |
| Rapporteur General: | Dr Auria King-Cenac (Saint Lucia)                      |

### **Appointment of Session Chairpersons and Rapporteurs**

7. Chairpersons and Rapporteurs were designated for the Technical Items and the Animal Health Situation as follows:
- |                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| Item I:                  | Dr Eduardo Barre Albera (Uruguay), Chairperson<br>Dr David René Orellana Salguero (Guatemala), Rapporteur |
| Item II:                 | Dr Osbil Watson (Jamaica), Chairperson<br>Dr David René Orellana Salguero (Guatemala), Rapporteur         |
| Animal Health Situation: | Dr Haïm Joseph Corvil (Haiti), Chairperson<br>Dr Rolando Arturo Tello Jaramillo (Panama), Rapporteur      |

### **Adoption of the Agenda and Timetable**

8. The Agenda and Timetable were adopted. (Programme available in Appendix 2).

### **Planning of the OIE Seventh Strategic Plan**

9. Dr Monique Eloit, OIE Director General, and Dr Mark Schipp, President of the OIE World Assembly of Delegates, delivered a joint presentation regarding the planning of the OIE Seventh Strategic Plan. They began by detailing the main achievements of the OIE Sixth Strategic Plan and the global and external challenges currently facing the OIE, before providing general comments on the proposed approach for the OIE Seventh Strategic Plan, including future directions and Members' involvement.



10. As preliminary thoughts regarding the Seventh Strategic Plan, Dr Eloit and Dr Schipp highlighted that:
- The Seventh Strategic Plan will be a logical follow-up to the Sixth Strategic Plan, based on achievements;
  - It will be structured in a similar manner to the previous plan, to ease reference and consistency;
  - It will adopt a non-prescriptive approach, and an operational work plan will be developed in parallel.
11. Based on the presentation, the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas noted that:
- The main achievements of the Sixth Strategic Plan include a clearer identification of strategies (antimicrobial resistance [AMR], animal welfare, the PVS Pathway, the OIE Observatory, etc.); the launch of the WAHIS+ Project; and an internal reform of the OIE, including the revision of processes and procedures, new work methods and an Information Technology (IT) Master Plan;
  - The main challenges faced by the Organisation include: supporting the achievement of the relevant United Nations Sustainable Development Goals; contending with a more competitive international trade environment; adapting to new information technologies, including the social media; and adopting the scientific approach needed to better address societal challenges, such as climate change, changes in consumption patterns and changes in production systems;
  - The overriding challenge is to preserve the coherence of the Organisation's activities, its effectiveness, the legitimacy of its mandate and its credibility, for the benefit of its Members;
  - The Seventh Strategic Plan should clarify, display and promote the values of the Organisation;
  - It is important always to keep in mind that the OIE has to contribute to good global sanitary governance by supporting OIE Member Countries in their efforts to strengthen their Veterinary Services, and it has to promote safer trade while taking into account the development of economies and the sustainability of the systems put in place, and must continue to be the leading organisation for animal health information;
  - The cross-cutting directions to be considered include: defining the OIE's science policy; defining a comprehensive and integrated Stakeholder Management System, as part of the OIE's engagement; developing a multiyear budget through a budgetary dialogue; and sustainably improving the OIE's internal governance (procedures and policies);
  - The Delegates noted that a process of consultation will be launched in 2019 by the OIE Directorate designed to ensure that the OIE Seventh Strategic Plan is developed from an inclusive perspective and that OIE Members' and OIE partners' suggestions and concerns are given due consideration during the development of the Plan;
  - All Delegates and partners of the region are invited to actively contribute to the development of the Seventh Strategic Plan by providing their inputs to the OIE Director General, to the OIE Council members representing the region, and to the members of the Bureau of the OIE Regional Commission.

## **Planning of the OIE Seventh Strategic Plan: The regional vision**

12. The members of the Bureau of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas and the Council in the region presented a brief analysis of each of the three strategic objectives and three cross-cutting areas of the OIE Sixth Strategic Plan. They focused on providing details regarding implementation of the Plan at regional level, the results achieved to date, the way in which the results support and strengthen the OIE's mandate and the impact they have had. They also presented their vision and proposals for the development of the next Strategic Plan.
13. After the presentations by the members of the Bureau of the Regional Commission and the Council, the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas noted that it was necessary to do the following:
  - *Strategic Objective 1: securing animal health and welfare by appropriate risk management*
    - Develop a reference framework to identify risks and analyse them to pinpoint areas where investment is needed and areas where there is excessive investment. Develop animal health programmes using a risk-based approach;
    - Make greater use of modelling to support decision-making on outbreaks of highly contagious diseases, in order to optimise vaccination policies, stamping-out and other control measures;
    - Promote a preventive approach (use of zones and compartments, implementation of biosecurity);
    - Consider the possibility of an approach that enables risk-sharing between partners and ensure that the State does not take all the risks itself but shares them with the private sector. With respect to compensation, take into account the risk levels to which affected individuals have been exposed;
    - Ensure that the information and data available in WAHIS is exchanged with other data sources so that, in the future, consideration can be given to the possibility of conducting risk assessments in a data intelligence (big data) context;
    - Identify joint working arrangements for sharing information and training at regional level, in order to enhance risk assessment and management (twinning projects or Collaborating Centres);
    - Support the OIE Observatory project to ensure the existence of applicable standards;
    - Work on reducing the time to define risk (rapid diagnosis, laboratory testing) and detect a problem;
    - Improve communication, including with the general public.
  - *Strategic Objective 2: establishing trust through transparency and communication*
    - Ensuring transparency through timely reporting of any events to the OIE remains one of the main duties of Member Countries. To maintain and even improve this, it is important for all Member Countries to commit to compliance with OIE standards and to accord them the value they require in order to avoid unreasonable sanitary barriers and promote transparency among all Members;
    - The concept of transparency should also be applied to PVS Pathway mission reports.

- *Strategic Objective 3: ensuring the capacity and sustainability of Veterinary Services*
  - o It would be necessary to focus on the areas that lead to an improvement in the structure and capabilities of Veterinary Services, namely: technical and management training, legislation, capacity building programmes (twinning), PVS Pathway, and Public-Private Partnerships.
  
- *Cross-cutting area A: scientific excellence*
  - o The OIE maintains a non-delegable role in the field of animal health, including the collection and dissemination of scientific information to enable its Members to take science-based decisions;
  - o This means ensuring that Members have access to the best skills and knowledge;
  - o All Member Countries have the same opportunities to nominate experts as members of the Specialist Commissions, in order to ensure representativeness and heterogeneity within the Commissions;
  - o The collaborative approach that the OIE is taking with other international organisations, such as FAO and WHO, under the "One Health" concept, especially on the issue of antimicrobial resistance, is very important for the region and should be continued. This approach has allowed the region to develop joint actions between official Veterinary Services and public health services.
  
- *Cross-cutting area B: diversity, inclusiveness, engagement, transparency*
  - o This should remain a priority and even be strengthened;
  - o The selection of members of the Specialist Commissions and members of the Regional Commission bureaux is of vital importance to the OIE. The model used in the Americas to focus on the geographic balance of nominees for the different member positions is an excellent model of inclusive participation. It is necessary to encourage experts from regions that are not sufficiently represented in the OIE to participate in the different commissions and working groups;
  - o Transparency needs to be reinforced by providing Member Countries with clearer explanations about the process of selecting candidates, especially regarding the need for ample time when notifying Member Countries that *Ad hoc* groups will be convened, and the criteria used for the selection of such working and *Ad Hoc* Groups members.
  
- *Cross-cutting area C: governance*
  - o One of the most important achievements of the Sixth Strategic has been reform of the OIE and its working methods (Specialist Commissions, applications for official recognition of disease status, performance management, improved technical capacity of human resources);
  - o The Seventh Strategic Plan should be a logical follow-up to the Sixth Strategic Plan, with a structure that is clear and accessible to the Member Countries;
  - o The Member Countries need to understand the strategies, purpose and benefits gained by the OIE's internal reform;
  - o Many countries in the region require greater understanding of good governance and all the factors determining whether or not it exists (as far as the Organisation is concerned).

## **Presentation of Dominican Republic**

14. Dr Nimia Lissette Gómez Rodríguez, Delegate of the Dominican Republic and Vice-President of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas, made a brief presentation of her country's Veterinary Service and highlighted the most important recent actions, including a public-private partnership for surveillance and control of the most relevant avian diseases, as well as the Caribbean Integrated Surveillance System on Antimicrobial Resistance in Agriculture (CISARA) and an operational improvement in certification and authorisation through the implementation of a one-stop shop for foreign trade.
15. The OIE Regional Commission for the Americas welcomed the actions carried out by the Dominican Republic and thanked Dr Gómez Rodríguez for her presentation.

TUESDAY 20 NOVEMBER 2018

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### **Follow up on the recommendations adopted during the Conferences of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas**

16. Dr Luis Barcos, OIE Regional Representative for the Americas, presented an analysis of the recommendations adopted at the past ten Conferences of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas in order to improve the quality of future recommendations. Some of the aspects analysed were the recommended actions, the possibility of having performance indicators, and their estimated level of implementation.
17. Working groups were set up to gain a better understanding of the use and relevance, for the Member Countries, of the recommendations of the Regional Commission Conferences and of the technical items. The lively discussions led to the following conclusions:
  - The recommendations highlight regional contexts and allow Members to proceed jointly in identifying situations, defining agreements and standardising actions developed at regional level. The recommendations serve to define a baseline for the Member Countries, taking into consideration those requiring special support, while respecting individual contexts and situations that limit the implementation of recommendations;
  - The recommendations should be easy for Member Countries to implement. They should focus on specific issues, be drafted promptly and have clear and relevant objectives for Veterinary Services in the region;
  - Regional organisations regularly use OIE recommendations to plan region-wide activities, as they consider them to have already been identified as important by Member Countries;
  - The questionnaires for the technical items are useful and should be continued because they take into account the regional context. The response rate should be high, otherwise the picture of the situation in the region will not be complete;
  - The questionnaires should be short, precise, easy to answer (multiple choice) and be sent in a timely manner. Consideration could perhaps be given to testing the questionnaire on a small group prior to sending it to all Delegates, to make sure it is easy to answer;
  - Where possible, consideration should be given to using information from other surveys by the OIE, or even by OIE partner organisations, to avoid sending repetitive questionnaires. The concept note prepared in advance by the Bureau of the Regional Commission explaining to the rapporteur what the region expects from the technical item is of vital importance. It is even proposed to begin the questionnaire by clarifying its purpose and what is being sought, to give countries a clearer idea when they come to answer questions;

- The rapporteur and the rapporteur's expertise are key to the success of the questionnaire and hence the success of the technical item itself. The idea is that a technical item should not only summarise the answers to the questionnaire but also explain the rapporteur's opinion, based on personal experience;
- Consideration should be given to publishing the results after the Conference to provide countries with the details of the analysis separately;
- The OIE can rely on regional organisations to follow up answers to questionnaires;
- It would be helpful to remind countries of the technical items selected by the Regional Commission as a follow-up after the General Session, to allow countries to include them in their agendas and to inform any new Veterinary Authorities, in cases where there has been a change of authority;
- Consideration should be given to the possibility of setting indicators to measure the level of implementation and/or progress;
- It would be useful to define technical items that address emerging and urgent matters requiring an immediate response and consensus.

### **Analysis of the Animal Health Situation in Members of the Region during 2017 and 2018**

18. Following the presentation on the analysis of the animal health situation in the region by Dr Paula Cáceres, Head of the OIE World Animal Health Information and Analysis Department (report available in Appendix 3);
19. The OIE Regional Commission for the Americas concluded that:
  - With regard to infection with avian influenza viruses, Member Countries recognise that the disease continues to pose a threat to the Region. Members should put more effort into sharing spatial and temporal details of HPAI in wild birds and LPAI in poultry, so that this data can support risk analysis and surveillance for more informed intervention strategies;
  - The fact that surveillance in migratory birds does not have the same degree of importance in all countries means that notification to the OIE does not necessarily reflect the pattern of this disease in the region;
  - With regard to infection with foot and mouth disease (FMD) virus, Members in the Region recognise that the eradication strategy has been successful, with a very small percentage of the Region yet to achieve official recognition of FMD freedom. However, the recent FMD outbreaks reported to the OIE emphasise that the risk of disease recurrence is still present and the OIE encourages countries to maintain a proper level of surveillance, to ensure early detection of outbreaks and allow the information to be rapidly shared at international level, thereby helping to avoid the risk of disease recurrence;
  - The lack of concrete information from Venezuela is serious. The OIE has withdrawn endorsement for the official FMD programme in Venezuela, and the Colombian Ministry of Agriculture has sent a communiqué to all its counterparts in the region and to relevant regional and international organisations. However, it is still very difficult for countries to keep to their FMD control and eradication targets because their efforts will never be sufficient if measures are not taken in Venezuela. A solution is requested to work with Venezuela and take it to a level where the regional situation can be assessed clearly;

- With regard to equine influenza, the OIE recommends that its Members continue their efforts to improve surveillance for early detection and rapid reporting of outbreaks, and for early detection of antigenic drift in order to improve vaccine efficacy. The provision of high-quality information would allow the OIE to identify changes in disease morbidity and mortality and help in identifying risk areas for the appearance of new virus strains;
- With regard to glanders, the disease is considered to be absent in the whole of the Americas Region, with the exception of Brazil. The OIE highly recommends its Members in maintaining the continuous implementation of precautions at borders, including quarantine procedures and testing of imported equids with highly sensitive and specific tests or using a two-tier approach, as these measures are essential in order to prevent the disease from being introduced into free territories;
- With regard to aquatic animal diseases, Members are encouraged to take advantage of the support provided by the OIE to ensure transparent and timely notifications. Members are also encouraged to submit high quality reports for aquatic animal diseases so that the corresponding information can be presented at the next Global Conference for aquatic animal health that will take place in Santiago (Chile) in April 2019;
- Finally, considering the potential impact of emerging diseases like Tilapia Lake Virus, Members are urged to comply with their reporting obligations, as set out in Chapter 1.1. of the *Aquatic Animal Health Code*, in order to prevent the spread of highly impacting aquatic diseases in the Region. For their part, the Members commended the work that the OIE had been doing on the matter and requested the Organisation to continue its actions and support, in particular to improve surveillance and notification, in view of the great impact that production has, not only on exports but also on food security in several countries in the region. It was recognised that training for Focal Points was key, as was the need to build diagnostic and animal health management capacity;
- The OIE will continue to provide support for training and other matters, either through the e-learning platform or face-to-face with staff from the World Animal Health Information and Analysis Department;
- Members of the Region are encouraged to support the project of modernisation of WAHIS. They should support the participation of the selected OIE national Focal Points selected for the Key Users Committee to represent the interests and views of the end users in the project. The project of modernisation of WAHIS will help to improve and even further countries' transparency and data accessibility, including the ability to conduct analyses that are not possible under the current system, and will contribute to a rapid, effective regional and global response to threats posed by animal diseases.

#### **Global situation of African swine fever (ASF)**

20. At the request of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas, a presentation by the OIE World Animal Health Information and Analysis Department concerning the global situation of ASF was included in the agenda of the Conference. The presentation was given by Dr Montserrat Arroyo.
21. After the short presentation, the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas highlighted the following:
  - ASF is considered to be absent throughout the Americas region. To maintain this situation, it is important that countries maintain the continuous implementation of precautionary measures at the borders established in the *Terrestrial Animal Health Code* (Chapter 15.1) and biosecurity at farm level;

- The Americas Region should also reassess the risks of introduction of ASF on this continent in the light of the epidemiological developments;
- In Europe the disease has been contained in certain zones and most of the outbreaks reported in wildlife. For domestic animals, higher numbers of outbreaks in backyard pigs, while commercial farms affected are mainly small in size. In Asia, the role of wildlife is still unknown and most of the reported outbreaks occurred in commercial farms so far.

**African swine fever in Europe:  
situation, measures and policy coordination  
under the GF-TADs for Europe**

22. Dr Francisco Reviriego Gordejo, Adviser at the European Commission, presented details about the situation, measures and policy coordination under the Global Framework for Progressive Control of Transboundary Animal Diseases (GF-TADs) for Europe, in order to facilitate discussions about ASF and enable experience-sharing among the regions.
23. After the presentation, the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas noted the following:
- ASF presents a specific challenge due to the occurrence of the disease in wild boar and domestic pigs, which required Europe to develop a new strategic approach to complement the classic control and eradication measures. This approach is based on long-term wild boar management measures (sophisticated selective hunting of adult females, feeding ban in risk areas and fast carcass removal and safe disposal), together with short-term measures for domestic pigs (raising awareness of passive surveillance and behavioural risks, continuous enforcement of the swill feeding ban and enhanced biosecurity);
  - Regionalisation is applied in the EU in line with OIE standards and as an integral part of the EU comprehensive animal health strategy. The EU strategy aimed to ensure optimum disease control and to minimise the negative impact of disease outbreaks on the EU internal market and on exports, without lowering the safety levels of commodities that are traded/exported in accordance with the principles of the World Trade Organization Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS Agreement). The key elements for successful regionalisation in the EU are: flexibility, predictability, transparency, proportionality (risk-based) and rapidity;
  - The European policy to tackle transboundary diseases is supported by the robust and efficient coordination mechanisms put in place under GF-TADs for Europe, with the support of the EU (e.g. ASF and LSD), which provides financial, technical and scientific advice. GF-TADS for Europe has been extremely important for sharing information on best practice through its Standing Groups of Experts.
24. After the two presentations on ASF, the Regional Commission highlighted the following:
- It was agreed that the current ASF situation was arousing great concern among Member Countries in the Americas because of the devastating impact that the introduction of ASF would have, coupled with the difficulty of controlling and eradicating it;
  - In view of this and current trade flows, it was agreed that prevention measures needed to be stepped up. This includes increased surveillance and the implementation of biosecurity programmes, together with effective communication. All these measures will require a regional approach linking all stakeholders, including producers and veterinary professionals;

- As preparedness is also needed for the possible emergence of ASF, joint actions by the OIE and other regional and sub-regional organisations are required. Given that GF-TADs has proved useful in coordinating ASF actions in Europe, experience-sharing between the Regional Steering Committees could be beneficial, coupled with the extension activities proposed by the European Union;
- In view of the fact that, as yet, no ASF vaccine exists, compliance with OIE standards, regionalisation and epidemiological monitoring remain some of the most effective measures for limiting the spread of the disease, within a framework of coordinated actions.

### **Foot and Mouth Disease: Challenges in the Americas**

25. Dr Javier Suárez Hurtado, Delegate of Bolivia to the OIE and President of the South American Committee for the Control of Foot and Mouth Disease (COSALFA), gave details about FMD control in the Americas, COSALFA and the Hemispheric Programme for the Eradication of Foot and Mouth Disease (PHEFA), as well as about the last stage of PHEFA and the challenges facing the Americas.
26. After the presentation, the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas noted the following:
- Added to the technical challenges in controlling and eradicating FMD in the Americas, there are major political challenges. The situation in Venezuela transcends the technical sphere, making regional collaboration on this issue vital to overcoming the difficulties. The PANAFTOSA vaccination programme in support of Venezuela is welcomed but, while vaccination is considered a useful tool, it is only one of the tools available and, given the complexity of the case, greater efforts are needed, especially in terms of surveillance and notification. The possibility of a regional approach is proposed, which could be similar to the one used by European countries to tackle the ASF crisis. Relevant regional organisations are called upon to support the region in this matter;
  - The PHEFA goal of eradicating FMD by 2020 is being jeopardised by the Venezuelan crisis and, in all likelihood, it will be necessary to review the last phase of the programme and to set a new target date by which the region can be better prepared. COSALFA could take the lead in clarifying how to tackle the situation with Venezuela;
  - COSALFA will work on reviewing PHEFA to make it a regional ministerial commitment;
  - As the OIE is first and foremost a technical organisation responsible for standard-setting and providing technical expertise, it is unable to interfere in the internal affairs of its Members, especially when they do not accept the support that the Organisation offers them. It is very difficult for the Organisation to provide support in the case of Venezuela because, in spite of the many overtures made to the country, there has been no positive response at all from the Competent Authorities;
  - Venezuela's membership is questioned, and doubts are raised as to whether the country is still a Member of the Organisation, in view of the fact that, in recent years, it has withdrawn from other organisations in which it played an active part in the past;
  - The OIE confirmed that Venezuela is still a member of the Organisation and explained that an OIE Member remains so until that Member decides otherwise. However, the OIE understands the countries' concerns, especially Colombia, as they are directly affected by Venezuela's failure to comply with its basic obligations for notification and transparency as a Member of the Organisation.



### **Global overview of Public-Private Partnerships in the field of Veterinary Services**

27. Dr Isabelle Dieuzy-Labaye, OIE Senior Advisor, Public-Private Partnerships, gave details about the global overview of public-private partnerships in the field of Veterinary Services.
28. The OIE Regional Commission for the Americas highlighted the following:
- The OIE is supportive of the development of impactful and sustainable public-private partnerships (PPPs) in the veterinary domain to strengthen national Veterinary Services;
  - As part of the Public Private Progress initiative, supported by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and in collaboration with CIRAD, the OIE conducted a global survey in 2017, soliciting both the public and private sectors to share their experience of partnerships in support of Veterinary Services. The survey results form the basis for a typology of PPPs in the field of Veterinary Services (see [online] <http://www.oie.int/es/para-los-periodistas/oie-public-private-partnerships/>) and highlight key success factors for impact and sustainability;
  - The OIE recently gathered several experts to consult on the development of a OIE PPP guidelines to help Member Countries and private partners alike to evaluate, initiate, develop and maintain successful PPPs in the veterinary domain. It is widely recognized that these PPPs represent a powerful tool to optimize the performance of Veterinary Services, with related benefits for both public and private partners. The OIE PPP guidelines will be released in 2019 and accompanied with relevant training and dissemination activities.
29. This presentation paved the way for the presentation of Technical Item I.

#### **Technical Item I (with questionnaire):**

##### **The role of private veterinarians in official Veterinary Service programmes: mechanisms for interaction, accreditation and quality control in a globalised world**

30. Technical Item I on “*The role of private veterinarians in official Veterinary Service programmes: mechanisms for interaction, accreditation and quality control in a globalised world*”, presented by Dr Hernán Rojas, Director of CERES BCA and former Chief Veterinary Officer of Chile, prompted a lively discussion among the participants, which will be reflected in a recommendation.

#### **Measures to prevent and control new world screwworm (*Cochliomyia hominivorax*)**

31. Dr John B. Welch, Screwworm Program Liaison to USDA-ARS, stressed the benefits for producers and wildlife in continental North America of eradicating new world screwworm using the sterile insect technique. He reported on its discovery in Key deer (*Odocoileus virginianus clavium*) in Florida Keys in 2016 and its spread to a further 13 keys. He detailed the control measures, including the breeding and release of around 188 million sterile flies, which led to eradication being declared in March 2017.

32. The OIE Regional Commission for the Americas concluded that:
- New world screwworm (*Cochliomyia hominivorax*) remains a major disease in the Americas region;
  - Early detection and the application of control measures reduces its impact on domestic and wild animals;
  - It is important to carry on surveillance, prevention and control actions in a coordinated manner, drawing on GF-TADs;
  - The situation of currently free countries, which require the development of early response plans, differs from that of countries where the infestation is present, underlining that the cost of eradication far exceeds the cost of controlling it.

WEDNESDAY 21 NOVEMBER 2018

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**Technical item II (without questionnaire):  
Sustainability of Veterinary Services:  
experiences and challenges**

33. Dr Jaime Romero, International Expert on Agricultural Health and Food Safety at IICA, presented Technical Item II on “*Sustainability of Veterinary Services: experiences and challenges*”. The presentation was followed by a lively discussion among the participants, which will be reflected in a recommendation.

**Panel discussion: Best practices and challenges in operationalising the “One Health”  
approach for supporting the development of  
National Action Plans on antimicrobial resistance**

34. A panel discussion among representatives from Canada, Cuba, Uruguay, the OIE, FAO and PANAFTOSA PAHO/WHO enabled countries to comment on their experiences of developing and implementing national action plans on AMR, including examples of best practice that could be useful to other countries in the region, as well as on the challenges they face on a day-to-day basis. The panel discussion also enabled organisations to comment on their current activities, and those planned in the future, to help countries to implement their national action plans. They also highlighted the challenges they face in carrying out these activities.
35. The OIE Regional Commission for the Americas concluded that:
- The One Health approach has proved to be the best way of addressing the AMR problem, and recognition was given to the actions of FAO/OIE/WHO Tripartite Alliance representatives in the Americas as a complement to other regional and sub-regional organisations and their activities;
  - The best results in developing national action plans have been achieved by integrating all the sectors involved under a multidisciplinary approach;
  - One of the most important challenges to the development of national action plans has been achieving mutual understanding and establishing communication channels between the different ministries (usually those of agriculture, health and environment), as well as other stakeholders. The difficulty in involving the competent areas of the environment was also raised;
  - A need was also identified to provide training at all levels, from decision-makers to producers;

- It is necessary to continue implementing OIE standards and guidelines, promoting the responsible and prudent use of antimicrobials and taking into account the OIE list of antimicrobial agents of veterinary importance;
- It is also important to continue providing information for the global database on antimicrobial agents intended for use in animals.

#### **Facilitation of Horse Movement: State of play in the Americas**

36. Dr Marta Rojas Figueroa, Consultant of FEI, gave details on the implementation of actions to facilitate the movement of high health, high performance (HHP) horses in the Americas.
37. The OIE Regional Commission for the Americas noted that:
  - The OIE has established specific standards and guidelines to facilitate the movement of HHP horses, including Chapter 4.16 of the *Terrestrial Code* entitled “High health status horse subpopulation”, the OIE *Handbook for the Management of High Health, High Performance Horses*, and Chapter 5.12. of the *Terrestrial Code*, which includes a *model passport for international movement of competition horses*, together with a *list of diseases which should be considered for inclusion in the veterinary certificate which accompanies the passport*;
  - The participation of the various regional and sub-regional organisations in the Americas will also result in substantial progress on the matter;
  - There is interest in implementing coordinated work programmes under public-private partnerships. To this end, working group meetings have been held in Central America and in the member countries of the Permanent Veterinary Committee of the Southern Cone (CVP);
  - It is necessary for each Member to formalise its working groups and prepare implementation timelines. This calls for the identification of contact points for each stakeholder, official recognition of compartments, a definition of the diseases to be included in surveillance plans, and consensus on the sanitary requirements for this special category of horses.

#### **Presentations from the New OIE Member Countries of the region**

38. Dr Arnold Dwarkasing, Delegate of Curaçao, OIE Member Country since May 2017, gave a brief presentation of his country’s Veterinary Services and their organisation, responsibilities and relationship with other Veterinary Services in the Caribbean. He highlighted the positives aspects of the OIE membership while recognising that it could have a cost with respect to the participation in many events.
39. Dr Auria King-Cenac, Delegate of Saint Lucia, OIE Member since May 2018, also gave a brief presentation of her country’s Veterinary Services, including their structure, relationship with other services and participation in regional animal health networks.
40. Both Delegates welcomed the support received from other Members in the region in securing OIE membership and acknowledged the advantages and benefits of their recent participation in OIE activities.
41. The OIE Regional Commission for the Americas concluded that it was necessary to continue supporting efforts to increase the number of OIE Members in the Americas, particularly Caribbean countries.

**The OIE Standard Setting process:  
discussion on relevant topics in the  
Specialist Commissions reports**

42. Dr Michael David, Director of the International Animal Health Standards Team at the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA APHIS), presented the procedure for the revision and adoption of OIE standards, and the most relevant topics currently under discussion.
43. The OIE Regional Commission for the Americas agreed that:
- While Members in the Americas are increasing their participation in and contribution to the OIE standard-setting and amendment process, there are still countries that are not involved in the process, making it vitally important for the region to take action on this;
  - It is necessary for the OIE to continue to support and promote the active participation of its Members in the standard-setting process, including the analysis of reports by the Specialist Commissions and the submission of relevant comments to improve proposed amendments to the OIE *Codes and Manuals*;
  - The most relevant matters of discussion relate mainly to the *Terrestrial Code*: the new chapter on animal welfare and laying hen production systems, as well as revision of the chapters on infection with avian influenza viruses and infection with classical swine fever virus;
  - It is important for Members, where appropriate, to align their laws and regulations with OIE standards and to implement them, as a measure to facilitate trade and minimise unjustified barriers;
  - The Terrestrial Code Commission is aware of both the need to work more inclusively and the fact that many chapters need to be made easier for readers to access and understand in order to facilitate the submission of comments;
  - The region congratulated the IICA for organising meetings bringing together all countries in the region and to support them in reviewing the chapters for the purpose of submitting comments. The next meeting will take place in Costa Rica from 22 to 23 April 2019;
  - Concern is shared by the poultry sector and the agriculture ministries of some Members in the region over the proposed new guidelines on the welfare of laying hens, especially in light of the significant changes proposed by these guidelines to poultry production systems, which, at present, are based on cage production for around 70% of the establishments (poultry farms) in the region. This item was suggested for discussion at the April 2019 meeting.

**Evolution of the OIE PVS Pathway:  
perspectives for the Americas**

44. Dr François Caya, Head of the OIE Regional Activities Department, started his presentation by reminding participants of the discussion that took place at the last Regional Conference, when four myths about the PVS Pathway were dispelled and several options for PVS Pathway evolution to enhance its value to Member Countries were described. He then presented details of the activities carried out since the last Regional Conference, with particular emphasis on the PVS Pathway Think Tank Forum and the evolution of the PVS Pathway, including the new graphical representation, with a special focus on its relevance in the Americas.

45. Following Dr Caya's presentation, the Regional Commission noted the following:

*Regarding the activities proposed under the evolved PVS Pathway:*

- In February 2019, the OIE held a PVS Pathway Orientation Training Workshop for OIRSA member countries to provide them with greater knowledge on how to better take advantage of PVS Pathway mission report recommendations;
- When relevant, Member Countries should request a PVS Evaluation of their Aquatic Animal Health Services;
- OIE Delegates interested in strengthening their inter-sectoral collaboration at the human-animal interface are invited to communicate with their Ministry of Health counterparts and formulate a joint request to the OIE and WHO to conduct an IHR-PVS National Bridging Workshop;
- As funding for PVS Pathway activities in the Americas remains difficult, countries in the region are invited to work with the OIE to identify new funding sources and thereby ensure the Pathway's sustainability in the Americas.

*Regarding future PVS Pathway-related activities*

- The working plan of the OIE Terrestrial and Aquatic Animal Health Standards Commissions will include the revision of Chapter 3.1 on the *Veterinary Services (Quality of Aquatic Animal Health Services – Aquatic Code)* and Chapter 3.2 on the *Evaluation of Veterinary Services (Terrestrial Code only)*. Member Countries are invited to contribute to the revision when draft revisions will be circulated;
- Member Countries should be actively involved in the development of the OIE Seventh Strategic Plan, especially regarding the positioning of the "Strengthening of Veterinary Services through the PVS Pathway" as one of the pillars of OIE's mandate, including considerations for better financing the development and maintenance of related activities through the regular budget.

46. The need was expressed to urge countries to act transparently and publish the results of PVS Pathway missions in order to facilitate data analysis.

### **Discussion of recommendations**

47. Considering that, at the 85th OIE General Session held in Paris in May 2017, the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas adopted "The role of private veterinarians in official Veterinary Service programmes: mechanisms for interaction, accreditation and quality control in a globalised world" as Technical Item I (with questionnaire) to be presented at the 24th Conference of the Regional Commission;
48. Considering that, at the 86th OIE General Session held in Paris in May 2018, the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas adopted "Sustainability of Veterinary Services: experiences and challenges" as Technical Item II (without questionnaire) to be presented at the 24th Conference of the Regional Commission;
49. Considering the complementary nature of these two items;
50. The OIE Regional Commission for the Americas decided to develop a single recommendation encompassing the discussions on both technical items;
51. The draft recommendation was submitted to the participants and then discussed. Some amendments were pointed out, which would be corrected immediately and submitted for final adoption on Friday.
52. Following adoption by the Regional Commission, the recommendation will be submitted for endorsement by the OIE World Assembly of Delegates in May 2019. Once endorsed by the Assembly, it 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  
25th Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas**

53. The President of the Commission asked Delegates present if any of their countries wished to host the 25th Conference of the OIE regional Commission for the Americas.
54. The Delegate of Peru expressed the wish for her country to host the next Conference, to be held tentatively in September 2020.
55. The proposal of Peru was endorsed unanimously.

THURSDAY 22 NOVEMBER 2018

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**Cultural visit**

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

FRIDAY 23 NOVEMBER 2018

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**Addressing the challenges of animal health emergency management: how to engage all interested parties at national, regional and global level to be better prepared?**

57. A round table, led by Dr Etienne Bonbon from the FAO Emergency Management Centre for Animal Health (EMC-AH), brought together representatives from ALA, CAN, CaribVET, EC, CVP, FAO, IICA, OIE, OIRSA and PANAFTOSA to discuss the management of animal health emergencies.
58. The experts at the round table each gave a brief overview of their organisation's mandate and activities with regard to the emergency management of infectious animal diseases, including the challenges faced and opportunities for improving cooperation between the various regional and international organisations. They highlighted the need for preparedness extending from the field level (livestock farmers and private veterinarians) to the global level (international organisations), with Veterinary Services playing the most important role in all cases.
59. Following the round table discussions, the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas made the following conclusions:
  - Animal health emergencies have a greater impact on countries with less developed structures, particularly when it comes to their impact on food security;
  - There are three main challenges in any emergency: rapid management of outbreaks, the adoption of preventive measures and addressing economic and trade repercussions. Focusing on emergency preparedness and response and measuring the economic impacts of emergencies are key to proper emergency management;
  - Future challenges include: the need to link the different areas of government, including Veterinary Services, agricultural extension agencies, national security and customs; building public-private partnerships; extending and improving application of the Critical Competencies in the OIE PVS Tool; collaboration on bioterrorism with other agencies, such as Interpol; and promoting the use of FAO's Good Emergency Management Practice (GEMP) tool and other available tools;
  - OIE standards provide all the elements needed for disease preparedness and response, while the OIE PVS Pathway enables countries to assess their compliance with OIE standards on disease preparedness and response;

- Emergency preparedness and response each call for an inclusive multisector approach involving all stakeholders. To this end, joint work among international and regional organisations, and agencies involved at national level, is key to supporting countries with emergency management and so ensuring prevention and recovery;
- It is important for any disaster prevention and management measure to take into account all levels (from family production systems to industry), especially the management capacity of the different biosecurity levels;
- Cooperation between public health and Veterinary Service officials is also key to ensuring the development of integrated strategies;
- The chapter of the OIE *Terrestrial Animal Health Code* under review on official disease control programmes covers all aspects of collaboration and joint working;
- The OIE has three Collaborating Centres covering the issue, which are available to Members;
- The existence of harmonised legislation, accompanied by regulations, is a factor in successfully preventing the spread of animal diseases;
- Member Countries are recommended to consider the following points to ensure proper emergency management:
  - o Fostering a strong, trusting relationship between farmers and public and private veterinarians;
  - o Fostering trust among the countries involved, especially within a framework of transparency, through the dissemination of information and the exchange of skills and, where possible, financial resources;
  - o Keeping the various communication channels active and up to date, including the use of social networks, as communication plays a crucial role in emergency management;
  - o Taking advantage of training opportunities provided by different organisations in the region, including simulation exercises for all levels and stakeholders, including diagnostic laboratories;
  - o Defining economic and financial tools, including incentive systems, compensation mechanisms, co-financing programmes and financial penalties. The availability of funding for emergency management and recovery is a key aspect;
  - o Using risk-mapping tools to ensure the risk-based surveillance of specific animal diseases;
  - o Predicting the impact of natural disasters and animal disease emergencies on animal health and welfare;
  - o Considering prevention and biosecurity as crucial tools that should be used at all levels.

### **Adoption of the Draft Final Report and Recommendations**

60. An electronic version of the final report was sent to all participants to facilitate review and feedback on the report.
61. Dr Monique Eloit, Director General of the OIE, explained the procedure for adopting the report and the recommendation of the Conference. Comments on the report may be provided up to 10 December 2018; these must be sent to OIE Headquarters and will be reflected in the final version of the report. However, the recommendation must be adopted during the session itself and may not be amended afterwards.
62. The recommendation of the Conference was adopted, including the minor amendments suggested by participants during the discussions.

### **Closing ceremony**

63. Dr Monique Eloit, OIE Director General, thanked the staff of the Dominican Republic's Directorate-General for Livestock and congratulated them on their excellent work in ensuring the success of the Conference. She declared the Conference a success from both a professional and personal standpoint, adding that, thanks to the excellent items presented and to the recommendation issued on the two Conference technical items, the discussions held throughout the week will undoubtedly be extremely useful not only to Members in the region but to Members all across the Organisation, after being adopted by the Assembly in May 2019. She thanked the Rapporteurs for their excellent presentations and the participants for their lively and interesting discussions and for taking part in the poster session. She thanked the host country for the warm welcome and hospitality extended to the participants throughout the week. She ended by thanking the OIE team for its excellent work both before and during the Conference.
64. Dr Mark Schipp, President of the World Assembly of OIE Delegates and Delegate of Australia to the OIE, added his thanks and congratulations to the Government of the Dominican Republic for its excellent organisation of the Conference and for the warm welcome and hospitality extended to participants.
65. Dr Mark Trotman, President of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas and Delegate of Barbados to the OIE, also thanked the host country for its preparatory work and its hospitality and kindness to participants. He also thanked the members of the Regional Commission for their participation and lively discussions throughout a week of intensive work.
66. Dr Nimia Lissette Gómez Rodríguez, Delegate of the Dominican Republic to the OIE, speaking on behalf of the Government of the Dominican Republic and on her own behalf, thanked the participants, her team at the Directorate-General for Livestock, the Rapporteurs and the OIE team for an excellent week of work and for a successful Conference. She wished the participants a safe journey home.
67. Dr Gómez Rodríguez closed the Conference at 11.30 a.m.



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**PROGRAMME**

**SUNDAY 18 NOVEMBER 2018**

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4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. Registration of participants and document distribution

**MONDAY 19 NOVEMBER 2018**

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09:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. Workshop on veterinary paraprofessionals

10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. Registration of participants and document distribution (continued)

2:30 p.m. Opening ceremony

3:10 p.m. - Appointment of the Conference Committee (Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and General Rapporteur)  
- Appointment of session chairpersons and rapporteurs (Technical items and Animal Health Situation)  
- Approval of the Agenda and Programme

3:15 p.m. Group Photo / Break

3:45 p.m. Planning of the OIE Seventh Strategic Plan (Dr Mark Schipp, President of the OIE World Assembly of Delegates and Dr Monique Eloit, OIE Director General)

4:30 p.m. Planning of the OIE Seventh Strategic Plan: The regional vision (Members of the Bureau of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas and regional members of the Council)

5:00 p.m. Discussion

5:30 p.m. Presentation of Dominican Republic (Dr Lissette Gómez, OIE Delegate of Dominican Republic)

5:50 p.m. Introduction to the Posters Session

6:00 p.m. Posters Session

7:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. Welcome cocktail offered by the Host Country

**TUESDAY 20 NOVEMBER 2018**

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8:30 a.m. Follow up on the recommendations adopted during the Conferences of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas (Dr Luis Barcos, OIE Regional Representative for the Americas)

9:15 a.m. Working group Session

10:00 a.m. Working group reporting

10:30 a.m. Break

- 11:00 a.m. Analysis of the Animal Health Situation in Members of the Region during 2017 and 2018 (Dr Paula Cáceres, Head of the OIE Animal Health Information and Analysis Department)
- 11:40 a.m. Discussion
- 12:00 p.m. Global situation of the African swine fever (ASF) (Dr Montserrat Arroyo, OIE Sub Regional Representative for Central America)
- 12:15 p.m. African swine fever in Europe: situation, measures and policy coordination under the GF-TADs for Europe (Dr Francisco Reviriego Gordejo, Adviser, European Commission)
- 12:45 p.m. Discussion
- 1:00 p.m. Lunch
- 2:00 p.m. Foot and Mouth Disease: Challenges in the Americas (Dr Javier Suárez Hurtado, OIE Delegate of Bolivia and President of COSALFA)
- 2:30 p.m. Discussion
- 3:00 p.m. Global overview of Public-Private Partnerships in the field of Veterinary Services (Dr Isabelle Dieuzy-Labaye, OIE Senior Advisor on Public-Private Partnerships)
- 3:30 p.m. Technical item I (with questionnaire): The role of private veterinarians in official Veterinary Service programmes: mechanisms for interaction, accreditation and quality control in a globalised world (Dr Hernán Rojas, Director CERES BCA and former Chief Veterinary officer of Chile)
- 4:15 p.m. Discussion
- 4:45 p.m. Break
- 5:15 p.m. Measures to prevent and control new world screwworm (*Cochliomyia hominivorax*) (Dr John B. Welch, Screwworm Program Liaison to USDA-ARS)
- 5:45 p.m. Discussion
- 6:15 p.m. End of the session

### **WEDNESDAY 21 NOVEMBER 2018**

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- 9:00 a.m. Technical item II (without questionnaire): Sustainability of Veterinary Services: experiences and challenges (Dr Jaime Romero, International expert on agricultural health and food safety at the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA))
- 09:45 a.m. Discussion
- 10:15 a.m. Break  
(Preparation of the Recommendation by designated small group)
- 10:45 a.m. Panel discussion: Best practices and challenges in operationalising the “One Health” approach for supporting the development of National Action Plans on antimicrobial resistance (Delegates and representatives of international and regional organisations previously selected)

- 11:45 p.m. Facilitation of Horse Movement: State of play in the Americas (Dr Marta Rojas, Chile)
- 12:05 p.m. Discussion
- 12:30 p.m. Lunch
- 1:40 p.m. Presentations from the New OIE Member Countries of the region (Delegates from Curaçao and Saint Lucia)
- 2:20 p.m. The OIE Standard Setting process: discussion on relevant topics in the Specialist Commissions reports (Dr Michael David, United States Department of Agriculture)
- 3:00 p.m. Discussion
- 3:40 p.m. Break
- 4:00 p.m. Evolution of the OIE PVS Pathway: perspectives for the Americas (Dr François Caya, Head of the OIE Regional Activities Department)
- 4:30 p.m. Discussion
- 4:45 p.m. Discussion of recommendations
- 5:45 p.m. Proposal of date and venue of the 25<sup>th</sup> Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas
- 6:15 p.m. End of the session
- 7:30 p.m. Dinner offered by the Host Country

#### **THURSDAY 22 NOVEMBER 2018**

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Cultural visit

#### **FRIDAY 23 NOVEMBER 2018**

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- 09:00 a.m. Addressing the challenges of animal health emergency management: how to engage all interested parties at national, regional and global level to be better prepared? (panel discussion with international and regional organisations previously selected)
- 10:30 a.m. Break
- 11:00 a.m. Adoption of the Draft Final Report and Recommendations
- 11:30 a.m. Closing ceremony



### **ANALYSIS OF THE ANIMAL HEALTH SITUATION IN MEMBERS IN THE REGION DURING 2017 AND 2018**

This report is based on information obtained from six-monthly reports, annual reports, immediate notifications and follow-up reports submitted to the OIE through the World Animal Health Information System (WAHIS) by 36 countries and territories<sup>1</sup> in the Americas Region, up to 24 September 2018. Special attention is given to the 2017 and 2018 reporting period.

The report reviews the situation in the Americas Region regarding some specific diseases notified during this period (infection with avian influenza viruses, infection with foot and mouth disease virus, equine influenza, glanders, acute hepatopancreatic necrosis disease and tilapia lake virus disease) and also reviews plans for the future WAHIS system.

As of 24 September 2018, 87% (28/32) of OIE Members in the Region had submitted both of their six-monthly reports on terrestrial animal diseases for 2017 and 22% (7/32) had submitted the report for the first semester of 2018; 75% (24/32) of Members had submitted both of their six-monthly reports on aquatic animal diseases for 2017 and 19% (6/32) had submitted the report for the first semester of 2018.

In addition, the Falkland Islands, Greenland, St. Helena and St. Vincent and the Grenadines submitted information through six-monthly reports for 2017. St. Vincent and the Grenadines also submitted information through its six-monthly report for 2018.

Between 1 January 2017 and 24 September 2018, 33 immediate notifications and 103 follow-up reports were submitted for terrestrial animal diseases and eight immediate notifications and seven follow-up reports for aquatic animal diseases.

Members are encouraged to continue their efforts to submit information in a timely fashion. In the context of the launch of the new version of WAHIS, Members with reports still outstanding for 2018 and previous years are encouraged to submit them as soon as possible so that their animal health information can be updated in WAHIS and shared with the global community.

#### **1. Infection with avian influenza viruses**

As reported at the 23rd Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas, held in Bolivia in November 2016, and at the 86th OIE General Session in May 2018, infection with avian influenza viruses (AI) continues to pose a significant global threat to animal health and public health. This section will therefore review the current situation in the Americas Region regarding infection with AI viruses (both highly pathogenic AI [HPAI] and low pathogenic AI [LPAI] in poultry, as well as HPAI in birds other than poultry [including wild birds]). The situation in the Region regarding implementation of selected recommendations, relating to AI notification to the OIE and the sharing of genetic information with the OIE network, issued at the end of the 23rd Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas will then be described<sup>2</sup>.

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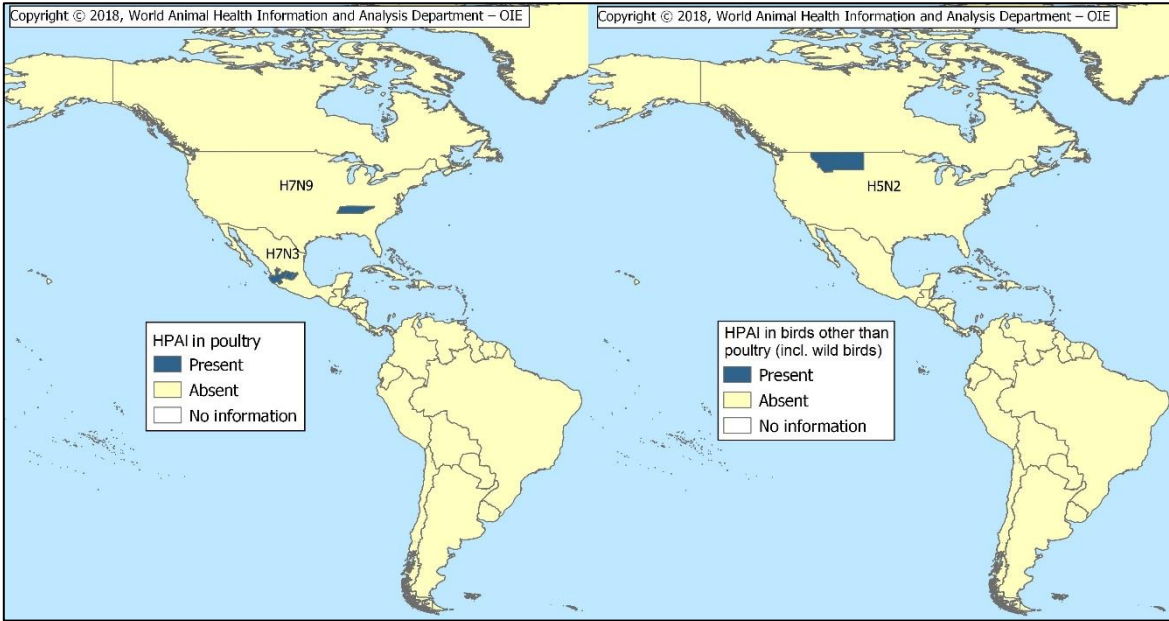
<sup>1</sup> This number includes the 32 Members of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas, as well as the Falkland Islands, Greenland, St. Helena and St. Vincent and the Grenadines

<sup>2</sup> Recommendations of Conferences of OIE Regional Commissions organised since 1 June 2016 endorsed by the World Assembly of Delegates of the OIE on 25 May 2017, [http://www.oie.int/fileadmin/Home/eng/About\\_us/docs/pdf/CR2017/A\\_REC\\_COM\\_2017.pdf](http://www.oie.int/fileadmin/Home/eng/About_us/docs/pdf/CR2017/A_REC_COM_2017.pdf)

The recent geographical distribution of HPAI in countries and territories of the Americas, based on information collected through WAHIS during the period from 1 January 2017 to 24 September 2018, is shown in Figure 1. During this period, 35 countries and territories provided information on HPAI, which was reported present by Mexico in poultry and by the United States of America (USA) in poultry and wild birds.

Both Mexico and the USA reported HPAI by means of immediate notifications. The USA first reported the recurrence of HPAI (subtype H5N2) in a wild bird in the State of Montana. The sample was collected in December 2016 as part of the hunter-harvested wild bird AI surveillance programme and the event was closed in March 2017, as no further cases had been detected. The USA then reported the recurrence of HPAI (subtype H7N9) in poultry in the State of Tennessee. Two farms were affected and the country indicated that the strain was not the same as the Chinese H7N9 lineage that had impacted poultry and infected humans in Asia. The event was closed in August 2017 and, in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 10.4. of the OIE *Terrestrial Animal Health Code*, the USA self-declared itself free from HPAI. Mexico reported a recurrence due to subtype H7N3 in commercial poultry in April 2017, in the State of Jalisco. The subclinical infection was detected following routine active surveillance, as animals had been vaccinated, the last vaccination having taken place 18 weeks before the detection. The event was resolved in May 2017. Finally, Mexico reported another HPAI recurrence due to subtype H7N3, which occurred in commercial poultry in February 2018, in the States of Guanajuato and Queretaro. The event comprising four outbreaks was also detected following routine active surveillance and, as of 24 September, it was still on-going.

**Figure 1. Distribution of HPAI in countries and territories of the Americas Region in 2017 and 2018, in poultry (left) and birds other than poultry, including wild birds (right) – labels indicate the subtypes reported (up to 24 September 2018)**



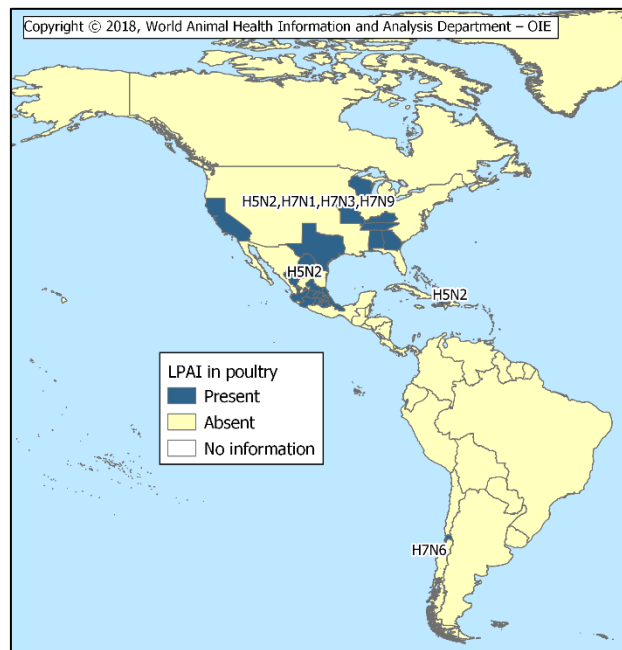
The recent geographical distribution of LPAI in countries and territories of the Americas Region, based on information collected through WAHIS during the period from 1 January 2017 to 24 September 2018, is shown in Figure 2. During this period, a total of 35 countries and territories provided information on LPAI in poultry, which was reported present by 14% (5<sup>3</sup>/35) of them.

<sup>3</sup> Chile, Dominican Republic, Haiti, Mexico and the United States of America



During this period, LPAI was reported by means of immediate notifications by three countries in the Region. LPAI recurrences were reported in the Dominican Republic in September 2017 (subtype H5N2) and in the USA in March 2017 (subtypes H5N2 and H7N9), February and March 2018 (subtype H7N1) and September 2018 (subtype H7N3). As of 24 September 2018, four of these events had been resolved and the last event was still on-going. The most notable event during the period of interest was the first occurrence of LPAI in poultry (subtype H7N6) in the country that was reported by Chile. The disease occurred in December 2016 and affected three poultry farms, containing more than 380 000 animals. The national authorities indicated that, according to the epidemiological analysis, the most likely source of infection was transmission of the virus (which was of South American lineage) through wild birds. The event was resolved in March 2017 and Chile then declared itself free from notifiable AI with effect from 9 June 2017.

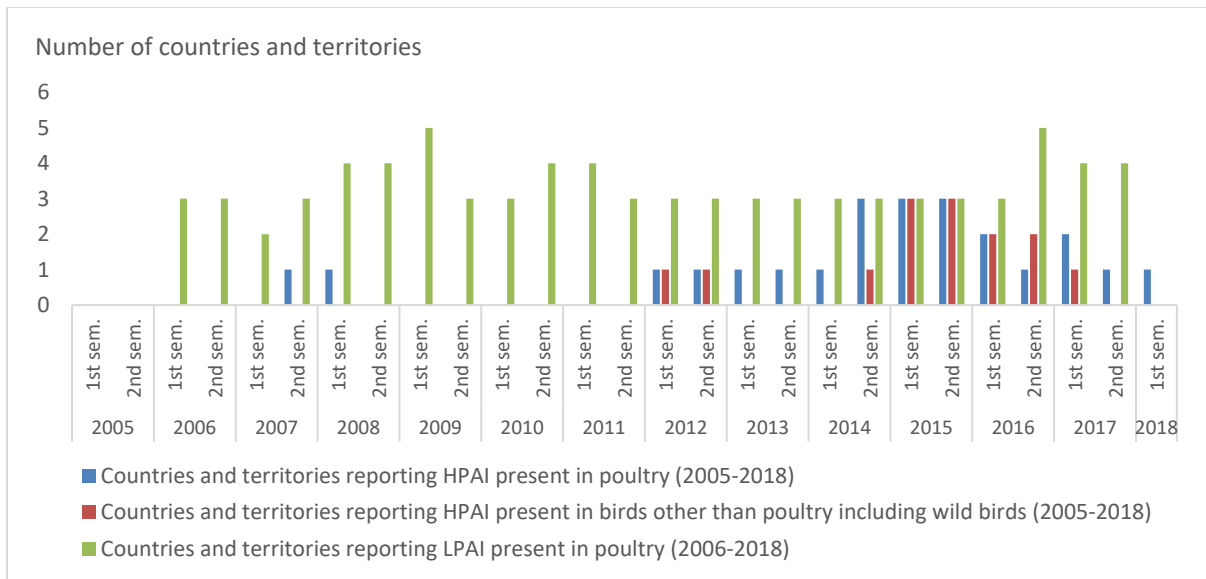
**Figure 2. Distribution of LPAI in poultry in countries and territories of the Americas Region in 2017 and 2018 (up to 24 September 2018) – labels indicate the subtypes reported**



The variety of subtypes reported in the HPAI- and LPAI-affected countries is remarkable and shows the complexity of AI dynamics in the Region.

The following analysis describes the trend of AI in the Region (HPAI since 2005; LPAI since 2006, the year it was included in the OIE List). Figure 3 shows the number of reporting countries and territories in the Americas Region that notified HPAI and LPAI present, by semester. LPAI in poultry has constantly been reported present in the Region during the whole period of analysis, by two to five countries and territories each semester, while HPAI has been reported more sporadically. However, it should be noted that HPAI in poultry has been present in the Region in each semester for the past seven years, with a maximum of three countries affected concomitantly in 2014 and 2015. HPAI in birds other than poultry, including wild birds, has been more rarely reported. The results shown for the 1st semester of 2018 are still only partial, as most of the countries and territories in the Region had not yet submitted their six-monthly report for that period by 24 September 2018.

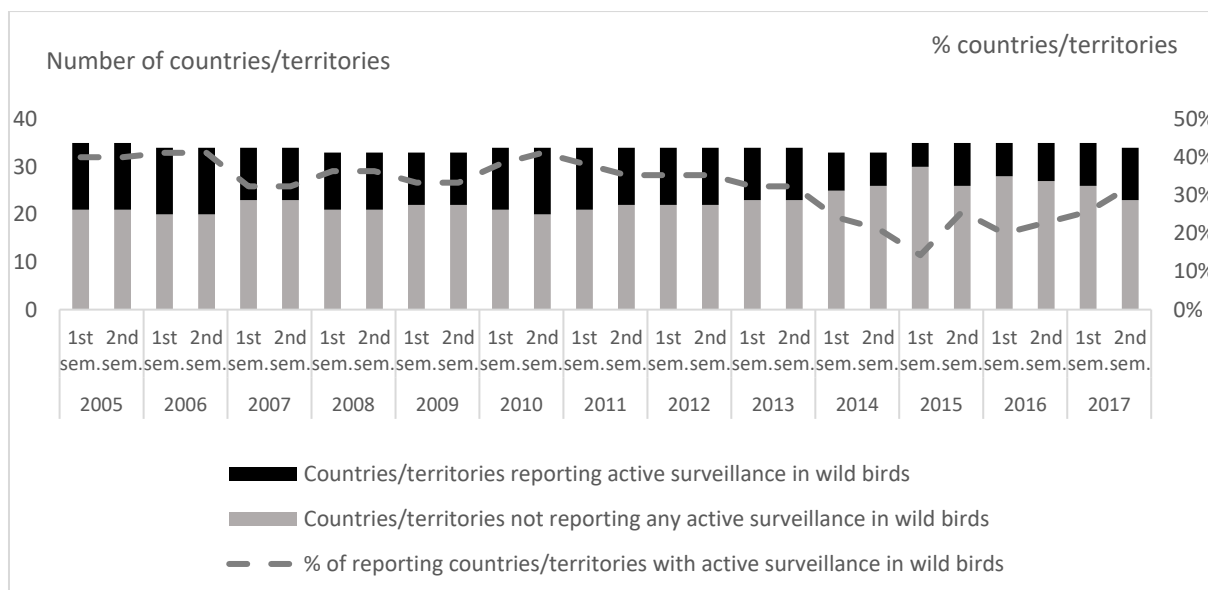
**Figure 3. Number of reporting countries and territories in the Americas Region for each semester between 2005 and 2018 that notified HPAI and LPAI present (data based on reports received up to 24 September 2018)**



The following paragraphs describe the Regional situation regarding four selected recommendations, relating to AI notification to the OIE and the sharing of genetic information with the OIE network, issued at the end of the 23rd Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas<sup>2</sup> and evaluates what progress was made in 2017.

Firstly, the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas recommended that **“Members conduct active wild bird surveillance to track and monitor AI viruses in the wild bird population, in particular in aquatic wild birds (...).”** In order to evaluate Regional compliance with the recommendation, the percentage of reporting countries and territories in the Americas that reported implementation of active surveillance in wild birds through their six-monthly reports was measured for the period from 2005 to 2017, and the corresponding trend was analysed. The results for the period from 2005 to 2016 were considered representative of the background situation and those for 2017 were considered representative of the evolution after the last Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas. The results are presented in Figure 4. The trend, analysed using a generalised linear model with binomial distribution, shows a significant decrease during the whole period (estimate: -0.03;  $p < 0.001$ ), indicating a deterioration of the situation in the Region. However, it should be highlighted that the decrease mainly occurred between 2005 (40% of reporting countries/territories) and the first semester of 2015, to a minimum value of 14%. After that semester, a marked increase was observed, up to 32% in the second semester of 2017. In particular, a marked increase in the percentage has been observed in the past two years, although the Region has not yet reached the level of 2005 and 2006. Taking into account the latest reports received, two-thirds of the reporting countries and territories in the Region do not report that they are conducting any active surveillance in wild birds. Disease absence in these countries and territories might therefore not have been fully verified, and HPAI distribution in wild birds may consequently be underestimated.

**Figure 4. Percentage of the reporting countries and territories in the Americas Region for each semester between 2005 and 2017 that notified active surveillance in wild birds (data based on reports received up to 24 September 2018)**



Secondly, the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas recommended that **“Members continue to provide detailed spatial and temporal information on AI occurrence in both domestic poultry and wildlife through WAHIS”**. Regarding this recommendation, the results for the period from 2006 to 2016 were considered representative of the background situation and those for 2017 were considered representative of the evolution after the last Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas. In the case of HPAI in poultry, three countries reported being affected at least once between 2007 and 2017 and they all provided spatial and temporal details in each report. In the case of HPAI in other birds, including wild birds, the same three countries reported being affected at least once between 2012 and 2017 but the provision of spatial and temporal details in the reports was far more irregular. As of 24 September 2018, no spatial or temporal details had been provided for HPAI occurrences in wild birds in 2017. Lastly, in the case of LPAI in poultry, eight countries reported being affected at least once between 2006 and 2017. Four of them consistently provided spatial and temporal details in each report, one of them started providing spatial and temporal details in each report starting from 2011 after five years of disease presence, while the three others either did not provide spatial and temporal details or provided details in only a few reports. These results show discrepancies in the level of detail provided on one hand for HPAI in poultry, and on the other hand for HPAI in wild birds or LPAI in poultry, with no significant improvement in 2017 compared with previous years.

Thirdly, the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas recommended that **“Members submit AI 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)”**. Indeed, every six months OFFLU coordinates inputs from OIE/FAO Reference Centres and national veterinary laboratories to provide AI virus data for consideration at the subsequent WHO Vaccine Composition Meeting (VCM). These data are needed to update pre-pandemic candidate vaccine viruses for human vaccines against zoonotic viruses of concern, and to contribute to the WHO biannual report on “Antigenic and genetic characteristics of zoonotic influenza viruses and development of candidate vaccine viruses for pandemic preparedness”. At the February 2017 WHO VCM meeting, sequence data for 248 H5, H7 and H9 AI virus subtypes were contributed by OFFLU Animal Influenza Experts from 32 animal health laboratories in 24 countries, in Europe, Asia, Africa and the Americas. In the Americas, the countries contributing data included Chile and the USA. At the September 2017 meeting, a record number of submissions was achieved. Sequence data for 341 H5, H7 and H9 AI virus subtypes and antigenic data for 49 viruses were contributed to OFFLU by animal health laboratories in 36 countries in Europe, Asia, Africa and the Americas<sup>4</sup>. In the February 2018 meeting, avian influenza sequence data for 168 H5, H7

<sup>4</sup> OFFLU Annual Report 2017, [http://www.offlu.net/fileadmin/home/en/publications/pdf/OFFLU\\_Annual\\_Report\\_2017.pdf](http://www.offlu.net/fileadmin/home/en/publications/pdf/OFFLU_Annual_Report_2017.pdf)

and H9 viruses were contributed by animal health laboratories in 25 countries representing Europe, Asia, Africa and the Americas. These results show the Regional contribution to support OFFLU activities.

Fourthly, the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas recommended that **“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”**. The OIE informs its Members in the Americas Region that new functionalities have been planned for the geographic information system (GIS) in the upgraded version of WAHIS, and for the report modules and the back-office and front-office systems to meet these needs. The WAHIS modernisation project will help to improve still further countries’ transparency and data accessibility and will contribute to a rapid, effective regional and global response to the threat posed by animal diseases.

In conclusion, this section shows that AI has been posing a threat to the Region for several years. In 2017, the HPAI event in the USA and the epidemiological analysis conducted on the LPAI event in Chile showed that a variety of AI viruses are circulating within wildlife in the Americas. Members of the Region are therefore urged to continue their efforts to conduct AI surveillance in both poultry and non-poultry birds including wildlife, in compliance with the OIE standards detailed in Chapter 10.1. of the OIE *Terrestrial Animal Health Code*. As shown in this section, only 32% of the reporting countries and territories in the Americas Region reported the implementation of active surveillance in wild birds in 2017. Although some efforts have been noted since 2016 and recommendations have been made by the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas on this matter, this percentage remains relatively low when compared to the situation reported in the Region for the panzootic crisis years, 2005 and 2006.

Furthermore, Members of the Region are encouraged to put more efforts into sharing spatial and temporal details of HPAI in wild birds and LPAI in poultry, so that these data can support risk analysis and surveillance and intervention strategies. Additional functionalities are planned for the modernised version of WAHIS to support these needs, which can only be met if sufficiently detailed information is provided by countries and territories using the system.

In this perspective, the OIE continues to support its Members by monitoring the evolution of the disease in the Region and throughout the world using WAHIS, to alert countries to the occurrence of exceptional events, and to produce the OIE’s periodic global situation report<sup>5</sup> to support a clearer understanding of this ongoing complex and highly dynamic epizootic. OFFLU, one of the objectives of which is to exchange scientific data and biological materials within the network, analyse such data and share its findings with the wider scientific community, is also of primary importance for understanding and controlling AI. The OIE thanks its Members in the Region for their support for OFFLU activities and encourages them to pursue their efforts in the future.

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<sup>5</sup> OIE Situation Report for avian influenza, <http://www.oie.int/en/animal-health-in-the-world/update-on-avian-influenza/2018/>

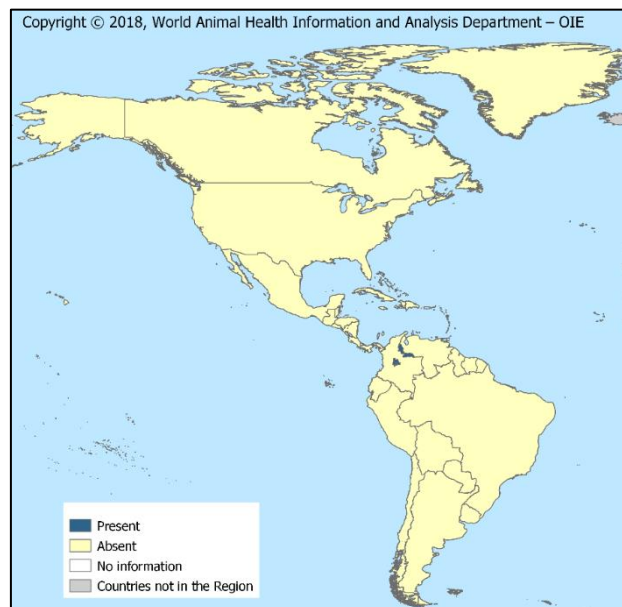
## 2. Infection with foot and mouth disease virus

Infection with foot and mouth disease virus (FMD) is one of the priority diseases for control and eradication in the Americas. The Global FMD Control Strategy was jointly developed by the OIE and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), under the Global Framework for the Progressive Control of Transboundary Animal Diseases (GF-TADs). The Global FMD Control Strategy was endorsed by the OIE and FAO in 2012.

The recent geographical distribution of FMD in Members of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas, based on information collected through WAHIS between 1 January 2017 and 24 September 2018, is shown in Figure 5. During this period, a total of 35 countries and territories provided information on the disease, and Colombia was the only country that reported the disease as being present in its territory.

Colombia reported the presence of FMD by means of immediate notifications. In 2017, Colombia submitted three different immediate notifications to the OIE for the recurrence of serotype O. The first event, which involved 125 sheep and 2637 cattle, started in June 2017 in the administrative divisions of Yacopi, Cundinamarca and Caparrapi, adjacent to the border with Venezuela. The event was declared resolved on 15 August. A second event, involving 136 cattle, started on 11 June in the administrative division of Arauca and was declared resolved on 29 June. Finally, on 14 July, a third event, involving 330 cattle, started in the administrative division of Norte De Santander and was declared resolved on 4 August. The illegal movement of animals was reported to be the source of infection for the first and third events, whereas feeding of swine with waste of animal origin transported to the affected area and fomites were considered to be the source of infection for the second event. In April 2018 Colombia advised the OIE that FMD had been confirmed following the detection and immediate quarantine of illegally imported cattle. The event was treated in accordance Article 5.1.4 of the *Terrestrial Animal Health Code* and did not affect the status of Colombia.

**Figure 5. Distribution of FMD (serotype O) in countries and territories of the Americas Region in 2017 and 2018 (up to 24 September 2018)<sup>6</sup>**

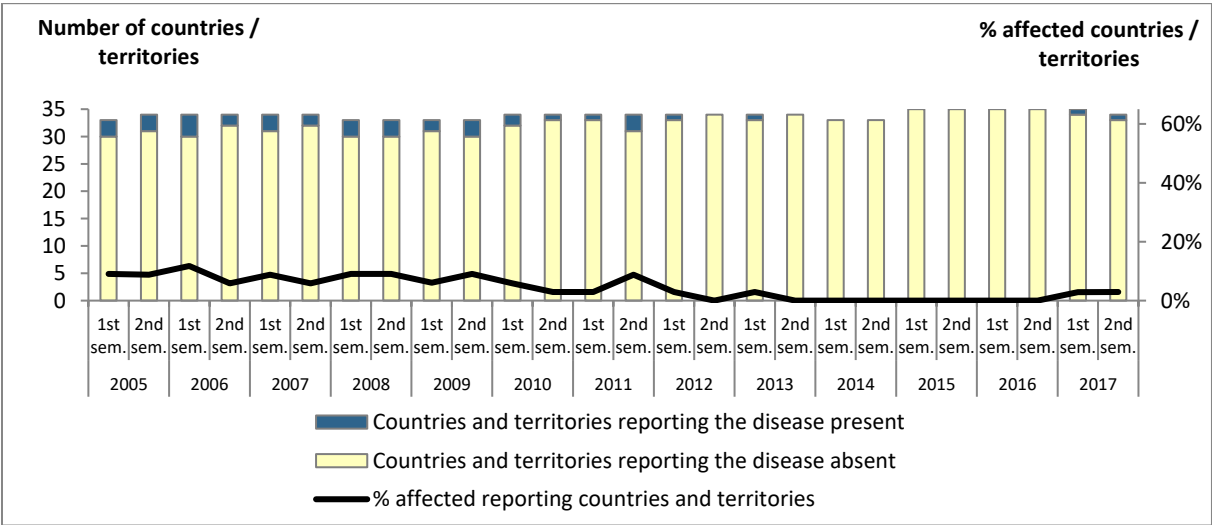


<sup>6</sup> The withdrawal of the endorsement of Venezuela's control programme for FMD with effect from September 2017 is noted on the OIE website: <http://www.oie.int/en/animal-health-in-the-world/official-disease-status/fmd/withdrawal-of-the-endorsement-of-oie-official-control-programme-for-fmd/>

The following section describes the trend in notifications of FMD since 2005, to evaluate its historical evolution in the Region. From 2005 to 2017, an average of two countries (4% of reporting countries and territories) notified the presence of FMD per semester (Figure 6). The trend in the percentage of countries and territories reporting the disease present in the last 13 years illustrates the progressive eradication of FMD. Up to 2011, an average of three countries (7% of countries and territories) reported the disease present. In 2012 and 2013, only sporadic recurrences of the disease were observed, with the recurrence of serotype A (Venezuela) and serotype O (Paraguay and Venezuela). Thereafter, no countries reported any outbreaks until the first semester 2017, when the recurrence of serotype O was reported in Colombia.

The trend in the percentage of affected countries, analysed using a generalised linear model with binomial distribution, shows a significant decrease during the whole period (estimate: -0.022238; p<0.001), indicating the progressive eradication of the disease from the Region.

**Figure 6. Percentage of the reporting countries and territories for each semester between 2005 and 2017 that notified FMD present, in the Americas Region (data based on reports received up to 24 September 2018)**



The success of the implementation of the Global FMD Control Strategy in the Region is highlighted by the high number of Members that obtained or maintained official recognition of their FMD free status in 2018: 56% of the Members (18<sup>7</sup>/32) were recognised as “FMD free where vaccination is not practised”, 6% (2<sup>8</sup>/32) as “FMD free where vaccination is practised”, while 16% (5<sup>9</sup>/32) were recognised as having both an “FMD free zone where vaccination is not practised” and an “FMD free zone where vaccination is practised”.

In view of the importance of FMD control and eradication in the Region, the next part of this section describes the trend in the surface area in the Region officially recognised as FMD free (countries and zones) since 2012.

Out of the 20 Members recognised as “officially free” (with or without vaccination), 17 of them have obtained and maintained their status since 2012.

<sup>7</sup> Belize, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, France (French Guiana, Guadeloupe and Martinique), Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, Suriname and United States of America.

<sup>8</sup> Paraguay and Uruguay

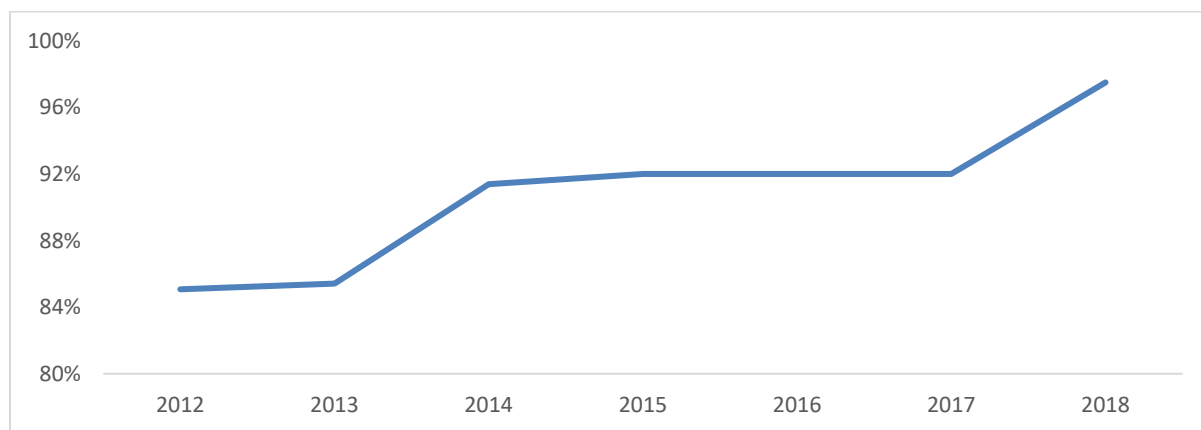
<sup>9</sup> Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia and Ecuador – It is worth nothing that, as of 24 September, for all the five countries, the whole territory was officially recognised free from FMD (except for the containment zone in Colombia)

The analysis evaluated the dynamic of the areas recognised as officially free (as a percentage of the surface area of all countries and territories in the Region), for the period 2012 - 2018.

The evolution in the total surface area recognised as officially free is shown in Figure 7. The analysis showed a significant positive trend in the total surface area recognised as officially free, for the period 2012 – 2018 (Spearman test,  $\rho=0.96$ ,  $p<0.001$ ).

The officially free areas increased by around 6 million square kilometres, corresponding to an increase from 85% to 97.5% of the Region in 7 years. Thus, only 2.5% of the surface area of the Region is currently not officially recognised as FMD free.

**Figure 7. Trend in the percentage of the surface area of the Americas Region officially recognised as FMD free over the period 2012 to 2018 (data based on reports received up to 24 September 2018)**



In particular, most of the countries have either increased or maintained their free areas. This is a strong signal that the eradication strategy is proving successful, but at the same time shows that there is still a risk of disease spread from the areas not yet officially recognised as FMD free.

The information provided by countries and territories of the Region shows the very limited spatial occurrence of FMD in the Region, highlighting the success of the Global FMD Control Strategy.

The trend in the occurrence of the FMD over the past 14 years shows that, until 2011, the disease was still regularly reported by a few countries. Since 2012 FMD has only occasionally been reported.

This success of the eradication strategy is even more impressive when we consider the trend over the past 7 years in the proportion of the Region's surface area officially recognised as FMD free and the relatively small percentage of surface area/countries yet to achieve official recognition of FMD freedom.

The recent FMD outbreaks reported to the OIE emphasise that the risk of disease recurrence is still present and the OIE encourages countries to maintain a proper level of surveillance, to ensure early detection of outbreaks and to allow the information to be rapidly shared at international level, thereby helping to avoid the risk of disease recurrence. Vaccination programmes deployed in accordance with national programmes, traceability and movement controls, particularly at national borders, are important in regions where the disease threat remains.

### 3. Equine influenza

Equine influenza is one of the most common infectious diseases of the respiratory tract of horses, donkeys, mules and zebras and is caused by two distinct subtypes (H7N7 – not isolated since the late 1970s –, and H3N8). The disease is endemic in many countries with substantial equine populations. Since the early 1980s, the H3N8 subtype has diverged into two lineages, Eurasian and American, the American lineage having been responsible for the majority of the recent outbreaks reported worldwide.

The recent geographical distribution of equine influenza in Members of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas, based on information collected through WAHIS between 1 January 2017 and 24 September 2018, is shown in Figure 8. During this period, a total of 35 countries and territories provided information on the disease, which was reported as present by 26% (9<sup>10</sup>/35) of them.

Equine influenza was reported by means of immediate notifications by four countries (Argentina, Chile, Colombia and Uruguay), three of them submitted an immediate notification, citing “*Unexpected change or increase in morbidity or mortality*” as the reason for the notification, while Colombia submitted an immediate notification using “recurrence of the disease” as a reason for notification.

Chile reported the event to the OIE, indicating equine influenza (subtype H3N8) and a starting date in January 2018 in the Region of “Metropolitana de Santiago”. In March 2018, Argentina reported equine influenza outbreaks (subtype H3N8) in the hippodrome of the city of Mendoza, with a morbidity rate close to 70%; similar outbreaks were subsequently registered in other hippodromes of other provinces. Uruguay reported outbreaks of the disease in June 2018 (subtype not specified), with an increase of cases in horses in several stud farms breeding sport horses in the cities of Salto and Paysandú. Finally, Colombia reported the recurrence of the disease in June 2018 (subtype H3N8) in several administrative divisions of the country, with a morbidity rate of 44%. The event is still ongoing and 319 outbreaks have been reported until now.

**Figure 8. Distribution of equine influenza in countries and territories of the Region in 2017 and 2018 (up to 24 September 2018)**

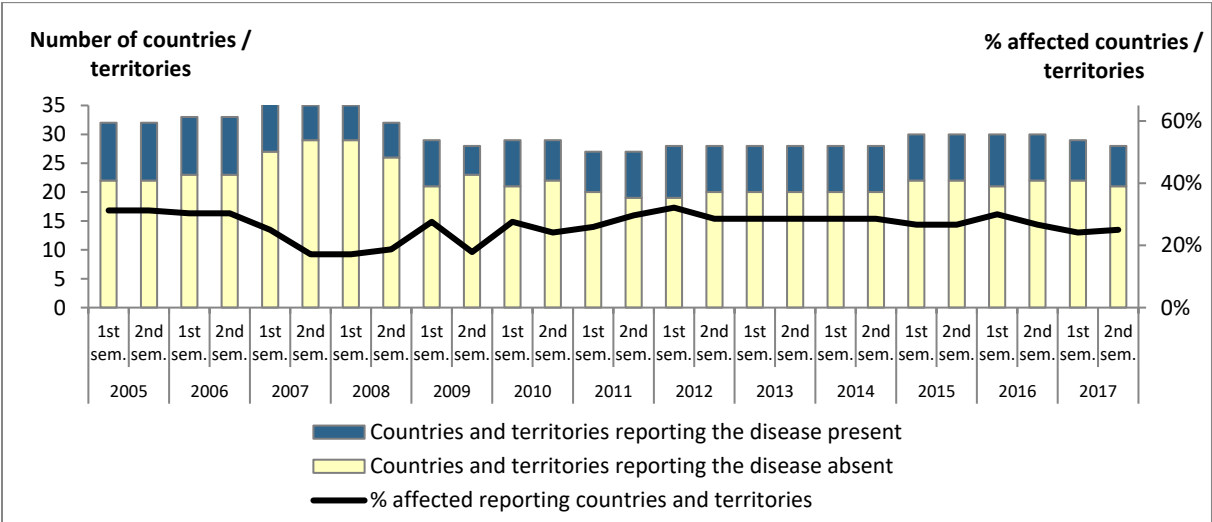


<sup>10</sup> Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, United States of America and Uruguay.



The following section describes the trend in notifications of equine influenza since 2005, to evaluate its historical evolution in the Region. From 2005 to 2017, an average of 26% of reporting countries and territories notified the presence of equine influenza per semester (Figure 9). The trend of the disease showed a marked reduction from 31% to 17% of countries and territories reporting the disease present in the period 2005 - 2007, followed by a short phase of increase and subsequent reduction, and finally a stable situation from 2012. The trend in the percentage of affected countries and territories, analysed using a generalised linear model with binomial distribution, shows no significant variation during the whole period (estimate: -0.0004; p=0.8), confirming a stable situation of disease occurrence in the Region.

**Figure 9. Percentage of the reporting countries and territories for each semester between 2005 and 2017 that notified equine influenza present, in the Americas Region (data based on reports received up to 24 September 2018)**



Even if the equine influenza situation in the Region appears stable, with no major changes in terms of disease prevalence at country level, it is worth highlighting the fact that equine influenza virus (EIV) can undergo continuous antigenic drift, thereby affecting the efficacy of vaccination. For this reason, even if equine influenza is endemic in many countries and circulates continuously in the equine population, explosive outbreaks occur at intervals of several years when the immunity of the equine population wanes, and sufficient antigenic drift in the virus has occurred, allowing the virus to evade vaccine-induced immunity.

In this context, the recent submission of immediate notifications for equine influenza, reporting “Unexpected change or increase in morbidity or mortality” in Argentina, Chile and Uruguay, and the recurrence of the disease in Colombia with large spread to the whole country could highlight a reduction in the immunity of the equine population and/or a virus antigenic drift.

Taking this into account, a retrospective analysis of WAHIS data was carried out to evaluate the occurrence of similar events that might indicate a sudden change in the epidemiological behaviour of the disease in the Region since 2005. To this end we took into consideration i) the number and trend of immediate notifications submitted during the period, and ii) changes in disease morbidity and mortality based on the quantitative information provided by countries and territories in their six-monthly reports.

In the period 2005 – 2018, only five immediate notifications were submitted by Members of the Region, one in 2011-2012 by Chile for the recurrence of the disease and the other four in 2018 (see above).

Quantitative information in the six-monthly reports was provided by only 38% (5<sup>11</sup>/13) of the countries and territories reporting the disease present since 2005. Moreover, the five countries providing quantitative data did not do so on a regular basis: detailed quantitative data were provided only for 29 six-monthly reports (45%) out of the 64 for which the disease was reported present. This means that the retrospective analysis of WAHIS data does not allow us to evaluate whether significant changes in the epidemiology of the disease have occurred in the Region.

Other important information to better understand the current epidemiological situation in the Region is provided by the analysis of the preventive and control measures applied. In 2017/2018 only Argentina and Suriname reported conducting official vaccination for the disease.

The analysis presented highlights that the disease is present throughout the Region and the number of countries reporting its presence has not significantly changed since 2005.

Even if the prevalence of the disease in the Region seems stable there would appear to be cause for concern. According to the alert messages submitted in recent months, reporting an “*unexpected change in morbidity and mortality*”, and considering that 80% of the immediate notifications submitted in the Region since 2005 were provided in the last 9 months, it seems that a major change in the epidemiological situation of the disease in the Region is underway. This change, based on what is known about the epidemiology of equine influenza, could be due to a reduction in population immunity and/or an antigenic drift in the circulating serotype<sup>12</sup>. Furthermore, the limited number of countries applying official vaccination could have facilitated the spread of the virus.

Vaccination is of basic importance for the control of the disease and for this reason the OIE regularly convenes an Expert Surveillance Panel on Equine Influenza Vaccine. The Panel meets annually to assess the circulating strains and provide recommendations on which strains should be included in the vaccines to ensure optimum protection.

Although vaccines that have been updated in accordance with the Expert Panel’s recommendations are now widely available, many current vaccines contain outdated strains and this can lead to a recurrence of the disease.

The OIE Expert Panel emphasises the importance of increased surveillance and the investigation of any vaccination breakdown, as well as the rapid submission of viruses to reference laboratories to monitor antigenic and genetic drift. This recommendation is particularly important given that few countries and territories currently provide information on the circulating subtypes in their reports. Diagnostic capacities in the Region should also be reinforced, in particular in countries not able to report information on the status of the disease, or not able to confirm suspected occurrences of the disease.

To help prevent the spread of the disease, the OIE recommends that its Members continue their efforts to improve surveillance for early detection and rapid reporting of outbreaks, and for early detection of antigenic drift in order to improve vaccine efficacy. In particular, all countries that have reported the disease absent for more than 2 years, should, in the event of a recurrence, inform the OIE through WAHIS by means of an immediate notification, in compliance with Article 12.6.4. of the *Terrestrial Animal Health Code*<sup>13</sup>.

Finally, the provision of high-quality information would allow the OIE to identify changes in disease morbidity and mortality and help in identifying risk areas for the appearance of new virus strains.

<sup>11</sup> Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia and Nicaragua

<sup>12</sup> Rash, A., Morton, R., Woodward, A., Maes, O., McCauley, J., Bryant, N., & Elton, D. (2017). Evolution and divergence of H3N8 equine influenza viruses circulating in the United Kingdom from 2013 to 2015. *Pathogens*, 6(1), 6.

<sup>13</sup> “A country, zone or compartment may be considered free from Equine Influenza provided the disease is notifiable in the whole country and it shows evidence, through an effective surveillance programme, planned and implemented in accordance with the general principles in Chapter 1.4., that no case of EI occurred in the past two years” - Terrestrial Animal Health Code - Chapter 12.6. Infection with Equine Influenza Virus - [http://www.oie.int/index.php?id=169&L=0&htmfile=chapitre\\_eiv.htm](http://www.oie.int/index.php?id=169&L=0&htmfile=chapitre_eiv.htm)

#### 4. Glanders

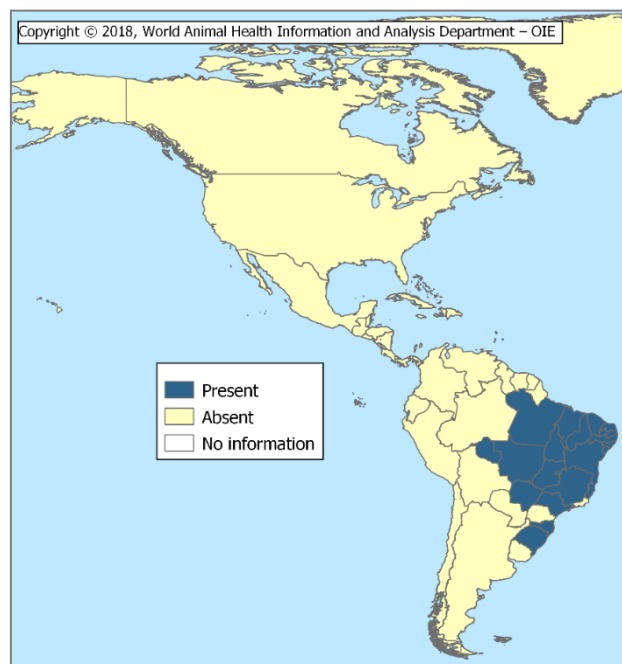
Glanders is caused by the bacteria *Burkholderia mallei*, for which no effective vaccines are available. In addition to being a fatal disease of horses, donkeys and mules, glanders has a zoonotic potential and causes high mortality rates (up to 40% with treatment) in infected humans<sup>14</sup>.

Although glanders has been eradicated from many countries of the world through screening and intensive culling, its increased occurrence and recurrence during the last decade in certain countries and regions (i.e. Germany in 2014, Turkey and the Middle East during the 2010s) has led to its being considered as a re-emerging disease<sup>15</sup>. In the Americas Region, however, the glanders situation has remained reasonably stable for several decades, as Brazil is the only country to have reported the presence of the disease since 1942, the year in which the disease was finally eradicated from North America (USA in 1942 and Canada in 1938).

During the study period (2017 and up to 24 September 2018), 35 countries and territories of the Americas reported a known status of glanders. Brazil was the only country in the Region that reported the disease present during the study period.

In the case of Brazil, since 2015 the glanders situation has been considered sufficiently stable for the disease to be reported exclusively through six-monthly reports. The geographical distribution of glanders in countries and territories of the Region, during the period 1 January 2017 to 24 September 2018, is shown in Figure 10.

**Figure 10. Distribution of glanders in countries and territories of the Americas in 2017 and 2018 (up to 24 September 2018)**

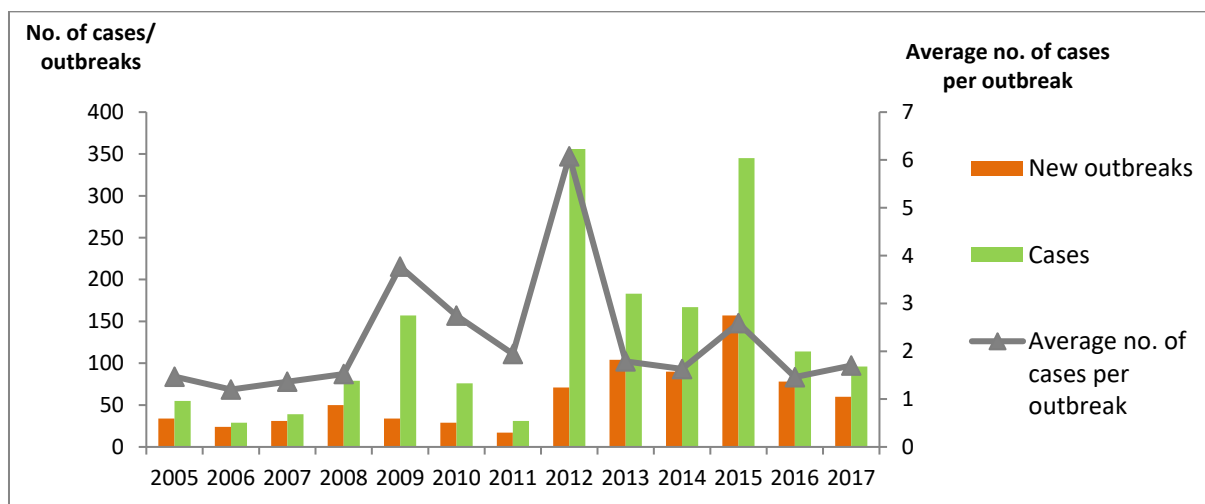


Brazil has been affected by glanders without interruption since 1999. The quantitative data reported to WAHIS since 2005 were analysed in order to identify any potential disease evolution and any variations in reporting. The trend of the reported outbreaks indicates the potential presence of two peaks of disease reporting, surrounded by more stable periods (Figure 11).

<sup>14</sup> Van Zandt, K. E., Marek T. Greer, M. T. & Gelhaus, H. C. (2013). Glanders: an overview of infection in humans. *Orphanet journal of rare diseases* 8(1) : 131.

<sup>15</sup> Verma, A.K., Saminathan, M., Tiwari, N. R., Dhama, K. & Singh, S.V. (2014). Glanders-a re-emerging zoonotic disease: A review. *J. Biol. Sci.*, 14: 38-51.

**Figure 11. Yearly trend in the number of cases, number of outbreaks and average number cases per outbreak reported by Brazil between 2005 and 2017**



The first peak occurred in 2012, coinciding with the first reports of the disease in Central and Southern regions of the country. It was in 2012 that the highest number of cases was reported (356 equids affected) and the largest outbreaks were declared (average of 6 cases per outbreak vs the average for the whole period of 2.2 cases per outbreak). In 2015, another peak of reporting was observed, when the second highest number of outbreaks was detected (157 outbreaks). Since then, although cases of glanders continue to be reported in most parts of the country, the number of cases and the number of outbreaks appear to have declined and for the past two years have remained relatively stable.

Several factors could have contributed to the presence of these peaks of notifications. For example, 2012 was the year when most of the outbreaks reported through immediate notifications were registered, while 2015 was the year before the Olympic Games and very intensive surveillance campaigns were carried out. Based on the reported data, the glanders situation in the Region has remained stable, with the occurrence of very small outbreaks in different regions of Brazil.

Glanders is an obligate pathogen with a limited capacity to survive outside the host. Therefore, the most common route of disease spread is through international movement of live animals<sup>16</sup>. In the Americas Region, 100% of the reporting countries and territories notified the absence or presence of the disease, 93% notified the existence of precautions at borders, but only 21% notified the existence of targeted surveillance (or active surveillance). Thus, the Region is mainly relying on general (or passive) surveillance when declaring disease absence.

Problems relating to diagnosis make the control and prevention of the disease difficult. Although there are many tests available for glanders diagnosis, the complement fixation test (CFT) is the one recommended by the OIE for most situations (eradication policies, determining the prevalence of infection, determining population freedom from disease, etc.). The CFT gives results within one week, but the specificity and sensitivity of the results strongly depend on the antigen used<sup>17</sup>. This could lead to false-positive and false-negative results, as well as delays in diagnosis. These factors, together with the existence of latent states potentially undetectable by CFT, could generate major problems for disease control and pose a risk of disease spread.

<sup>16</sup> Kettle, A. N. B. & Wernery, U. (2016). Glanders and the risk for its introduction through the international movement of horses. *Equine veterinary journal* 48(5): 654-658.

<sup>17</sup> Glanders and melioidosis. Chapter 2.5.11. OIE Manual of Diagnostic Tests and Vaccines for Terrestrial Animals 2018

In conclusion, glanders is considered to be absent in the whole of the Americas Region, with the exception of Brazil, where the disease situation has been reported to the OIE as sufficiently stable to be reported exclusively through six monthly reports since 2015. The OIE highly recommends maintaining the continuous implementation of precautions at borders, including quarantine procedures and testing of imported equids with highly sensitive and specific tests or using a two-tier approach, as these measures are essential in order to prevent the disease being introduced into glanders-free territories.

## 5. Selected aquatic animal diseases: acute hepatopancreatic necrosis disease and tilapia lake virus disease

This section reviews the situation in the Americas Region regarding two aquatic animal diseases, for which recent changes were reported. **Acute hepatopancreatic necrosis disease** (AHPND) and **tilapia lake virus** (TiLV) disease have both emerged in recent years, with devastating consequences for the aquaculture industry. AHPND is no longer considered to be emerging and has been an OIE-listed disease since 2016, whereas TiLV can still be considered an emerging disease.

Firstly, AHPND is a disease of crustaceans that has had severe consequences for the shrimp industry<sup>18</sup>. In 2013 and 2014, several studies estimated that since AHPND first appeared in 2010, shrimp production in AHPND-affected regions had dropped by up to 60%; AHPND is estimated to have resulted in a global loss of 1 billion USD per year to the shrimp industry<sup>19,20</sup>. AHPND was included in the OIE List of aquatic animal diseases in May 2015 and therefore became notifiable to the OIE from January 2016. Now, more than two years after the disease became notifiable, this section will review the current AHPND situation in the Americas Region.

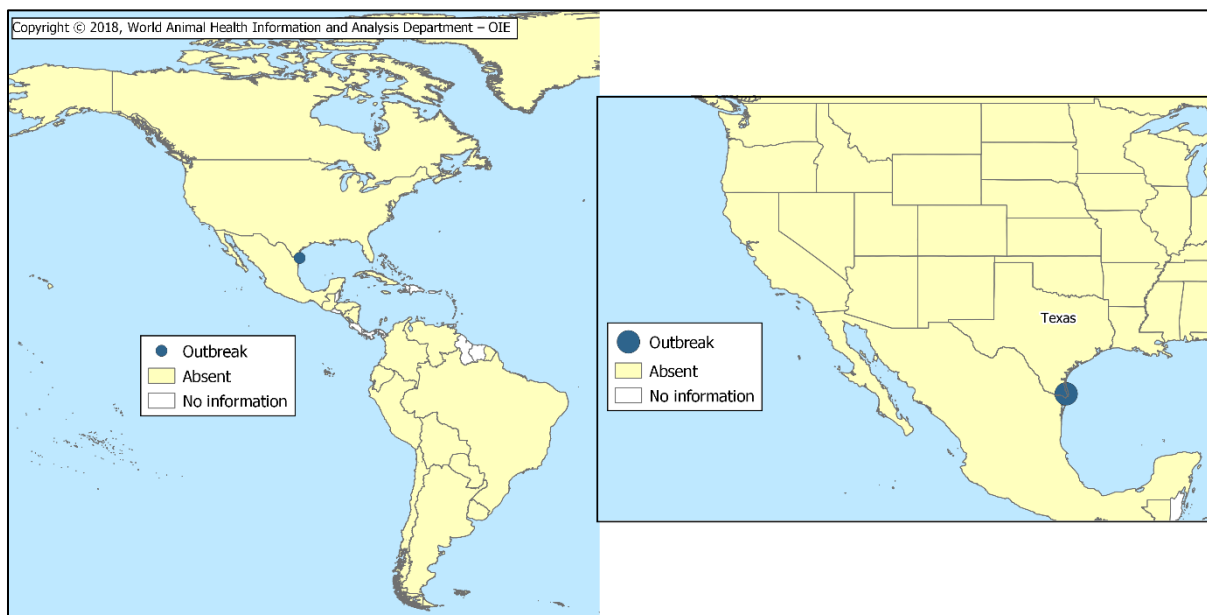
The geographical distribution of AHPND in countries and territories of the Americas Region, based on information collected through WAHIS during the period from 1 January 2017 to 24 September 2018, is shown in Figure 12. During this period, a total of 26 countries and territories provided information on AHPND. The USA was the only country that reported the presence of the disease, which was reported through an immediate notification indicating that the disease first occurred in the country in June 2016. It was detected in a semi-closed pond of farmed shrimps. The affected farm was placed under quarantine, all the animals were harvested, and cleaning and disinfection of the premises was completed prior to the event being reported closed in December 2017.

<sup>18</sup> Li P., Kinch L. N., Ray A., Dalia, A. B., Cong, Q., Nunan, L. M., Camilli, A., Grishin, N. V., Salomon, D. & Orth, K. (2017). Acute Hepatopancreatic Necrosis Disease-Causing *Vibrio parahaemolyticus* Strains Maintain an Antibacterial Type VI Secretion System with Versatile Effector Repertoires. *Appl Environ Microbiol.* 83(13):.

<sup>19</sup> FAO. Report of the FAO/MARD Technical Workshop on Early Mortality Syndrome (EMS) or Acute Hepatopancreatic Necrosis Syndrome (AHPNS) of Cultured Shrimp (under TCP/VIE/3304). Rome: FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations) (2013).

<sup>20</sup> De Schryver, P., Defoirdt, T., Sorgeloos, P. (2014). Early mortality syndrome outbreaks: a microbial management issue in shrimp farming, *PLoS Pathog.* 10(4):e1003919.

**Figure 12. Distribution of AHPND in countries and territories of the Americas Region in 2017 and 2018 (up to 24 September 2018)**



AHPND represents a significant threat to shrimp production in the Americas Region, estimated at around 1 400 000 tonnes in 26 countries and territories<sup>21</sup> in 2016 by FAO<sup>22</sup>, the biggest producers being Ecuador (426 209 tonnes), Mexico (225 071 tonnes), Argentina (178 520 tonnes), USA (124 455 tonnes) and Canada (108 877 tonnes). It should be noted that among the 25 countries and territories reporting the disease absent, nine did not report any surveillance measures to the OIE, 12 reported only general (or passive) surveillance measures and only four, including one of the biggest regional producers of shrimps and prawns, reported targeted (or active) surveillance measures. These results may suggest some gaps in the surveillance strategy, which would increase the threat to production in the Americas Region.

The second part of the section reviews the situation of infection with TiLV. Since 2011, several countries and territories in different regions of the world have experienced substantial mortality in farmed and wild tilapia populations, most likely due to infection with TiLV, an orthomyxo-like virus first described in 2014<sup>23</sup>. As presented at the 2018 General Session of the OIE World Assembly of the Delegates<sup>24</sup>, this disease represents a considerable risk to tilapia production worldwide. Current annual global production of farmed tilapia is estimated to be about 6 000 000 tonnes, with 600 991 tonnes in the Americas<sup>22</sup>. The production of farmed tilapia is very common around the world: 127 countries and territories, including 34<sup>25</sup> in the Americas, were identified by FAO<sup>22</sup> as tilapia producers in 2016, the biggest producers in the Americas being Brazil (247 781 tonnes), Mexico (180 352 tonnes), Colombia (61 800 tonnes), Honduras (30 100 tonnes) and Ecuador (22 624 tonnes). The OIE Aquatic Animal Health Standards Commission has determined that TiLV meets the definition of an emerging disease, as provided in the

<sup>21</sup> Argentina, Belize, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, French Guiana, Greenland, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, United States of America, Uruguay and Venezuela

<sup>22</sup> FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department - <http://www.fao.org/fishery/statistics/global-production/en>

<sup>23</sup> Eyngor, M., Zamostiano, R., Tsofack, J. E. K., Berkowitz, A., Bercovier, H., Tinman, S., Lev, M., Huryitz, A., Galeotti, M., Bacharach, E., Eldar, A. (2014). Identification of a novel RNA virus lethal to tilapia. *Journal of Clinical Microbiology* 52(12):4137–4146.

<sup>24</sup> Final Report of the 86th General Session, 20 - 25 May 2018, [http://www.oie.int/fileadmin/Home/eng/About\\_us/docs/pdf/Session/2018/A\\_FR\\_2018.pdf](http://www.oie.int/fileadmin/Home/eng/About_us/docs/pdf/Session/2018/A_FR_2018.pdf)

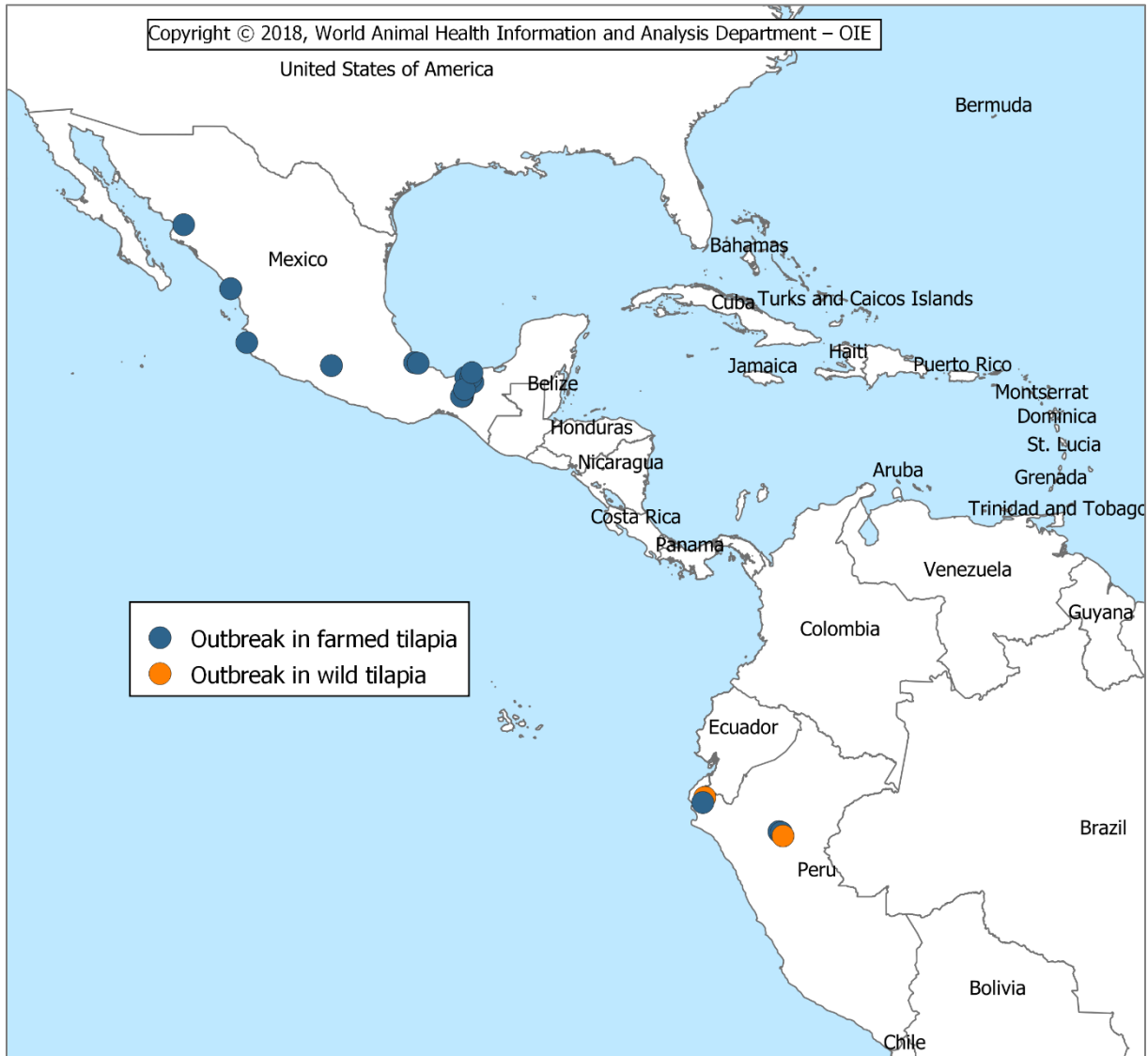
<sup>25</sup> Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Barbados, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guadeloupe (France), Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Martinique (France), Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Puerto Rico, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, United States of America, Uruguay, US Virgin Islands and Venezuela

Glossary of the OIE *Aquatic Animal Health Code* and should therefore be reported as per Article 1.1.4. of Chapter 1.1. of the aforementioned *Code*.

The following paragraphs review the current TiLV disease situation in the Americas Region. In 2018, Mexico and Peru sent immediate notifications for TiLV disease, in accordance with Chapter 1.1. of the *Aquatic Animal Health Code*. In Peru, the event started in November 2017, when artisanal anglers reported atypical mortality in Poechos Reservoir (Lancones - Sullana, Piura). All stages of tilapia (i.e. juveniles and adults) were affected. Tilapia were found stranded, with dermal lesions and exophthalmos. According to the information provided by the country, during the coastal El Niño phenomenon (February 2017), tilapia farmed in cages were reported to have escaped in Poechos Reservoir. A second outbreak was detected in December 2017 in a pond of farmed tilapia in the same area, when atypical mortality of more than 40% was reported. Two more outbreaks were then found in January and February 2018 in farmed fish, with very high mortality (up to 100%). The country explained that the disease had spread through informal movements of fry and tilapia from the natural environment for commercial purposes. Finally, in April 2018, a fifth outbreak was reported in wild tilapia in a lake, 30 km away from the TiLV-positive farming centres. In Mexico, the event started in July 2018. During the active surveillance carried out by the veterinary authorities together with the State Aquaculture Health Committees, TiLV was detected by molecular biology techniques in 20 aquaculture production units out of a national registry of 2,884 tilapia producers. The affected aquaculture production units were located in some localities of six states of the country (Chiapas, Jalisco, Michoacán, Sinaloa, Tabasco and Veracruz). In order to protect national production, strategies were agreed with producers, technicians, researchers and industry representatives to raise biosafety levels, namely: good production, cleaning, washing and disinfecting practices of premises, equipment and means of transport and avoid movement, import and export of animals with suspected disease. As of 24 September 2018, the two events were still on-going.

The recent geographical distribution of the TiLV disease event in Mexico and Peru, based on information collected through WAHIS, is shown in Figure 13.

**Figure 13. Distribution of the TiLV outbreaks in Mexico and Peru in 2017 and 2018 (up to 24 September 2018)**



Due to the potential impact of TiLV disease on global aquaculture production, the OIE Aquatic Animal Health Standards Commission, meeting in February and September 2017, assessed the disease against the criteria for inclusion in the OIE List of aquatic animal diseases. The Aquatic Animal Health Standards Commission determined that the criteria had not been met as there was insufficient information concerning analytical and diagnostic specificity and the sensitivity of the assay. However, given that TiLV disease meets the definition for an *emerging disease*, Members are encouraged to notify the presence of the disease and to submit further information so that the OIE can establish a clearer picture of the international distribution and impact of the disease, while further work on developing and validating diagnostic methodologies is being undertaken. Providing information on such events with significant mortality is important as it provides the basis for assessing emerging diseases for possible inclusion in the OIE List and alerting OIE Members to new potential threats occurring in the world.



Reporting on aquatic animal diseases is an obligation for all OIE Members, and includes diseases in both aquaculture and wild harvest fisheries. The OIE helps its Members to fulfil their obligations on notification of aquatic animal diseases by encouraging the nomination of National Focal Points for Aquatic Animals, and giving them access to WAHIS and providing regular dedicated training, including through the WAHIS e-learning platform, launched in 2017. In addition, between November 2017 and March 2018, the World Animal Health Information and Analysis Department, with the support of the OIE Regional Representative for the Americas, provided the Focal Points for Aquatic Animals in the Andean Region (comprising Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru) with virtual training on notification, at their request. Members are therefore encouraged to take advantage of all the support provided by the OIE to ensure transparent and timely notifications, which are crucial for preventing disease spread.

In addition, this section has highlighted a potential problem regarding the AHPND situation, given that several countries and territories of the Region have reported the disease absent, without, however, implementing surveillance measures. Disease absence in these countries and territories might therefore not have been fully verified, and AHPND distribution may consequently be underestimated.

The information that Members provide through WAHIS is of crucial importance for the OIE Aquatic Animal Health Standards Commission to be able to assess the diseases against the criteria for the inclusion in the OIE List of aquatic animal diseases. This process led to the inclusion of AHPND in 2016 and is on-going for TiLV disease. Members are therefore urged to comply with their reporting obligations, as set out in Chapter 1.1. of the *Aquatic Animal Health Code*. Members are also encouraged to submit high quality reports for aquatic animal diseases so that the corresponding information can be presented in the next Global conference for aquatic animal health that will take place in Santiago (Chile) in April 2019.

## 6. WAHIS+

### General background:

WAHIS is an intrinsic and fundamental part of the OIE's mandate and a vital tool for the 182 OIE Members to continue '*Ensuring Trust through Transparency and Communication*' of the global animal disease situation in a timely manner. The sustainability of this platform and its continued use by national Veterinary Services is at the core of the OIE Sixth Strategic Plan 2016-2020 and will continue to remain a key priority for the OIE.

Taking into consideration that WAHIS was created in 2005, changing societal demands and the rapid pace of technological and digital change, the OIE's Members requested the Organisation to develop a modernised, global and analytically versatile new system (WAHIS+). As a result, the OIE has embarked on a ten-year process of modernising its existing animal health information system.

When it is launched in 2019, WAHIS+ will constitute a completely redesigned platform and will incorporate a transdisciplinary and holistic approach to data collection, analysis and dissemination – not only addressing animal diseases, but also public health. Moreover, as WAHIS+ moves forward, it will progressively incorporate climate and environmental data sources. WAHIS+ will have a quicker and more intuitive user-friendly system with new features, including: extended data mining, customisable data queries and enhanced mapping and data visualisation capabilities. Interactive maps will be accessible in numerous application pages, including dashboards implemented for national purposes, showing data such as outbreak location, affected species, analytics indicators in various forms and risk perimeters (zoning and compartmentalisation). The dynamic, interactive, ergonomic national dashboards will have integrated analytical capabilities and the possibility to extract and upload data in a wide range of formats (e.g. PDF, Excel, CSV and as an image). Building bridges between WAHIS+ and national/regional databases will support this endeavour and regional initiatives are already underway.

Due to the magnitude of the WAHIS+ project, in April 2018 the OIE engaged an internationally recognised IT development company, called Sopra Steria, to undertake the development of the WAHIS+ project. This IT company has extensive experience in the development of complex information technology solutions with a global reach and involving public goods. Sopra Steria is developing WAHIS+ through *agile* methodology, which is iterative and will ensure a quick delivery of functional components and visible results for May 2019.

### **Progress on deliverables**

The development and deployment of the WAHIS+ platform has an estimated project duration of 3 years and an application lifespan of 10 years and beyond.

The WAHIS+ project was structured in phases to initially focus on ensuring the development of major core functionalities during the first and second releases. More specifically, the first release (expected second semester 2019) includes: a new local report to facilitate the notification process to the OIE, an immediate notification and follow-up reporting module and a six-monthly report module, as well as their respective interfaces. For the second release, in December 2019, additional modules of the core functionalities will be developed, such as: annual report, wild annual report, e-learning system and smartphone application.

In collaboration with the WAHIS+ project team and the World Animal Health Information and Analysis Department, Sopra Steria have already begun laying down the functional and technical foundations for WAHIS+, which involves the creation of all relevant technical documents and the specifications for WAHIS+. The teams are currently working on: (i) establishing the design layout (ergonomic, functional and technical navigation standards – graphic charter); (ii) establishing functional interfaces and management rules based on the high-level business requirements; (iii) outlining the data model; and (iv) establishing the functional modalities for data migration.

Starting in September 2018 and continuing until November 2018, the project entered a new phase with a specific objective to define the detailed functional specifications for Local, Immediate notification and Follow-up reports. This phase will run in parallel with the development and testing phases in order to deliver the product at the earliest date. During the same period, work began on the following: (i) management and/or processing rules; (ii) an analysis of the data and a description of data properties; and (iii) user interface design (inputs, outputs, dialogue).

### **Key users' engagement**

Key users' involvement right from the early stages of the project is crucial for the development of a sustainable system that can respond to user needs and expectations. The WAHIS+ team is currently working on setting up the **Key Users Committee**, which will be composed of selected users (identified from OIE national Focal Points for Animal Disease Notification, for Aquatic Animals, and for Wildlife), as well as OIE scientific experts who have expressed an interest in the evolution of WAHIS.

These selected key users will come from all OIE Regions and will represent the interests and views of WAHIS+ end users. During WAHIS+ development, these key users will undertake end-user testing and provide recurrent business and functional feedback to the WAHIS+ project management team and ensure that any evidence gaps are addressed. This Committee will be particularly engaged during the development of core business functional modules. Meetings will be organised using remote access (e.g. videoconference).

**Recommendation of the:****24th Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas**  
Punta Cana, Dominican Republic, 19 to 23 November 2018

## CONSIDERING THAT:

1. The Veterinary Authorities (commonly referred as Official Veterinary Services) were originally established to ensure the control and, where possible, eradication, of specific diseases (rinderpest as from the late 19th century and, in the Americas, foot and mouth disease);
2. As emerging issues present a threat to animal, human and environmental health, this initial vision must now be broadened to respond to complex global health, political, sociocultural, technological and diversity-related situations;
3. The Veterinary Services need the necessary financial or human resources to meet these new demands properly. That makes it necessary to innovate and find the best way to tailor animal health and food safety management, at primary production level, to each country's individual circumstances;
4. One of the main missions of the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) is the promotion of Veterinary Services to improve their legal framework and resources, with the primary aim of establishing quality Veterinary Services, as defined in the Chapter 3.1 of the OIE *Terrestrial Animal Health Code* which provides details on the provisions relating to the quality of the Veterinary Services and their fundamental principles of quality;
5. The OIE has a proven record of supporting the strengthening of Veterinary Services and, since the establishment of its flagship programme, the OIE PVS Pathway, it has continued to affirm that for the Veterinary Services to fulfil their mission and generate a global public good, they require sustainable investment;
6. The PVS Pathway missions conducted over the past decade have shown that Veterinary Services are chronically under-resourced in many countries, leading to sub-optimal organisation and staffing of Veterinary Services, thereby jeopardising animal health and welfare nationally, regionally and globally, with consequences on public health;
7. According to the definition of *Veterinary Services* in the OIE *Terrestrial Animal Health Code*, the provision of veterinary services involves a variety of governmental and non-governmental organisations, ranging from the *Veterinary Authority* to authorized private veterinary care providers (veterinarians, veterinary paraprofessionals or aquatic animal health professionals) and also including various types of private sector organisations;
8. The Veterinary Services, as per defined by the OIE, play a significant role in delivering public good and achieving several United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), including: ending poverty, ending hunger and ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all;

9. The private sector, including producers and industry, plays a very important role in partnership with the Veterinary Authority, as it provides them with support to enable them to fulfil their mandate more effectively; and that, in addition;
10. Private veterinarians and veterinary paraprofessionals can also play a key role in partnership with the Veterinary Authority, either as individuals or working as part of a veterinary service company, or in a production, or supply company;
11. The OIE PVS Evaluation contains a section where countries evaluate performance with respect to their Veterinary Authority's relationship with the private sector;
12. Public-private partnerships (PPPs) and consideration and appreciation of the work of private veterinarians, veterinary paraprofessionals as well as other private sector partners are an intrinsic part of modern public administration, and that they exist both in the region and across the world, provide an animal health management vision that focuses on improved effectiveness and efficiency (better use of resources) and can be tailored to countries' individual circumstances;
13. Countries in the region are interested in strengthening collaboration between the public and private sectors, including through PPPs, as demonstrated by the high number of responses from the region to a global survey conducted by the OIE in 2017 and also by the adoption of Resolution no. 39 regarding "*Public-Private Partnerships: expectations of private sector partners for international animal health and livestock sector development programmes and the implications for the OIE*" by the OIE Member Countries at the 85th General Session in May 2017;
14. In several countries in the region, public-private interaction has been key in implementing disease prevention, control, and eradication programmes and achieving countries' current animal health status;
15. Collaboration with the private sector on matters relating to the Veterinary Authority may differ in nature, scope and outreach. It may cover animal health, animal welfare, food safety at primary production level, trade or related areas. It may be established for one or more species, one or more diseases or hazards of interest to public health, or one or more territories within a country;
16. The analysis of the answers<sup>1</sup> from countries in the region to a global survey conducted by the OIE in 2017 as part of its *Public-Private Progress* initiative, highlights that:
  - the principal reason for most countries in the region to establish PPPs in the first place was to control or eradicate foot and mouth disease. However, in recent years, PPP initiatives have increasingly been established in other areas, such as poultry and swine health, and bovine brucellosis and tuberculosis control;
  - most PPP initiatives identified in the region were largely driven by the private sector, with a focus on exports;
  - the experience was assessed as good to excellent in terms of impact, although no mention was made of it having been subject to a formal evaluation;
  - most of the PPP proposals have been on-going for several years and aspired to become permanent, demonstrating their sustainability.
17. The OIE has done a large amount of work over the past months to design a better tailored PVS Pathway more aligned with the national and regional needs;

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<sup>1</sup> Analysis done by the author of the Technical Item 1 to complete the work done to developing his report.

18. The OIE is in favour of the development of impactful PPPs in the veterinary domain in order to strengthen national Veterinary Services in a sustainable manner.

#### THE OIE REGIONAL COMMISSION FOR THE AMERICAS

#### RECOMMENDS THAT:

1. The OIE Delegates raise the awareness of decision makers about the key role played by the Veterinary Services and the importance of providing them with sufficient financial and human resources to guarantee that their performance is sound (in compliance with OIE standards) and sustainable;
2. Member Countries support the OIE work in advocating to resource partners to invest in the OIE PVS Pathway;

#### THAT THE VETERINARY AUTHORITIES OF THE MEMBER COUNTRIES:

3. Work to build their capacity, including the application of concepts of economics of animal health, enabling them to prioritise activities according to their economic and social impact, and to design efficient intervention strategies that help them to identify sources of public and private funding;
4. Consider the participation of veterinarians or veterinary paraprofessionals in activities deemed relevant by the Veterinary Authority in order to generate greater benefits;
5. Consider the principles of economics to define and share responsibilities between the public and private sectors, as well as financing and delivery mechanisms;
6. Support the establishment of impactful and sustainable PPPs in the veterinary domain, based on the guidelines for PPPs to be developed by the OIE in 2019 for use by both the public and private sectors, while always complying with the responsibilities of the Veterinary Authority;
7. Establish formal, representative and ongoing platform of dialogue with private sector organisations, including veterinary associations and veterinary paraprofessionals, producer associations and private companies, to define a strategy of collaboration with the private sector, including PPP initiatives, that is geared to the challenges faced and the situation in each country;

#### AND THAT THE OIE:

8. Help Delegates, via the development of advocacy material, to sensitize decision makers on the value of sustainable Veterinary Services and the potential benefits of collaborating with the private sector to improve the quality and sustainability of their activities;
9. Lead a practical training programme for its Member Countries for the development and implementation of sustainable PPPs, using the guidelines under development by the OIE;
10. Maintain an up-to-date database, containing PPP experiences, in a format that makes it easy to disseminate to serve as a motivation for other countries;
11. Support the development of methodologies and tools for the technical and socioeconomic evaluation of collaborative initiatives with the private sector, to complement the guidelines for PPPs to be published in 2019;
12. Support, together with the Veterinary Authorities, the development and implementation of new technologies either through PPPs or through agreements with private providers, universities and technology centres, all with the aim of strengthening the Veterinary Services.