



Organisation
Mondiale
de la Santé
Animale

World
Organisation
for Animal
Health

Organización
Mundial
de Sanidad
Animal

20th Conference of the
OIE Regional Commission for the Americas
Montevideo (Uruguay), 16-19 November 2010

FINAL REPORT

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List of Abbreviations

AAC	Aquatic Animal Health Standards Commission
ALA	Asociación Latinoamericana de Avicultura
APHIS	Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service
BSE	Bovine spongiform encephalopathy
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CAMEVET	Committee of the Americas for the Harmonization of the Registration and Control of Veterinary Medicines
CaribVET	Caribbean Animal Health Network
CAN	Andean Community
CAS	Consejo Agropecuario del Sur
CEBASEV	Centro Buenos Aires para la Capacitación de los Servicios Veterinarios
CIGB	Cuba's Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology
CISA	Inter-American Committee on Avian Health
COMEXA	Mexico-American Commission for the Eradication of the Screwworm
COPEVET	Pan American Council on Veterinary Science Education
CVP	Standing Veterinary Committee of the Southern Cone
CSF	Classical swine fever
COSALFA	South American Committee for the Control of Foot and Mouth Disease
COTASA	Andean Technical Committee for Agricultural Health
TSEs	Transmissible spongiform encephalopathies
EHNV	Epizootic haematopoietic necrosis virus
ELISA	Enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay
PS	Private standards
FARM	Federation of Rural Associations of Mercosur
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FMD	Foot and Mouth Disease
HPAI	Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza
HSZ	High Surveillance Zone
IHNV	infectious haematopoietic necrosis virus
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
ISA	Infectious salmon anaemia
LABIOFAM	Laboratorios Biológicos Farmacéuticos
LADIVES	Vesicular Disease Diagnostic Laboratory
MERCOSUR	Southern Common Market
OSPESCA	Organization of Fishing and Aquaculture in Central America
PACA	Central American Agricultural Policy
PHEFA	Hemispheric FMD Eradication Plan
PCR	Polymerase chain reaction
NAFMDB	North American FMD Vaccine Bank Program

-SAIVECAN	Animal Health Information and Monitoring System
SENASA	Servicio Nacional de Sanidad y Calidad Agroalimentaria
SENACSA	Servicio Nacional de Calidad y Salud Animal
SENASAG	Servicio Nacional de Sanidad Agropecuaria e Inocuidad Alimentaria
EU	European Union
UPACC	Union for the Protection of Agriculture and Livestock from Climate Change
WCS	Wildlife Conservation Society
WSAP	World Society for Animal Protection
GF-TADs	Global Framework for Progressive Control of Trans-boundary Animal Diseases
GLEWS	Global Early Warning System for Major Animal Diseases, including Zoonoses
IICA	Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture
NAAHC	North American Animal Health Committee
OIE	World Organisation for Animal Health
OIRSA	Regional International Organization for Plant Protection and Animal Health
PCP	Progressive Control Pathway
PAHO	Pan-American Health Organization
PANAFTOSA	Pan-American Foot-and-Mouth Disease Center
PANVET	Pan-American Association of Veterinary Sciences
PVS	OIE Tool for the Evaluation of Performance of Veterinary Services
SPS	Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Emergency Fund
USDA	Department of Agriculture of the United States of America
VHS	viral haemorrhagic septicaemia
VEP	Project for the Creation and Strengthening of a Network of Epidemiologists and Para-Epidemiologists
WHO	World Health Organization
WTO	World Trade Organisation
WAHIS	World Animal Health Information System
WAHID	World Animal Health Information Database
WNF	West Nile fever

Introduction

1. Following the kind invitation of the Government of Uruguay, the 20th Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas was held in Montevideo from 16 to 20 November 2010.
2. A total of 121 participants, comprising OIE Delegates and/or nominees of 25 Members and 1 observer country and senior officers from 15 regional and international organisations attended the conference. In addition, representatives of the private sector as well as private veterinary organisations from the region were present. Dr Carlos Correa Messuti, Delegate of Uruguay and President of the OIE World Assembly of Delegates; Dr Bernard Vallat, OIE Director General; Dr Jamil Gomes de Souza, 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; Dr Jose Joaquin Oreamuno, OIE Sub Regional Representative for the Americas and Dr Karim Ben Jebara, OIE Head of the Animal Health Information Department also participated to the Conference. Dr Alejandro Thiermann, President of the Terrestrial Animal Health Standards Commission, Dr. Victo Manuel Vidal Martínez, Member of the OIE Aquatic Animal Health Standards Commission and the speakers presenting Technical Items I and II, namely, Ing. Walter Oyhantcabal, Coordinator Climate Change Projects Unit, Ministry of Livestock Agriculture and Fisheries of Uruguay and Dr Gideon Bruckner, President OIE Scientific Commission, honoured the Conference by their presence.

Tuesday 16 November 2010

Opening Ceremony

3. Dr Jamil Gomes De Souza, OIE delegate for Brazil and President of the Regional Commission for the Americas, extended a warm welcome to all Conference participants and began his talk with a reference to the enormous increase in demand for food products recorded in recent years, due primarily to the increase in the size of the middle class, thus envisaging the immediate and constant need for increased production of products of animal origin.
4. He also noted the economic and social growth in countries whose economies are structured around animal production. These countries, in addition to meeting internal requirements, produce large quantities of surplus products for export to markets that are becoming more stringent with regard to aspects concerning the health and welfare of animals.
5. Dr De Souza stated that this stable situation can, in many cases, be impacted by diseases that directly interfere with production processes, limiting access of animal products to market.
6. The World Organisation for Animal Health, the world reference body for treatment and eradication of animal diseases, is effectively collaborating with less developed nations in the development and implementation of strategies for promoting the treatment and eradication of the principal diseases, while also setting down standards as guidelines and regulations for safely engaging in international bi-lateral transfers of animals and animal products, thus diminishing or totally avoiding the use of restrictive measures not based on technical or scientific data.
7. Dr De Souza emphasised that in the Americas, an area of extensive animal production in the world, the OIE is highly relevant in strengthening veterinary services, thus contributing to the progress of eradication of FMD in the continent.
8. He also reminded OIE Members that effective participation in the preparation and application of the new Hemispheric FMD Eradication Plan (PHEFA) will be of fundamental importance in completing the eradication of the disease in the region.
9. Dr De Souza also stressed the support of OIE in the region in the area of preventing BSE, avian influenza and in all issues related to animal welfare.
10. The President of the Regional Commission for the Americas wished all participants and excellent work week and a pleasant stay in Montevideo.

11. In conclusion, Dr De Souza expressed his sincere and special thanks to the Uruguayan people who have once again demonstrated their usual hospitality.
12. Dr Luis Osvaldo Barcos, Regional Representative for the Americas, welcomed all participants and thanked the Uruguayan government and local staff for having worked together to make this conference come true in the beautiful city of Montevideo.
13. Dr Barcos, highlighted the coordination achieved by the Bureau of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas, which enables discussions on the policies and activities of interest to the region and the proposals that are received from Members of the region, a strategy that makes it possible to keep updated on the requirements of the region and to stay in line with OIE objectives.
14. Dr Barcos referred to the meeting of Directors of National Laboratories of the Veterinary Services held from 3-5 November of this year in Panama City, which was a meeting for Launching a Network of the National Laboratories of the Veterinary Services, in order to work together and improve quality, efficiency and diagnostic opportunities, as well as better vaccine quality, among other items.
15. He also mentioned the excellent coordination achieved, with the approval of the GF-TADs, in developing the activities of the international and regional organisations, the Veterinary Services and the OIE. He emphasised that this was a key factor to fully use the human, technical and financial resources available.
16. He concluded by wishing all participants an interesting and productive week of work and discussions.
17. Dr Carlos Correa, OIE Delegate for Uruguay and President of the OIE World Assembly of Delegates, gave a warm greeting and stated that it was a pleasure and an honour to welcome all conference participants to Montevideo to attend the 20th Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas.
18. He thanked the Uruguayan government for hosting the conference, which was declared to be in the national interest by the President of the Republic and of tourism interest by the Minister of Sports and Tourism.
19. Dr Correa stressed the importance of the OIE Regional Commissions and the specific role they play in each region by providing a platform for regional Members to find solutions, shared problems, and develop common perspectives on issues of general interest.
20. The President stated that the Americas Region is particularly active in the OIE, despite not being the biggest regarding the number of countries comprising the Region.
21. The Regional Commission for the Americas brings a huge contribution to the Organisation through its Members' experience and technical capabilities.
22. Dr Correa referred to the conference programme, emphasising the interest and complexity it provided and putting a particular emphasis on the two technical items proposed for discussion, the "OIE Strategy for the control and eradication of foot-and-mouth disease at regional and global levels" and "Climate change and its links with animal diseases and animal production".
23. With regard to treatment and eradication of FMD, he stated the importance of the theme for the region, where the fight against the disease cannot be carried out individually, but through coordinated actions. Regarding that, he emphasised on the experience of the Southern Cone countries within the framework of the Permanent Veterinary Committee programme. This programme has been given strong support from the OIE.
24. Dr Correa urged that there should not be limitation regarding resources or effort in the fight against FMD and suggested the possibility of promoting a global coordination plan with other international organisations such as FAO and all relevant regional organisations, with the support of countries and donors.

25. Regarding the second technical item, Dr Correa remarked that the impact of climate change on the appearance and geographic propagation of diseases and disease vectors in terrestrial and aquatic animals, as well as the various husbandry and production systems, are of great interest to the OIE.
26. He believes that the work achieved in this area will contribute to provide scientific evidence required to support national and regional decisions for the mitigation and adaptation of those to the effects of climate change.
27. Dr Correa advocated the adoption of recommendations that will allow adequate follow-up and progress in the two technical items to be presented during the Conference.
28. He also made particular reference to the programme item related to the Fifth OIE Strategic Plan and OIE Global Programme for Strengthening Veterinary Services, expressing his satisfaction regarding their approval at the OIE 78th General Session.
29. He stressed that the Fifth Strategic Plan will regulate the actions of the organisation during the next five years, guiding not only regulated tasks but also introducing key areas such as veterinary education and legislation, food safety, the impact of climate and atmospheric change on the emergence of animal diseases and other issues.
30. The President stated that in the current era of intense and rapid change was characterized by a dynamic globalisation process incorporating the economy, communications, technology and culture. To those changes, other factors such as the threat of impacts derived from climate change, the consequences of the demographic explosion and the increase in international trade activity: all of which, within the mandate and competence of the OIE, represent a permanent challenge to intensify actions to ensure human and animal health, food security and animal welfare.
31. Dr Correa highlighted that the OIE has been present, for close to ninety years, to support the requirements of the international community, by providing technical capabilities, experience and a universal and solidarity-oriented that overall contributed to the management of common issues faced by the humanity.
32. One of the principal preoccupations of the OIE is to stimulate the economic and social progress of the poorest countries. This is of major importance to the OIE considering that the majority of its Members belong to developing and transitional countries.
33. Dr Correa also mentioned the modern approach to the "One health" concept as promoted by OIE jointly with the, WHO, FAO and UNICEF, as a global and cooperative response to the recent epizootic outbreak of H5N1.
34. This approach is complemented by the "work during peace time" strategy, and not exclusively during national emergencies. In this way, the objective is not only prevention of animal—and human—health problems, but also to comply with the cost-benefit aspect, both from the economic and social perspectives.
35. The OIE is aware that countries depend on each other. In this way, to the extent that achievements and efforts in some countries have beneficial effect on the others, it must be acknowledged that ineffectiveness or breakdowns of only one of them can endanger the overall world health situation. It is therefore essential to continue to struggle for proper national, regional and international governance in veterinary issues and to strengthen national Veterinary Services, as they are the key elements in the fight against animal diseases, while promoting animal welfare and food security. The national Veterinary Services represent a "Global Public Good" for the OIE. The OIE has developed and promoted the PVS tool for evaluating the capacities of these Services at national level, including analysis of gaps and the necessary support for overcoming them.
36. Dr. Correa emphasised that many of OIE's achievements can be attributed to the support of the World Animal Health and Welfare Fund made possible through voluntary grants from generous donors.

37. The OIE is proud of its wide and varied Membership of 177 countries. Its greatest value resides in precisely this rich diversity. We are proud of the wide range of experience that supports the work of specialists and technical personnel, but it is also a guarantee for the world community. The countries have dedicated their best scientists and technicians in the veterinary field, who have been supplemented by other professionals in related fields, all of whom are contributing to investing a modern, interdisciplinary focus into OIE standards.
38. Dr Correa especially acknowledged the Director General Dr Bernard Vallat, whose leadership has helped achieving the Organisation's objectives. He also highlighted the work carried out by the OIE Regional Representative for the Americas, through Dr Luis Barcos and his team, and the work done by the Bureau for the Americas in bolstering regional activities. Lastly, he stressed the work of the OIE Regional Activities Service, which collaborated actively in setting up the Conference.
39. In conclusion, Dr Correa evoked the unconditional support of the government of Uruguay in undertaking to completely organise the Conference. He stressed that it was a privilege for Uruguay to host the Conference and all its participants.
40. He highlighted all the effort made by the persons from Uruguay involved in the organization ensuring the meeting was a success.
41. He concluded by wishing all participants a fruitful Conference and an agreeable stay in Montevideo while trusting participants would enjoy the traditional hospitality and convivial times.
42. Dr. Bernard Vallat, Director General of the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE), welcomed all participants attending to the 20th Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas.
43. He started by thanking the Government of Uruguay to host such an important event, declared as of National Interest, and for the warm welcome extended to all participants since the moment they arrived to the country.
44. Dr. Vallat expressed his special gratitude to the President of the Republic and the Secretary of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries for their generous assistance in the preparations for this event.
45. He also highlighted the exceptional career of Dr. Carlos Correa, OIE Delegate for Uruguay and current President of the OIE World Assembly of Delegates, an important position for which he demonstrated a great enthusiasm, by drawing on his extensive experience and vision and playing an active role in all of the Organization's activities and offering tremendous support.
46. Dr. Vallat remarked that this Conference reflects the vitality of the Regional Commission for the Americas and its determination to bring its members together in order to discuss animal health issues, as well as the implications and commitments they entail not only for the Veterinary Services of the Americas, but also for all 177 OIE Member Countries.
47. He recalled that, since the OIE's creation in 1924, its main objective has been to promote international cooperation and coordination in controlling animal diseases. In today's globalized context, achieving such objective is increasingly important.
48. Dr. Vallat mentioned that, while the Americas Region is not the largest in size, it is certainly among the most active OIE regions and represent an extraordinary source of animal protein for the world. After the recent incorporation of the Bahamas, there are now 30 Member Countries in the region.
49. He was delighted to see so many of the Member Countries attending to the meeting and was also pleased to remark that the Americas are actively involved in each and every activity of the Organization. The member countries of the Region are involved in many joint projects with different international and regional organizations, as well as with various OIE stakeholders.

50. The Director General explained that during the 20th Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas they would analyze the main animal health issues faced by the continent, as well as the region's advances in this regard. He added that they would also discuss the forthcoming regional programs and activities, being fully aware that their success would ultimately depend upon the commitment and collaboration of each Member Country of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas.
51. He briefly referred to the Conference program, highlighting some of the issues to be addressed, such as climate change and its impact on animal diseases and production. This matter is of critical importance today, considering the fact that at least one disease emerges or re-emerges each year. He noted that the consequences of climate change have been a major consideration in the OIE 5th Strategic Plan.
52. According to Dr. Vallat, by discussing this issue at the meeting, it would be possible to identify the best ways to help Veterinary Services throughout the region and around the world to acquire structures complying with international standards on good governance. He further emphasised that they would talk about the best scientific way to face and take a common position regarding some unjustified criticisms and against animal production.
53. Another important technical item refers to the OIE Strategy for the control and eradication of foot-and-mouth disease at the national, regional and global levels, following the enforcement of the 2009 World Conference recommendations approved in Asuncion. He explained that they would discuss the common OIE-FAO strategy for the regional and global control of this disease. He also commented that the participants opinion were of paramount importance for the improvement of the strategies under development and to be presented at the forthcoming World Conference (with donors) to be held in Asia in 2012.
54. Dr. Vallat added that they should by no means neglect solidarity toward less favored nations. Under the terms of its mandate and activities, and in collaboration with other international and regional organizations, the OIE demonstrates that the developed countries have everything to gain in helping less advanced nations in the control and eradication of animal diseases that threaten free countries. Beyond any doubt, the best way for free countries to be protect is by helping infected countries getting rid of existing pathogens.
55. Dr. Vallat briefly described the OIE Global Program for Strengthening Veterinary Services, based on the use of the OIE-PVS tool for Performance of Veterinary Services evaluation. This program has been widely implemented as more than one hundred OIE Member Countries have already benefited from the tool.
56. In the Americas, twenty-one (21) countries have conducted their first PVS assessment or have applied to do so, while eight (8) have asked for a PVS Gap Analysis to be performed. This second component of the PVS pathway seeks to identify and make the priority investments needed to comply with the OIE international Veterinary Services standards. The Governments of these countries, as well as the donors, use the results of these analyses when determining the investments needed to ensure that the national Veterinary Services operate according to OIE international standards.
57. Dr. Vallat remarked that, as part of this PVS pathway, the OIE has undertaken to support its Member-Countries in the process of updating veterinary legislation, as the basis for Good Governance of Veterinary Services. He further highlighted that the OIE is developing in collaboration with PAHO-PANAFTOSA a project to adapt the PVS tool in order to assess the interaction between animal health and public health in line with the application "One Health" concept. There will be a pilot project to be undertaken in Costa Rica.
58. The Director General stated that he was pleased to announce that the OIE was organizing its first Global Conference on Veterinary Legislation, to be held in Djerba from 7 to 9 December 2010. The purpose of this Conference being to give Member Countries the opportunity to openly discuss the importance of veterinary legislation. He cordially invited all participants to attend.

59. He took the opportunity to also invite them to the first OIE Global Conference on Wildlife, organized jointly with the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), the FAO and the WHO, to be held in Paris from 23 to 25 February 2011, where the link between health and biodiversity will be addressed for the first time. This high level meeting will represent a unique opportunity to build the future in the context of globalization and climate change taking into account the necessity of protecting the biodiversity worldwide.
60. Dr. Vallat referred to the OIE Regional and Sub-regional Representations in Buenos Aires and Panama, highlighting the fact that, over the next few years, these offices will give more importance on specific regional issues, including helping Member Countries complying with the OIE international standards, and also improving involvement in the process of drafting such standards. The OIE has created national Focal Points to achieve this objective, specialised on six different areas: aquatic animal diseases, wildlife, animal disease notification, veterinary products, animal welfare and animal production-related food safety. He also made reference to the laboratory network of the veterinary services of the region and to the implementation of OIE laboratory Focal Points for which a pilot project has been undertaken in the Americas.
61. He also confirmed that the OIE Scientific Commission was working on preparing official recognition mechanisms for new diseases on the basis of the template already being used for foot-and-mouth disease and BSE. He added that the Commission had started working on African horse sickness and would follow on with classical swine fever in 2011.
62. He finally emphasized on the importance of Good Governance of Veterinary Services, which will always be on the front line against the animal diseases control fight, including zoonoses, stressing the fact that the cooperation between OIE Member Countries and the Organization itself, and also with the other International Organizations involved and international donors being crucial for its success.
63. He expressed his thanks for the interest and collaboration of the region's countries in the activities of the OIE and especially for the collaboration of Argentina and Panama, the host countries of the Regional and Sub-Regional Representations. He also thanked for the invaluable support made through the voluntary contributions provided by donor countries, such as Canada and United States which permanently collaborate through voluntary and professional contributions to support a number of OIE programmes and activities.
64. Dr Vallat concluded by wishing participants an excellent Conference and hoping that the work and activities conducted over this week will be of fruitful and of great.
65. The accountant Mr Danilo Astori, Vice President of the Oriental Republic of Uruguay, on behalf of the Uruguayan Government, welcomed the participants, who came from 27 countries, as well as the representatives of international and regional organisations and observers.
66. The accountant Mr Astori emphasised the importance Uruguay has given to the 20th Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas, considering the OIE's reputation, with its 86 years of existence and its 177 Members throughout the world.
67. That renowned reputation of the OIE is one of the strengths of this Conference. It is expected that the organisation's reputation will be of help to achieve important results, in important and strategic, in line with the objectives of the OIE, related to the Animal Health and Welfare, as well as food safety, bearing in mind Human health.
68. In respect of the subjects to be discussed, he emphasised the impact of climate change, from the environmental viewpoint, nowadays included in all the agendas, which means that animal health could not be an exception.
69. He also stated that the FMD control and eradication programme is one of the main issues, as Uruguay has made major efforts at national and international level.

70. The Vice President emphasised that Uruguay is particularly interested in opening to the world, that the country has already made efforts to do so, within the framework of its strategic plan. He gave the example of his country, where animal product exports account for one-third of the exports of goods, to various countries.
71. He reminded that animal product exports depend on each country's health level, and that health level depends on the credibility of the certifications given by the government. This should be considered a "matter of State", which means it should be part on a national strategy and not resulting from government alternations or changes. No country will be able to achieve important results; the activities cannot be either individual or unilateral.
72. The results are supposed to come out of collective efforts, within the framework of international cooperation.
73. He finally wished all participants a pleasant stay and a very productive week, and then declared the Conference open.
74. The above speeches were made available for the participants.

Election of the Conference Committee

75. The Conference Committee was elected as follows:

Chairperson:	Dr Francisco Muzio (Uruguay)
Vice-Chairperson:	Dr José David Bolaños Méndez (El Salvador)
Rapporteur General:	Dr Igor Romero Sosa (Mexico)

Adoption of the Provisional Agenda and Timetable

76. The Provisional Agenda and Timetable were adopted.

Designation of Session Chairpersons and Rapporteurs

77. Chairpersons and Rapporteurs were designated for the technical items as follows:

Item I:	Dr. Bernardo Cosentino (Argentina), Chairman Dr. Mark Trotman (Barbados), Rapporteur
Item II:	Dr Brian Evans (Canada) Chairman Dr Daniel Rojas (Paraguay), Rapporteur
Animal health situation:	Dr. Miguel Domínguez (Peru), Chairman Dr. Héctor Escobar (Chile), Rapporteur

Fifth OIE Strategic Plan and OIE Global Programme of Strengthening Veterinary Services (including PVS, PVS Gap Analysis, legislation and communication support in America and the world)

78. The Conference Chairman, Dr Francisco Muzio, invited Dr Bernard Vallat, OIE Director General, to present the Fifth OIE Strategic Plan and OIE Global Programme for Strengthening Veterinary Services.
79. Dr Vallat started his presentation by talking about the OIE and its 177 Member Countries throughout the world. He evoked the history of the Organisation, since its creation in 1924.

80. The Director General emphasised the importance of the Delegates and the Focal Points as part of the OIE governance bodies. The main responsibility of the Delegates is to negotiate international veterinary legislations for their countries and to report to the OIE on the animal disease situation in their countries. The Focal Points are designated by the Delegate to represent him/her and work in fields such as: aquatic animal diseases, wildlife, animal disease notification, veterinary products, animal welfare and animal production food safety.
81. Dr Vallat referred to the OIE Reference Laboratories and Collaborating Centres, highlighting their role in supporting Members to comply with OIE international standards and to actively participate in the development of international standards.
82. He also commented on the different laboratory twinning projects intended to improve expertise and diagnostic capacity with the aim of achieving OIE standards compliance. Through this project, both Members and regions will have a wider and more balanced opportunity to benefit from international expertise to supporting and strengthening the Veterinary Services of the scientific community in developing countries, so they can participate in the development of standards. He listed the different approved and active twinning projects for the information of the assembly.
83. Dr Vallat referred to some of the tools and mechanisms that the OIE will continue to promote and support in its new Strategic Plan, such its World Animal Health Information System (WAHIS) and the web linked database WAHID. He reminded countries of their obligation to timely notify the occurrence of animal diseases using this new system, for the immediate notification and follow-up reporting during outbreaks to track the worldwide animal health situation in real time, in addition to submitting six-monthly reports on the presence and absence of OIE-listed diseases.
84. Dr. Vallat reminded the assembly of the OIE's role as an Intergovernmental Organisation in setting standards, guidelines and recommendations for animal health within the framework of the WTO SPS Agreement. He also referred to another important mechanism that the OIE offers to its Members - the informal mediation procedure. This voluntary-based mechanism may be used to help resolve differences between Members using science and OIE recommendations for safe international trade in animals and animal products.
85. The Director General gave a summary of the OIE's objectives, including:
- to ensure transparency in the global animal disease and zoonosis situation;
 - to collect, analyse and disseminate scientific veterinary information and disease control methods;
 - to provide expertise and encourage international solidarity in the control of animal diseases;
 - to improve the legal framework and resources of national Veterinary Services.
86. Dr Vallat presented important key messages that will guide the new OIE Strategic Plan: 2011-2015, as well as the concepts and tools to be used during this period in order to face those problems.
87. He started by indicating the global population and increased animal protein demand trends, highlighting the fact that forecasts to 2030 suggest that the demand for animal protein will increase by 50%, especially in developing countries.
88. Dr Vallat mentioned that the risk of diseases spreading around the world increases with globalisation, the rapid movement of people, animals and animal products, and also climate changes.
89. Dr Vallat stressed the importance of food security and food safety as crucial elements for public health, given the need for the global supply of safe food and the key role of veterinary scientific experts must play in protecting the society, not only in controlling diseases and the lost associated to them, but in integrating the latest scientific research to increase animal production and thus providing everyone with access to animal protein (milk, eggs, meat).

90. Dr Vallat noted the increasing importance of Veterinary Public Health given the zoonotic potential of animal pathogens, bearing in mind that 60% of human pathogens (infectious diseases) are zoonotic, 75% of emerging diseases are zoonotic, and 80% of agents having a potential bioterrorist use are zoonotic pathogens.
91. Turning to the new concepts for promoting the protection of countries and regions from current and emerging threats for animal and humans, he introduced the concept of Global Public Good. Public Goods are goods with benefits that potentially extend to all countries, people, and generations. Animal health systems are global public goods, as the control and eradication of infectious diseases, including zoonoses, have positive consequences at national, international and intergenerational levels.
92. Dr Vallat commented on the good governance of Veterinary Services and stated that this will only be achieved if all the Members meet certain minimum requirements, such as the:
- Need for suitable legislation and its implementation through effective national animal health systems
 - Need to guarantee surveillance, early detection and rapid response to disease outbreaks through a national chain of command and good diagnostic capacities
 - Necessity to recognize governments responsibilities
 - Alliances between the public and private sector (farmers, private veterinarians, consumers) are key
 - Support to the quality of Services through the use of OIE PVS tool (evaluation and gap analysis of international standards)
 - Initial and continuing veterinary education
 - Applied research
93. The OIE has, since 1990, adopted a five-year strategic planning cycle for programming its work. The Fifth OIE Strategic Plan (2011-2015), adopted at this year's General Session, builds on the success of the previous Strategic Plans and integrates important new elements for improving animal health, veterinary public health and animal welfare world-wide.
94. The Director General emphasised that the Plan emerged from the dialogue between OIE Members and the Council.
95. Among the elements of the Plan, Dr Vallat stressed the contribution of public health and animal health to food security, the application of the "One Health" concept for reducing of risks of high impact diseases at the interface between animals, humans and ecosystems. This will require to consider working in certain non-traditional areas, such as infectious diseases in wildlife, working animals, competition and companion animals, in addition to food-producing animals. The OIE is working on this concept at world level together with FAO, WHO, UNICEF and the World Bank. The Director General of the WHO, FAO and OIE made a common publication on this matter this year.
96. The Director General emphasised the key role of Veterinary Services in controlling diseases at their source, referring the reduction of public health risks-related zoonoses. He also pointed out that some non-zoonotic diseases shall be considered as priorities as they affect food security, becoming a public health issue.
97. He noted that the OIE will continue to work towards strengthening the technical capacities, management, legislation and good governance of Members' Veterinary Services of the Member Countries through the World Animal Health and Welfare Fund and in collaboration with global partners such as FAO, WHO and regional partners in addition to global, regional and national donors.
98. The Plan also aims at strengthening the Organisation's communication tools including official communications (required under its mandate) and its interface with veterinary professionals, the public and the media. Global improvement and harmonisation of veterinary legislation, the use of veterinary products and continuous veterinary education will be highlighted.
99. Dr Vallat declared that the OIE will also continue strengthening Regional Representations to enhance its help to Members through capacity building activities.

100. The Director General recalled that the Fifth Strategic Plan is consistent with the General Objectives of the OIE. He also explained that while the main contact point with Member Countries is the Delegate, a system of Focal Points has been established. Each country shall designate its Focal Points to help them work in different technical aspects while respecting their other obligations.
101. Dr Vallat reminded the assembly of the current OIE Global Programme for Strengthening Veterinary Services, based on the use of the OIE-PVS tool for evaluating the Performance of Veterinary Services. This programme has been designed to provide continuous improvement of compliance with OIE standards on quality, in addition to strengthening the standards and guidelines adopted by OIE Members, with influence on global, regional and national policies on the Good Governance of Veterinary Services. The programme is funded by the OIE World Animal Health and Welfare Fund, which receives grants from a number of donors and was created to promote and implement the capacity building activities of the OIE.
102. He briefly described the Tool and the evaluation process. He also explained that the first PVS evaluation, known as the “diagnosis”, is followed by the PVS-Gap Analysis, called the “prescription”. The OIE is working in conjunction with its partner organisations (mainly FAO in developing countries) and donors to prepare priority investment programmes that could be funded either by each Country or by international donors. This second step is used to prioritise the needs identified within the framework of national priorities.
103. Dr Vallat presented the state of play on the OIE PVS Programme, at global and regional level, including OIE PVS Evaluations, including PVS Gap Analysis missions. More than 100 of the 177 Members of the OIE have already applied the PVS evaluation, with a total of 96 missions and 72 complete final reports.
104. Fifty-seven Members across the world have already applied the PVS Gap Analysis, and 26 of them have completed their missions.
105. Referring specifically to the Americas, Dr Vallat said that 21 Members have already conducted their first PVS evaluation. He appealed to Members of the region that might need help through the PVS Path and who have not already applied the evaluation to do so before the end of the PVS Programme.
106. Eight Members from the region have asked for the Gap Analysis process to be launched. The Director General listed the benefits to the other Members, if they apply for this step of the process.
107. Dr Vallat also mentioned how important it is for Members to update their veterinary legislations and reminded the assembly that the OIE has developed a generic model that would help Members to improve compliance with the OIE Standards. He pointed out that there are specific missions that help Members with their legislation issues and that pilot Members have been designated to develop an agreement with the OIE to support them and supervise the evolution and implementation of an appropriate legal framework.
108. The Director General explained the OIE activities related to veterinary education to adopt basic veterinary curricula in the veterinary training institutions throughout the world. These basic knowledge requirements of veterinarians refer to the Public Good role and responsibilities of the veterinarians in each country. He also presented the findings of the OIE work on the relation between domestic animals and the environment and listed the benefits of livestock production in the world.
109. Dr Vallat concluded his presentation by referring to all the World Conferences the OIE is preparing and invited all the countries to take part actively in these conferences.

Discussion

110. The Chairman of the Conference thanked Dr Vallat for his very interesting and documented presentation on the activities of the OIE and the Fifth Strategic Plan. The Plan is particularly important for the region, because of its scope, as it is wider than the previous one and includes animal health and its relation with Animal Welfare and Food Security.

111. Today, the increase of animal production being one of the main challenges in the Americas, the problems related to the intensification of production systems should be anticipated.
112. Dr Emerio Serrano, Delegate for Cuba, congratulated Dr Vallat for his presentation pointing out that it shows the evolution of the OIE during these years. He reminded that the strategic plan was initially a modest proposal made for the Americas, that it was applied in the region and then implemented to a global scale.
113. Dr Serrano made reference to the twinning programme, highlighting the strength it has brought to the organisation. Twinning projects are the best example of solidarity promoted by the OIE among its Members. He highlighted the importance for developing countries to benefit from this programme in order to improve their capacities. Taking the example of Cuba, he pointed out that there are twinning projects between Cuban and German Laboratories, for classical swine fever, and between Cuban and Italian Laboratories, for avian influenza and Contagious Bovine Pleuropneumonia (CBPP). Besides, they are working on the development of a Reference Laboratory for mycoplasmosis, whose goal will be to promote a special helping system for countries in Africa, without regional support.
114. Referring to epidemiology, or epizootiology, he stated that the country is now working on a Centro de Sanidad Agropecuaria (agricultural health centre), to be the Collaborating Centre for epidemiology. Cuba would have two Collaborating Centres, along with the biotechnology Collaborating Centre.
115. He emphasised that both the Collaborating Centres and the Reference Laboratories are in the most developed countries, which means that they should be promoted in the developing countries, taking advantage of the OIE's assistance, through the twinning opportunities.
116. Dr Rosa Guerrero, representative of the Secretary General of the CAN, thanked Dr Vallat for his presentation and asked the OIE to consider the possibility to work together with the CAN on legislation. Dr Guerrero mentioned the work of the CAN, through the Andean Technical Committee for Agricultural Health (COTASA), to develop trade standards and expressed the desire of the CAN to work with the OIE on legislation.
117. Dr Vallat expressed his satisfaction about the positive opinion the countries have towards the twinning programme. He said it is extremely positive that Cuba participates in both the Reference Laboratories and the Collaborating Centres programmes.
118. Regarding that, he reminded that the OIE is open to the proposals of its Members. He explained that the proposals should be analysed by the Laboratories Commission and then possibly approved by the Director General, emphasizing the importance of strategic partnerships to help other countries. He also underlined the importance of an appropriate repartition of laboratory twinning initiatives in various countries of the Region.
119. In response to the CAN's request for working together with OIE on legislation, the Director General confirmed that the OIE is open to collaborate with regional organisations, and on this matter he pointed out the example of the OIRSA, which proposed the participation of its Member countries in the international Conference, to be held in Tunisia. He also commented that every time a Member of OIRSA contacts the OIE for help on legislation, the OIE verifies with the country and if the country gives its approval, an OIRSA observer is sent with the OIE mission.
120. Dr Mark Trotman thanked Dr Vallat for his presentation and commented he would like to discuss on veterinary education. He explained that there was a need to improve para-veterinary training, at least in the countries of the Caribbean.
121. He acknowledged the fact that para-veterinarians does not have the same training level; nevertheless, he stressed the importance of their work for animal health.
122. He reported that para-veterinary training curricula should be enhanced, as current programmes are mainly focused on assisting veterinarians and para-veterinarians are barely given training on Public Health.

123. Dr Vallat explained that the OIE is interested in the para-veterinarians as animal and veterinary public health players. He confirmed that the OIE standards request their accreditation by the national Veterinary Statutory Bodies. He reminded that OIE began its activities on Veterinary Education with the Conference of Deans held in 2009; that conference was focused on the veterinarians. The next step will be the initial and continuous training of paraprofessional.

Report on the activities of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas

124. The Conference Chairman, Dr Francisco Muzio, invited Dr Jamil Gomez, Delegate of Brazil and President of the OIE regional Commission for the Americas to present the report on the activities of the Comision.
125. Dr Jamil started his presentation commenting that the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas, through its Bureau, has been working in close coordination with the Regional and Subregional Representations for the Americas, to which end two workshops have been held: one in December 2009 and the other in March 2010, both in Buenos Aires. The aim of the workshops was to discuss the activities conducted by the Regional Representation and to plan its future activities, as well as to address matters of great importance to, and with significant impact on, the countries of the Americas.
126. He underlined that the Bureau of the Regional Commission suggested that attention should be given to the issue of global warming, which is why it has been made one of the key items of this 20th Regional Conference. This is appropriate, not only because it is a topical issue, but also in light of the FAO document on the impact of livestock production on global warming, for which purpose information has been collected and the Veterinary Services have been asked to study the issue in depth.
127. The Bureau of the Regional Commission asked the Regional Representation to include on its activities visits to the Caribbean countries of St. Vincent, Grenada, St. Lucia, St. Kitts and Nevis, Dominica, and Antigua and Barbuda, to encourage their participation in the OIE and to consider an alternative to their joining as new members.
128. In reference to the activities of 2010 Dr Gomez de Souza gave a brief summary of the most relevant issues as follows:
- (a) OIE Focal Points.
 - (b) Cost-benefit: continue with the work programme.
 - (c) Meeting to update OIE standards.
 - (d) Next meeting of the Inter-American Committee on Aquatic Animal Health (IAC-AAH) in Costa Rica.
 - (e) Participation in important events to be defined in accordance with their importance and with budgetary aspects, as well as with suggestions from the region's Member Countries.
 - (f) Latin American Parliament (PARLATINO): participate in meetings.
 - (g) Inter-American Committee on Avian Health (CISA)–Committee of the Americas for Veterinary Medicines (CAMEVET)–Standing Committee of the Americas on TSEs in Animals (COPEA)–Caribbean Community (CARICOM)–Regional International Organization for Plant Protection and Animal Health (OIRSA)–Andean Pact–South American Committee for the Control of Foot and Mouth Disease (COSALFA)–Pan American Council on Veterinary Science Education (COPEVET): these annual activities will be continued.
 - (h) NETWORK of LABORATORIES OF THE AMERICAS.
 - (i) List of experts in the region.
 - (j) PVS–GAP Analysis: continue encouraging countries to undertake this.
129. As regards 2011 activities, the aspects discussed to date have been:
- (a) OIE Focal Points: continue with their training in accordance with the programme defined by the Regional Representation.
 - (b) Laboratories Focal Point: the OIE should consider the creation of this new Focal Point.
 - (c) Cost-benefit: continue with the work programme.

- (d) Meeting to update OIE standards: emphasis to be placed on this discussion with the aim of arriving at joint positions in the Americas.
- (e) Continue with the tasks of implementing the NETWORK of VETERINARY SERVICE LABORATORIES OF THE AMERICAS.
- (f) Contributions from Member Countries of the region: the Bureau should make an appeal for countries that are in a position to do so to increase their contributions to the OIE in order to improve funding for the activities of the Regional Representations.
- (g) Raise awareness concerning the role of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas.
- (h) Resolution XVIII of the 74th OIE General Session.

Report on the activities of the OIE Regional and Sub Regional Representations for the Americas and Proposal of activities for 2010/2011

130. The Chairman of the Session, Dr Francisco Muzio requested that Dr Luis Barcos, Regional Representative for the Americas, present the Report of the Activities of the Regional Representation and Sub-representation.
131. Dr Luis Barcos gave a summary of the activities carried out by the Regional Representation and Sub-representation within which stood out the actions to improve capabilities by means of carrying out various training seminars on the focal points of animal welfare, health safety of animal-based food products, veterinary medicines and diseases among aquatic animals.
132. Dr Luis Barcos also highlighted the coordination of meetings to discuss standards for the OIE, for the CISA in Ecuador and Costa Rica, for the CAMEVET in Colombia and of the Aquatic Animals Committee of the Americas. Also, the Meeting for Launching the Network of the National Laboratories of the Veterinary Services of the Americas was set up in Panama and a Delegates training period was held in May, 2010 in Paris, just prior to the General Session.
133. He also mentioned the series of events in which Regional Representation and Sub-representation entities participated, such as the launching of the FMD project in the Andes region, the international meeting on Anaplasmosis in Argentina, the 31st FAO Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean, the Classical Swine Fever meeting in Colombia, the PVC meeting in Uruguay and Paraguay, the Rabies Control Programmes in America and the International Poultry Council meeting in Chile, as well as participation in the celebration of Brazil's Agricultural Ministry's 100th anniversary and the PanVet 2010 event in Peru.
134. Dr Luis Barcos added that institutional visits were conducted in Brazil, as well as a tour to non-member Caribbean countries such as Saint Kitts and Nevis, Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Montserrat, Grenada, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.
135. Regarding Animal Welfare, Dr Barcos commented on the second meeting of the Inter-American Committee on Animal Welfare for the Americas, where discussions began on a regional strategy for Animal Welfare that will be submitted to the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas.
136. He also spoke of the setting up of the Network of Veterinary Service Laboratories of the Americas, informing the Regional Commission that it ought to review various documents drawn up for its approval, in which it is proposed that an analysis of financial sources for the basic activities be carried out, at an estimated cost of USD 60,000 per year.
137. Lastly, Dr Barcos stated that the List of Experts that was drawn up in the Regional Representation will be assembled into a database of OIE experts at global level.
138. In reference to the activities proposed for 2011, the Regional Representative announced that a scientific publication would be produced on the cost-benefits studies of diseases that originated in 2006. The countries that took part in the activity were Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Chile, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Paraguay and Uruguay, and they covered diseases like foot-and-mouth disease, brucellosis, tuberculosis, classical swine fever and avian influenza.

139. He also pointed out that there will be workshops on Focal Points for Wildlife and advanced training in WAHIS in Buenos Aires, Argentina.
140. Dr Barcos mentioned the Global OIE Conference on Aquatic Animals that will be held from 28-30 June, 2011 in Panama and for which the Regional Representation will handle logistical aspects, with support from the Headquarters.
141. With regard the Regional Committees CAMEVET, CISA, Aquatic Animals and Animal Welfare, he stated that various meetings would be held in 2011, for instance CAMVET in Buenos Aires, one in Venezuela for CISA and the Aquatic Animals Committee, which has yet to confirm its venue.
142. Dr Barcos mentioned the proposal to convene a meeting with the Delegates prior to the end of the OIE Comments period in 2011 to analyse standards to be adopted in the General Session of May, 2011.
143. Lastly, he announced the next meeting of the Bureau to be held in March, 2011.

Discussion

144. Dr Michael David, representative of the United States, thanked the President of the Regional Commission for his presentation and asked him to clarify, in relation to the regional strategy for animal welfare mentioned in the presentation, when he intended to distribute copies of this strategy to the delegates and what period was available for comments and sending to the region.
145. Dr Jamil Gómez explained that, for the moment, the objective was to stimulate member countries to commit to development of the regional strategy. For the time being, this strategy should not be considered as formally constituted.
146. In this spirit, Dr Luis Barcos, Regional Representative for the Americas, completed Dr Gomez's remarks by stating that a Animal Welfare Focal Points meeting, held in coordination with the Animal Welfare Committee, took place in Chile on June of this year. One of the recommendations that resulted from the meeting was to develop a regional strategy in this area. He stated that an ad hoc group is working on preparing the document to be submitted to the Bureau of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas and will subsequently be sent to member countries.
147. Dr Deyanira Barrero León, representative of Colombia, submitted for approval the new plan for eradicating FMD and requested that the plan appear in the OIE activities schedule for 2011, as well as the integration of countries and close cooperation with PANAFTOSA so as to be able to work harder toward making this commitment a success and so that stronger support can be relied upon in resolving the difficulties of the issue in the Andes region.
148. Dr Bernard Vallat commented to Dr Barrero that her contribution was highly relevant and recalled that during her remarks she highlighted the importance of having well organised veterinary services that comply with international quality standards. He showed that it is very difficult to make an investment in disease eradication programmes without veterinary services complying with OIE standards, making reference to fifty years of OIE experience in this environment. Dr Vallat mentioned that the OIE recommendation has always been that when investments are made in a country to eradicate a disease, it is necessary to request that the country in question comply with those quality standards that have been unanimously adopted by OIE Member Countries. Some countries are unable to comply with this requirement, because of other economic priorities or emergencies, and it is for this reason that the international community offers its support to develop veterinary services in all countries that need this. He concluded that when a country does receive support from the community, meeting internationally recognised quality standards for veterinary services is inevitable. Without effective veterinary services, programmes are neither effective nor lasting and therefore are a waste of funds.
149. Dr Francisco Muzio, Chairman of the Conference, requested that Dr Lucio Carbajo Goñi, Delegate for Spain and special guest to the conference, to present his view on disease control in the region and any aid that Spain can provide to the Americas.

150. Dr Lucio Carbajo began his presentation by thanking the Commission of the Americas for his invitation to such an important conference and declared his pleasure in participating in this event for the first time. He referred to Spain's relations with many of the countries represented at the conference. This relationship is both cultural and historical. Spain has always maintained broad and thriving relationships with the American continent.
151. He commented on the wide spectrum of relations that Spain has with the Americas and the veterinary context and the exchange of animal products between them. He underscored the interest that Spain has in controlling diseases and maintaining animal health. He explained how Spanish cooperation is manifest in this context through such organisations as the FAO and OIRSA and how it wishes now to collaborate with OIE, especially in the Americas.
152. This collaboration would occur through the OIE World Fund for establishing programmes that help with food security and trade. He stressed the importance of this cooperation, reporting on the recent visit Dr Vallat made to Spain to present the OIE to the International Cooperation Spanish Agency (Agencia Espanola de Cooperación Internacional).
153. Dr Carbajo iterated the cooperation of Spain in eradicating diseases, not only through the Cooperation Agency, but also through the country's Ministry of the Environment and Rural and Marine Environment. He offered Spain's technical support to all and urged them to benefit from Spain's experience in disease eradication.
154. He then spoke of the commission for the Spanish language whose intention is to continue to support the use of Spanish in the OIE and to ensure that all OIE documents be produced promptly in Spanish for Spanish-speaking countries to facilitate the various analysis and discussions.
155. In his quality as European Commission member, he referred to the document regarding animal health and indicated that the American continent was a priority continent for the European Commission. America is very important when it comes to European countries cooperation.
156. Dr Carbajo explained to the audience that a revolution occurred in Europe with the onset of the food crises involving both dioxins and Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy, which sparked widespread alarm and had the result of ensure adequate staffing of Veterinary Services. The moment was used to create services very close to the problem and all of Spain's provinces now have an animal health laboratory that makes it possible to act immediately during emergencies. The main thing is to keep the mechanism working and not limit its use for emergencies. The OIE will be dealing with a very important issue jointly with universities, i.e. training for future veterinarians. It is essential that veterinary personnel know the basics of working in the field, that they know what a country's structure is made of and what the work and requirements of cattle breeders consists of.
157. He concluded by referring to the importance of exchanging information between veterinary services and urged all to share ideas, to get to know each other and to know who one is dealing with and who are the counterparties for the future. These exchanges will facilitate overall transparency, an essential requirement for a globalised world.

Administrative Issues – Report of the recent meeting of the Council

158. Dr Francisco Muzio, Chairman of the session, asked Dr Carlos Correa, OIE Delegate for Uruguay and President of the OIE World Assembly of Delegates, and Dr Brian Evans, Delegate for Canada and Member of the Council, to present a summary of the recent meeting of the Council.
159. Dr Carlos Correa made a brief presentation on the Council, explaining that it meets twice a year, and with the financial support of the Canadian government, a third meeting is scheduled in order to analyse the policies and actions to be taken in between General Sessions.
160. The Council is composed of two delegates per continent.

161. He pointed out that during the last meeting various delegates expressed their worries regarding the little time granted for discussion of issues such as health standards, the scientific commission and aquatic animals during the General Session. Considering that time is too short, they decided to make changes in the original model and format. None of the Working Groups - Wildlife diseases, Animal welfare and Food safety - will make presentations to the assembly, as those presentations are included in the working documents. This would allow two more hours for discussion. If the Delegates have requests related to the 3 working groups, their presidents will be available to respond.
162. Regarding the comments on the Code chapters, he pointed out that Africa had made a very important and coordinated contribution. He invited the region to coordinate the work and to promptly send their comments on the main points of the Code.
163. He announced that the current web page design will be improved and the new platform will be launched in January 2011, offering better access to contents, as well as reference and consultation documents.
164. Finally, Dr Correa reported that another issue raised during the meeting was the lack of application of the procedures regarding disease status recognition. If in doubt, the countries might be contacted by means of a visit, audio/video conferences, E-mail, or requiring additional information from them.
165. Dr Brian Evans, as a Member of the Member of the Council, emphasised Dr Correa's work as President of the OIE World Assembly of Delegates. He expressed the region's pride in having a president who is able to think in the interests of all countries.
166. He referred to other administrative issues of interest to the assembly and explained that during its last meeting the Council broadly discussed the OIE Mandate and Internal Rules for Reference Laboratories and Collaborating Centres, highlighting the twinning projects and the need to ensuring both transparency and integrity of the process.
167. Dr Evans announced that the Council is also working on a system to ensure the transparency of the procedures used by the OIE, particularly those related to the status to the list of sanitary recognition. The main goal of this work is to ensure and document the absence of conflict of interests during the procedure.
168. He also reported on the audits and trainings scheduled in the Regional and Sub Regional representations this year. The objective of the audits was to ensure the Members use the contributions in the best possible manner.
169. He finally highlighted the importance of good communication within the OIE and announced the launch of the new version of the OIE Web Site. Besides, he informed a new vademecum online will be available and will soon be sent to the Delegates. This vademecum is a precious source of information on the role and the responsibilities of the OIE Delegates.
170. In March 2011, the OIE will publish an annual report allowing to share the information on the organization with general public.
171. He concluded by emphasising the OIE's continuous engagement in supporting the Member Countries who face catastrophes.

Technical item I

Climate change and its link with animal diseases and animal production

172. The Chairman of the Conference, Dr Bernardo Cosentino, Representative of Argentina, gave a brief introduction of the Engineer Walter Oyhantcabal, Coordinator of the Union for the Protection of Agriculture and Livestock from Climate Change (UPACC) of the Uruguay Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries and speaker on Technical Subject I of the conference.
173. Mr Oyhantcabal informed the audience that the presentation would be presented in collaboration with Dr. Egardo Vitale, consultant at the Uruguay Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries and co-author of the report.

174. Mr Oyhantcabal started the presentation on climate change and its relationship to animal production and diseases.
175. The presentation centred on four key issues relating to the elements to be considered in climate change, the impact of climate change on livestock and the impact of livestock on climate change and lastly the possible responses and actions to be undertaken.
176. He stated that there are records of climate change occurring in the past, but that those taking place at present are worrisome due to the speed at which they are occurring and their relationship with the concentration of greenhouse gases. The unpredictability in estimating increases in temperature and of potential impacts to animal health and production have sounded the alert to this potential risk.
177. He highlighted the fact that climate change does not manifest itself uniformly, as affected areas will be affected differentially, with extreme and opposite phenomena that include greater frequency of strong rains, cyclones of greater intensity, higher sea levels and an extension of the surface area affected by drought.
178. He then described potential biophysical impacts of climate change, both on the physiology of vegetation and on insects and animals.
179. All of these events would bring on negative socioeconomic impacts, including lower yields for agricultural and livestock systems, increases in production costs and an associated decrease in net revenue of producers and workers in the area. This will be paired with an increase in the risks of and vulnerability to climate phenomena of the populations, especially in sectors with few resources.
180. With regard to the impact of livestock on climate change, he did a critical analysis of the various reports produced for IPCC and FAO in which agriculture and livestock activities are identified as causing a large percentage of global greenhouse gases emissions. In these cases, he described the criteria that were applied to identifying such agricultural activities, which respond to a viewpoint that he does not consider solely pertinent to livestock breeding, in addition to which, within the livestock business itself is included the entire spectrum of the various productive systems, for the totality of animals species produced by man, in extensive schemes such as the intensive farming operations.
181. He stressed that therefore the entire estimated impact of agricultural and livestock activities has been erroneously attributed to certain specific cases, such as cattle breeding, with the result of discrediting the others and creating false speculation.
182. He then described the benefits that livestock production brings overall, which broadly override the supposed negative effects it produces on climate change, such as bringing value to pastoral systems, the recognition that cattle breeding deserves for preserving biodiversity, water and soils, leading to the production of more food with a lower impact on ecosystems. It is a way of reducing the effect of change to the world's climate, through the adoption of good practices and the promotion of eco-efficiency and environmental sustainability. Nonetheless, none of these measures help to reduce the impact of climate change on agricultural and livestock systems.
183. Dr Edgardo Vitale gave a presentation on the perception of the Americas region on climate change and animal health.
184. His introduction to the theme outlined that any major change to the inert components of the ecosystem affects the living components, including microorganisms, parasites, vectors, animal reservoirs and susceptible hosts. This implies that climate change, directly or indirectly attributable to human activities, provokes changes in the frequency and dispersal of disease, including zoonosis.
185. To give an example, he stated that currently it is accepted that 80% of all animal pathogens are zoonotic agents, as are some 75% of emerging pathologies.

186. In addition, he detailed a definition of "vulnerability" as given by the IPCC, calling it "The degree to which a natural or social system is able to cope with the adverse effects of climate change depending on its magnitude, the sensitivity of the system to changes in the climate and the system's adaptive capacity with regard to these changes." For this reason it is important to estimate regional vulnerabilities, with the objective of identifying those sectors that suffer the worst harm as a result of climate threats and their consequences, be they direct or indirect.
187. He also referred to a report published by the IPCC in 2007, with the warning that changes in meteorological standards will modify the spatial distribution of the insect population, and the presence or absence of many diseases will depend on their capacity to adapt to climate and environmental changes.
188. From this, one can suppose that the major diseases transmitted by vectors will be able to change in terms of incidence and intensity, depending on regional climate and environmental variables.
189. He also referred to the survey carried out in 2008 by the OIE amongst its members with the purpose of evaluating existing perceptions of probable repercussions of climate change on livestock production and emerging and re-emerging diseases.
190. This survey demonstrated that the majority of Veterinary Authorities in the countries of the region are aware of the theme, in keeping with the rest of the world, and are worried about the prospect of this phenomenon provoking an emergence or re-emergence of animal diseases within a period of five to ten years.
191. Likewise, the answers indicated that the avian flu and the Newcastle disease as emerging or re-emerging diseases directly associated with climate change, linking them with changes in the migration patterns of wild birds that move from the Arctic to South America during winter in the north. It follows that wild birds act as reservoirs for other pathogens, such as the West Nile virus, and serve as natural hosts for other viruses.
192. He also stated that many feel that the risk of human exposure to skin leishmaniasis is increased in the north of the continent, up through Central America to southern Canada, depending on how widespread the propitious habitat for developing the diseases vectors and reservoirs is. A similar situation may be developing now in Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay, where a change in the epidemiology of the disease is being observed with it turning up in urban and peri-urban zones and displaying an intensified virulence.
193. With relation to the proposals for specific regional level activities, responses included requests for support of the various international organisations for research and training on these issues.
194. From the research perspective, he felt that studies on climate change and its effect on diseases must be developed, as well as revisiting vigilance strategies of the veterinary services in relation to the perceived and forecasted risk of the occurrence of diseases associated with climate change.
195. In analysing the expressed requirements, he underscored the need to create training programmes on the veterinary service level and emphasised the need to share information and experiences amongst the countries of the region, to set up a network of experts, and to collaborate in identifying priority areas for strengthening capabilities.
196. To conclude he stated that known and emerging infectious diseases linked to climate change will be a challenge to animal and public health, and it should be understood that preventive action offers clear economic, environmental and social advantages because by anticipating potential impacts we will minimise the threat to ecosystems and human and animal health.
197. In this sense, the branch of veterinary public health continues to demonstrate its importance and we will need to strengthen veterinary education curricula, focusing on integrating it into other areas to protect health on a global level.

Discussion

198. Dr Moisés Vargas Terán, representative of the FAO, stated that the subject of climate change was a fundamental theme and represents a concern of all international organisations, especially the FAO. He stated that the most important thing is not to know whether 8 or 18% of livestock activity is involved in climate change, what is important is to take action. The FAO has a commission for livestock development in Latin America and the Caribbean and is currently carrying out three primary activities: alternatives for preventing degradation of pasture land and work for intensifying agro-pastoral and forestry systems in Latin America, more accurate measuring of greenhouse gas emissions in the region, with the resources and production systems of livestock on the continent and seeking financing for sustainable livestock.
199. Dr Gideon Bruckner, President of the Scientific Commission, stated that the Commission has understood the serious problem that climate change and its impacts represent. Nonetheless, he reminded the audience of the danger of considering the impacts of climate change as the only cause of animal diseases. Dr Bruckner stated that there are seasonal trends in the appearance of diseases as is the case with bluetongue disease that are not only due to climate change.
200. Dr Victor Vidal, member of the Aquatic Animals Commission, commented that, while people are assuming that climate change is the cause of animal diseases, there has not been long-term evidence proving linkages between those variables.
201. Dr José Sánchez of the Rural Federation (Federación Rural) asked whether it was possible to think of changing the parameters of genetic selection of animals, choosing animals with more resistant skin in confronting photo-sensitivity issues, keratosis or skin problems, seeking methods to measure carbon, etc.
202. Dr Brian Evans, delegate for Canada, mentioned two issues that should be considered important at the time of drafting the recommendation, since the OIE is a science-based organisation and therefore this is the right time to begin communicating a balance in the global debate, in order that this issue does not negatively impact the livelihoods of producers. Firstly, one billion producers depend on cattle and this is a factor that should be considered in the area of food security.
203. Secondly, with relation to the recognition we are giving to terrestrial animal facing climate change, it is important to realise that oceans are the largest CO₂ sequestration areas and that the survival of aquatic animals could be affected by a modification of this environment. Many countries depend on aquatic production systems more than land production and therefore, the impacts on aquatic species should also be considered.
204. Dr Edgardo Vitale, co-author of the Technical Item, confirmed that although there are some evidence demonstrating direct link between livestock and climate change, no scientific work has been carried out that prove the direct link. It is therefore very important to get the opinion of the countries on the questionnaire so as to obtain a better perspective of the issue.
205. The engineer Walter Oyhantcabal, speaker on the technical item, added that the evidence indicates that there will be greater sources of stress and greater pressure on prejudices and balances between the environment and animals. The distribution of vectors will also change, and as they change there exists a high possibility of the spread of diseases, although there is no irrefutable evidence the link the two events. We should generate systems that furnish data to build models that help us making decisions.

Analysis of the animal health situation in the Region up to June 2010 and perspectives for the future

206. The Chairman of the Conference, Dr. Miguel Oscar Domínguez Falcón, Delegate for Peru requested Dr Karim Ben Jebara, Head of the Animal Health Information Department of the OIE to present the analysis of the Animal Health situation up to June 2010.

207. This report is based on information obtained from national reports sent by the Member Countries of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas to prepare for the Regional Conference, from information extracted from the immediate notifications and follow-up reports received in the 2009 period up to 18 October 2010 and the official data obtained from the World Animal Health Information System (WAHIS).
208. With a view to the 20th Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas, the OIE requested the concerned Members to submit a report on the animal health situation in 2010. The following 27 countries/territories submitted their reports: Argentina, Barbados, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guadeloupe (France), Guatemala, French Guiana (France), Honduras, Martinique (France), Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Dominican Republic, St. Pierre et Miquelon (France), Trinidad and Tobago, United States of America and Uruguay.

Animal populations of the Americas

209. The American continent is a large land mass with a surface area of 42,385,154 km² and a population of 923,903,315 inhabitants, which gives a population density of 21.8 inhab. per km², l.
210. Furthermore, this continent has developed a wide variety of stocks be they livestock or aquaculture, making it one of the highest stock-producing regions of the world. America has become one of the world's main providers of animal protein because of the high number of animals bred, the quantity of products of animal origin produced in the region, its ability to maintain and continually improve the state of animal health and the open trade policy of various countries.
211. As can be gleaned from Table 1, the livestock population of terrestrial animals in the Americas has the following mean main animal populations: birds (□ 8,942,741,496), cattle (□ 492,521,943) and swine (□ 141,017,425). The percentage variation in the populations of these three species, taking 2005 as the reference year, shows that the cattle population remained stable over the 2005-2009 period (Percentage var.: -0.05 to 1.2%) and that the bird and swine populations have gradually raised their 2005 year level by a 15.5% and 12.8% percentage variation respectively (Graph 1).

Table 1: Distribution of the animal livestock population in the Americas over the 2005-2009 period

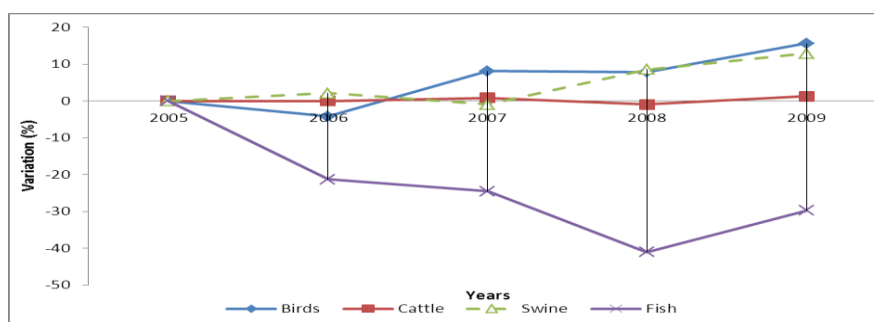
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	Average
Birds	8 478 668 617	8 121 461 700	9 166 826 615	9 146 112 666	9 800 637 880	8 942 741 496
Cattle	491 520 162	491 249 617	495 610 427	486 700 216	497 529 291	492 521 943
Swine	134 933 918	137 813 595	133 664 828	146 396 280	152 278 503	141 017 425
Sheep	84 944 338	85 632 525	89 048 128	85 427 243	84 289 211	85 868 289
Goats	34 933 374	34 338 412	37 308 083	36 781 749	33 581 681	35 388 660
Equidae	23 631 364	24 224 701	26 721 936	22 524 252	22 633 983	23 947 247
Camelidae	7 626 267	7 841 394	8 560 723	8 083 296	8 686 158	8 159 568
Bees*	6 248 963	5 909 477	8 165 286	9 981 146	9 716 507	8 004 276
Buffaloes	1 873 822	1 989 462	1 942 515	1 969 316	2 033 385	1 961 700
Hares/Rabbits	8 171 095	8 128 027	3 061 940	3 091 097	4 887 233	5 467 878
Deer	581 395	537 142	522 619	481 811	483 073	521 208

* hives

1 Source: <http://www.populationdata.net/index2.php?option=continent&cid=2&nom=americas>

212. It needs to be said that most of the quantitative data on birds, cattle and swine populations comes from a handful of countries. In the case of the bird population, Brazil and the United States² account for 75% of the continent's bird production, while 72% of the region's cattle population comes from Brazil, the United States and Argentina. Lastly, 81% of swine production takes place in the United States, Brazil, Canada and Mexico. It is vital that the countries regularly report on and update their animal populations, as this will help to identify world livestock production trends.
213. Moreover, the reports on the farmed aquatic animal populations of the Americas suffer from irregular reporting by the countries involved. In 2005, 16 countries reported on some 3 of their aquaculture production figures, but this number dropped to 11–12 countries per annum during the 2006-2009 period, and only nine of these countries⁴ regularly declared their populations over the 2005-2009 period.
214. Turning to the tonnes produced per category⁵, fish production is in the lead with a mean figure of 1,055,048 tonnes followed by molluscs averaging at 269,692 tonnes over the 2005-2009 period.
215. According to data provided during this period, a total of 16 countries reported on their fish production figures, two of which account for practically the 80% fish farming figure in America, Chile contributing 52% of mean production and the United States of America contributing 24%. Accordingly, if we take 2005 as the reference year, the percentage variation in the fish population shows that fish farming declined sharply during the 2005-2009 period (Percentage var.: down by 21 to 30%), which can be attributed to the drop in Chile's production at the time (Graph 1).

Graph 1: Variation (%) of the animal production by category during the last 4 years in the Americas (compared to 2005)



216. Lastly, we should emphasise how important it is for countries to reporting routinely on their animal populations through annual reports sent to the OIE, especially those relating to aquaculture in America, as this is needed to identify the region's trends.

Simulation exercises

217. The Member Countries organise disease introduction simulations that they convey to the OIE for distribution via the OIE-Info Distribution List, prior to conducting them.
218. Of the 25 simulation exercises conveyed to the OIE in 2009, 14 (56%) were conducted on the American continent. Up to 18 October 2010, a total of 16 simulations had been communicated, 4 of which (25%) had been conducted in countries of the Americas.
219. Diseases studied through the simulation exercises during the 2009 – October 2010 period in America are: foot and mouth disease (7), classical swine fever and swine diseases (6), avian influenza (2), Rift Valley fever (1), cattle diseases (1) and avian diseases (1) (Table 2).

² The United States of America has reported the same bird production over the 2005-2009 period

³ Crustaceans, fish or molluscs

⁴ Belize, Chile, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, United States of America, Guatemala and Venezuela

⁵ As for aquatic animals, there is no a specific classification by species; instead they have been divided into three categories: fish, molluscs and crustaceans.

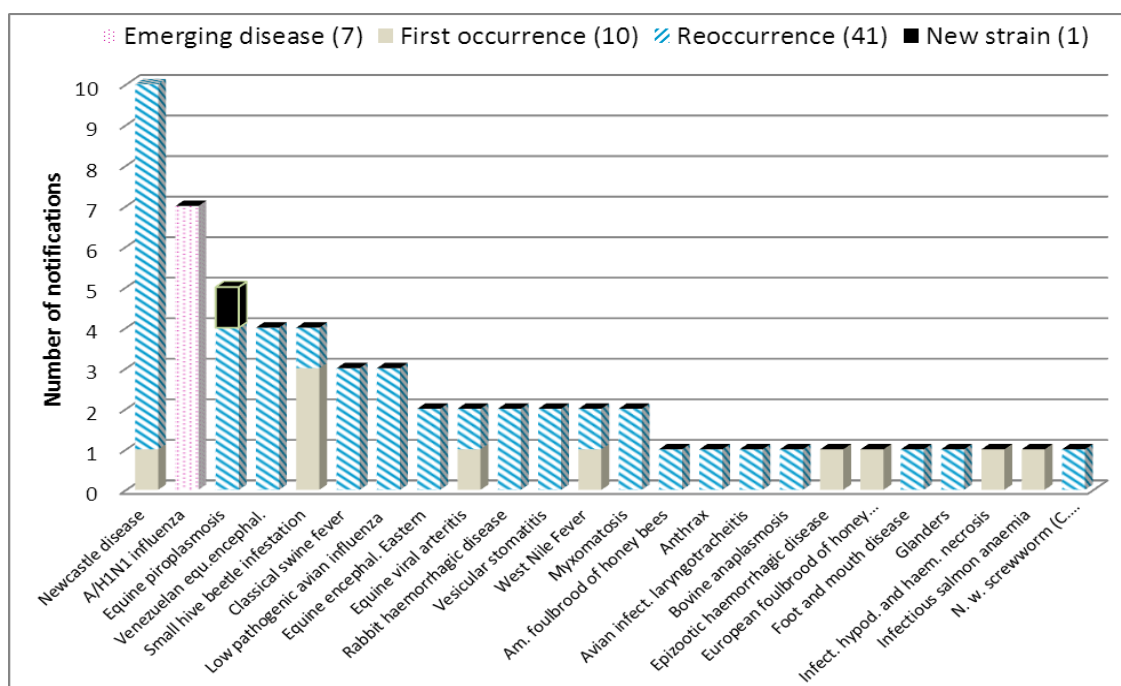
Table 2: Simulation exercises conducted in the Americas during the 2009 – October 2010 period and conveyed to the OIE for distribution via the OIE-Info Distribution List

COUNTRY	DISEASE	DATE
Argentina	Foot and mouth disease	2-4 December 2009
Argentina	Swine diseases	27-30 October 2009
Argentina	Swine diseases	21-24 September 2010
Argentina	Avian influenza	2-4 September 2009
Bolivia	Avian influenza	26-28 August 2009
Brazil	Swine diseases	4-10 July 2009
Brazil	Cattle diseases	8-14 August 2009
Brazil	Avian diseases	25-31 July 2009
Chile	Foot and mouth disease	17-21 August 2009
Costa Rica - Panama	Classical swine fever	30 November to 4 December 2009
United States	Foot and mouth disease and anthrax	18-24 June 2009
United States	Rift Valley fever	20-21 and 25-26 May 2010
United States-Canada	Foot and mouth disease	16-19 June 2009
Guatemala	Classical swine fever	23-27 August 2010
Guatemala	Classical swine fever	19-21 November 2009
Peru	Foot and mouth disease	23-26 November 2009
Peru	Foot and mouth disease	11-13 August 2009
Peru	Foot and mouth disease	20-24 September 2010

Exceptional epidemiological events and diseases

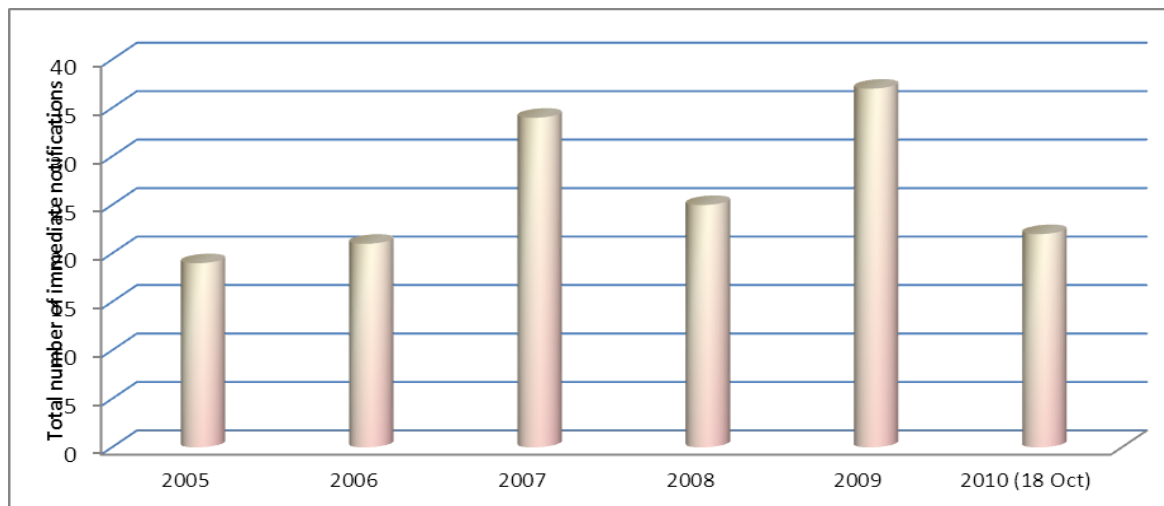
220. Graph 2 offers an overview of the exceptional epidemiological events and diseases notified by the countries/territories of the Americas during the 2009 to 18 October 2010 period, when a total of 59 immediate notifications were made in America. The diseases the most frequently notified are 10 notifications of Newcastle disease (notified as first occurrence and re-occurrence) and 7 of influenza A/H1N1 (notified as emerging disease). There was only one immediate notification of a new strain for equine piroplasmiasis in the United States of America.

Graph 2: Immediate notifications in the Americas, by disease during 2009-2010



221. Forty-two of the total number of events notified has ended, including four that ended because the disease was declared as endemic. A total of 17 events, of which 6 date back to 2009, remain unresolved.
222. The number of immediate notifications made in the Americas tended to rise during the 2005-2010 period, from 19 notifications (in 2005) to a total of 37 (in 2009) (Graph 3).

**Graph 3:
Total number of immediate notifications in America, from 2005 to 18 October 2010**



Six-monthly reports

223. The six-monthly reports submitted by the countries of the Americas through WAHIS from 2005 to date have been sent by a total of 33 countries/territories (28 Member Countries, 3 French territories of the Region 6 and 1 Non-Member Country⁷). Of this total, 91% (29 countries/territories⁸) kept the information up-to-date, 9% (3 countries⁹) stopped sending information between 2007 and 2008 and only the Bahamas send no information over the period.
224. Of a total of 21 six-monthly reports submitted in the first half of 2010, 20 countries submitted the information directly via the WAHIS interface and only one country submitted its report in file format Word (paper format). While 100% of the countries registered the six-monthly report on terrestrial and aquatic animals, 10 of them did not submit any information on aquatic animals (Table 3).
225. During 2009, of the 30 countries that reported to the OIE, 18 confirmed the presence of at least one disease in their aquatic animal populations, which represents a total of 13 diseases in the region that year.
226. Within the aquatic diseases of greatest incidence are mentioned: infectious hypodermal and haematopoietic necrosis present in 6 countries, only in domestic populations; Taura syndrome and infection with *Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis* present in 4 countries; white spot disease present in 3 countries, in domestic populations; and infectious salmon anaemia present in 2 countries, both in domestic and wild populations. Diseases of amphibians were notified only for wild animals (Table 4).

⁶ Guadeloupe (France), Martinique (France); French Guiana.

⁷ Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

⁸ Argentina, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guadeloupe (France), Guatemala, Guiana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Martinique (France), Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, United States, Uruguay and Venezuela.

⁹ Barbados (last report submitted in 2007); Surinam and Trinidad and Tobago (last report submitted in 2008).

Table 3: Six-monthly reports, 1st half of 2010, by type of submission and recorded information

	COUNTRY	DATA ENTRY	SIX-MONTHLY REPORT
1	Argentina	WAHIS	Terrestrial and aquatic
2	Belize	WAHIS	Terrestrial and aquatic
3	Brazil	WAHIS	Terrestrial and aquatic
4	Bolivia	WAHIS	Terrestrial
5	Canada	WAHIS	Terrestrial and aquatic
6	Chile	WAHIS	Terrestrial and aquatic
7	Cuba	PAPER	Terrestrial and aquatic
8	Dominican Republic	WAHIS	Terrestrial
9	Ecuador	WAHIS	Terrestrial
10	El Salvador	WAHIS	Terrestrial and aquatic
11	Guatemala	WAHIS	Terrestrial and aquatic
12	Guiana	WAHIS	Terrestrial
13	Guadeloupe (France)	WAHIS	Terrestrial
14	Haiti	WAHIS	Terrestrial
15	Honduras	WAHIS	Terrestrial and aquatic
16	Mexico	WAHIS	Terrestrial and aquatic
17	Nicaragua	WAHIS	Terrestrial
18	Paraguay	WAHIS	Terrestrial
19	Peru	WAHIS	Terrestrial
20	United States of America	WAHIS	Terrestrial and aquatic
21	Uruguay	WAHIS	Terrestrial

Table 4: Notified diseases affecting domestic or wild species of aquatic animals in the Americas in 2009

NOTIFIED DISEASES IN 2009	STATUS NOTIFIED IN		TOTAL COUNTRIES
	DOMESTIC POPULATIONS	WILD POPULATIONS	
Infectious hypodermal and haematopoietic necrosis	6	0	Brazil, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Mexico, Nicaragua and Venezuela
Infection with <i>Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis</i>	0	4	Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica and Guatemala
Taura syndrome	4	0	Colombia, Costa Rica, Mexico and Venezuela
White spot disease	3	0	Costa Rica, Mexico and Nicaragua
Infectious salmon anaemia	2	2	Canada and Chile
Infection with ranavirus	0	2	Canada and United States
Koi herpesvirus disease	1	1	Canada and United States
Viral haemorrhagic septicaemia	1	2	Canada and United States
Infectious haematopoietic necrosis	0	1	United States
Gyrodactylosis (<i>Gyrodactylus salaris</i>)	1	0	Colombia
Infection with <i>Xenohaliotis californiensis</i>	1	0	Chile
Tetrahedral baculovirosis (<i>Baculovirus penaei</i>)	1	0	Venezuela

Situation of the OIE-listed diseases considered as regional priorities

Foot and mouth disease (FMD)

227. FMD is endemic in parts of Asia, Africa and the Middle East and sporadic outbreaks are observed in some countries of South America. It was introduced into the Americas during the 19th century, particularly in North and South America from 1870. During the 20th century, FMD have spread through various countries of the continent; however, it has never been notified in: Belize, Cayman Islands, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Martinique (France), Nicaragua, Panama, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Trinidad and Tobago.
228. FMD is caused by seven distinct serotypes (A, O, C, SAT1, SAT2, SAT3 and Asia1), of which only the serotypes O, A and C are found in the Americas. Brazil reported serotype C in the State of Amazonas in August 2004, and this serotype has not been reported either in the region or anywhere else in the world.
229. During the 2009-2010 period, the disease occurred in the American countries of Colombia, Ecuador and Venezuela. The only immediate notification received at the time came from Colombia, which detected an outbreak in July 2009 in Nariño Department, which was brought under control in August 2009. The strain matched serotype O, presented 9 cases in swine and a susceptible population of 22 cattle that was destroyed. There have been no further outbreaks to date and the northern zone of Chocó Department has kept its FMD-free zone without vaccination status.
230. Ecuador reported the disease in a number of provinces during the 2009-2010 period, which only affected domestic species (cattle, swine and sheep). The serotype present is serotype O and the disease is considered as endemic. A total of 190 outbreaks occurred in 2009 with 1,785 cattle, 23 swine and 121 sheep cases involved. There were 39 new outbreaks of FMD from January to June 2010, affecting a total of 1,115 cattle. This epidemiological situation led to new studies of the acting strains and a full review of control strategies, as the number of cases of the disease increased between 2006 and 2010. The FMD control programme aims to certify FMD-free zones, for future eradication of the disease with and without vaccination by 2012.
231. During 2009, Venezuela presented serotypes O and A, which affected 150 cattle in seven provinces. To date, the OIE has no information on year 2010.
232. In Bolivia, there have been no reported disease outbreaks since March 2007, and the country has its own FMD eradication programme which intends to obtain in the short term the FMD-free zone certification with and without vaccination. The country currently has two FMD-free zones with vaccination.
233. Since 1992, Brazil has had its own national FMD eradication programme and has been working on expanding Brazil's free zones through surveillance systems. The absence of virus circulation in the region has been proven by longitudinal sero-epidemiological surveys based on risks and by the surveillance results. All the states of the free and non-free zone, excluding the State of Santa Catarina, apply an established FMD vaccination schedule to their bovine and bubaline herds.
234. Cuba retains its FMD-free country status without vaccination and continues to strengthen the measures taken at the international entry points to the country, in addition to risk analysis prior to issuing import authorisations for animals and animal products.
235. In the 1970s Mexico started working on an FMD emergency plan, which is currently being updated. Passive surveillance is carried out on notifiable vesicular diseases (bluetongue, vesicular stomatitis and contagious ecthyma). For their part, as part of the epidemiological surveillance of vesicular diseases, Guatemala and Nicaragua pay special attention to vesicular stomatitis, which is endemic in both countries and, because of its similarity with FMD, is investigated and is followed up in the farms, with traceability of possible similar cases in neighbouring farms and confirmation in the Vesicular Disease Diagnostic Laboratory (LADIVES) in Panama.

Table 5: 2010 foot and mouth disease status declared to the OIE

FMD-free country without vaccination	FMD-free country with vaccination	FMD-free zone without vaccination	FMD-free zone with vaccination
Belize	Uruguay	Argentina	Argentina
Canada		Brazil ¹⁰	Bolivia ¹¹
Chile		Colombia ¹²	Brazil: various States ¹³
Costa Rica		Peru	Colombia
Cuba			Paraguay
Dominican Republic			
El Salvador			
Guatemala			
Guiana			
Haiti			
Honduras			
Mexico			
Nicaragua			
Panama			
United States of America			

242. In conclusion, serotypes A and O are still present in the region, only in two countries. The countries continue their efforts to remain FMD free or to quickly eradicate the disease. Joint efforts among South American countries to establish frontier zones (High Surveillance Zone) and in North America to establish Vaccine Banks have been remarkable.

Rabies

243. Rabies is a zoonosis caused by a neurotropic virus of the genus *Lyssavirus* of the family *Rhabdoviridae*, it is contagious to all mammals, including humans. In wild populations, the rabies disease is maintained in reservoirs, particularly vampire bats in America; domestic animals are usually exposed by contact with infected wild animals. During the 2007-2010 period the only serotype notified to the OIE in the Americas is RABV.

244. In Belize, rabies is an endemic disease and has been confirmed in cattle every year. The virus is found in bats and foxes. Vaccination of bovines, equines, dogs and cats is recommended, and dog vaccination is carried out under the auspices of the Ministry of Health.

245. During the first six months of 2010, Bolivia presented cases in domestic animals, with in particular one case in camelidae which as it was associated with urban rabies was jointly addressed by the SENASAG and public health authorities for controlling zoonotic disease outbreaks.

246. In 1966, Brazil created a nationwide prevention programme for rabies and other encephalopathy applied to herbivores. It aims to reduce the prevalence of the disease in the domestic herbivore population. The programme strategy is based on vaccinating domestic herbivores, controlling the reservoirs of infection and using other animal health defence procedures geared to protecting public health.

247. In Canada, the disease remains endemic in wild species in various provinces of the territory and infection in domestic animals is the result of exposure to wild animals. Rabies vaccination is widely administered to domestic animals in Canada. The Veterinary Biologics Centre of Canada has taken part in monitoring the regulation for an oral rabies vaccine for use in wildlife vaccination programmes in Ontario and Quebec.

¹⁰ State of Santa Catarina

¹¹ Chiquitania zone and Oruro Department

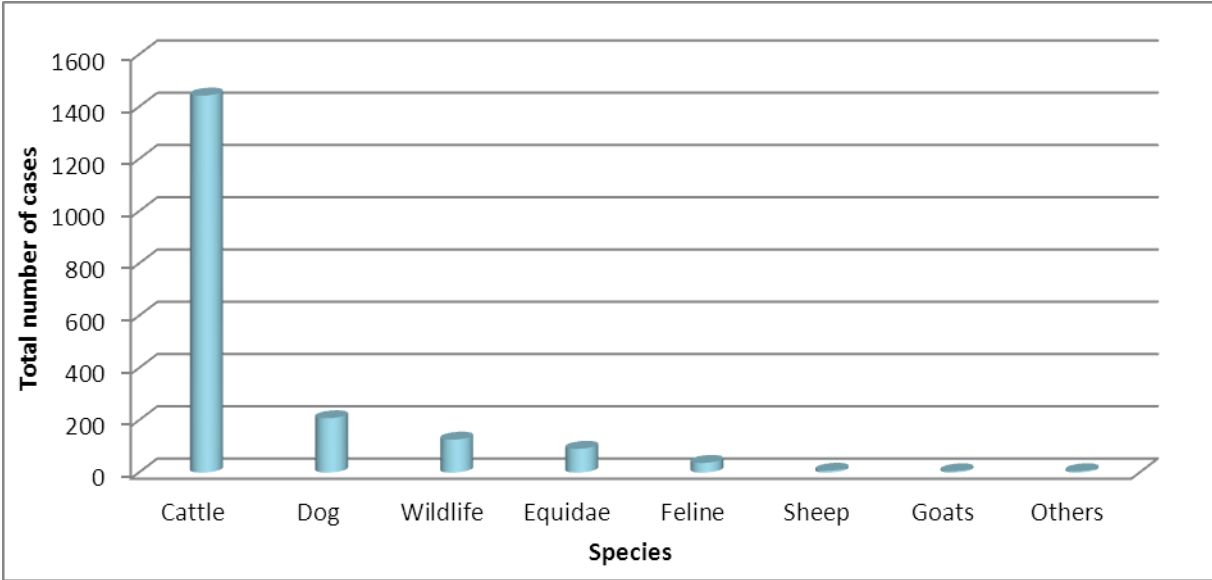
¹² Zone I – North-west region of the Department of Chocó and San Andrés and Providencia island groups

¹³ States of Acre along with two adjacent municipalities of Amazonas, Rio Grande do Sul, Rondonia and the middle southern part of State Pará. The States of Bahia, Espírito Santo, Minas Gerais, Rio de Janeiro, Sergipe, Tocantins, Distrito Federal, Goiás, Mato Grosso, Paraná, São Paulo of Brazil, and the zone in the State of Mato Grosso do Sul

248. Colombia has national geographical dissemination commensurate with the ecology of the transmitting vampire bat. Vampire bats are being captured and treated to reduce the risk to humans and domestic animals. Bovines and, if necessary, other susceptible species are being vaccinated, zoonosis training is dispensed through the Health Service, response is made to suspicions and samples are sent to laboratories, where the acting virus is typed and guides decision-taking.
249. Costa Rica has a cattle rabies control programme under whose auspices outbreaks are investigated, vaccination is carried out in response to the outbreaks and vampire population is under surveillance.
250. In 2010, Guatemala implemented a rabies surveillance and monitoring programme in bovines supervised by the Ministry of Agriculture, in response to the gradual increase of the disease incidence between 2005 and 2009. Furthermore, it has a Public Health Programme for the vaccination of dogs, with 90% coverage. During the months of January and February 2010, the number of bovine rabies cases increased in the north of the country. The reason for this change in the epidemiology of the disease is the overspill of farming frontiers and the practice of grazing on lands close to the mountainous areas, where large vampire bat populations (*Desmodus rotundus*) live in caves. An emergency bovine rabies vaccination plan was instigated on 30,000 heads of cattle; furthermore, the vampire bat population was put under control and public information campaigns were conducted to dissuade the population from using lands near the caves for cattle-grazing and to encourage animal vaccination against bovine rabies.
251. In the Dominican Republic, the Department of Animal Health shares responsibility for the notification and follow-up of rabies cases with the Ministry of Public Health. The notified cases in stock animals in the first half of 2010 were caused by mongoose bites. The health measures taken in each case were the destruction of the affected animals and the vaccination of susceptible animals in the zone. The main reservoir of the disease is also the mongoose in Cuba. The country is working on increasing the canine vaccination rate by importing specific vaccine given the current impossibility of producing the vaccine domestically. Coordinated work is going on with the Ministry of Public Health to carry out the zoonosis control and eradication programmes, veterinary services training activities, sanitary inspection, and diagnosis of the diseases.
252. Panama has a wild rabies control and prevention programme consisting of the control of vampire bat populations and the vaccination of animal populations in focal and perifocal areas, in which the disease affects cattle and equidae, among other species. During the first half of 2010, 6 cases of the disease have been notified and 15,572 have been vaccinated in the country.
253. Paraguay has defined risk areas for bovine rabies transmitted by vampire bats. The country has an information system shared by various institutions and a monthly publication in the epidemiological bulletin of SENACSA. The Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare has the responsibility for canine rabies control.
254. Numbers of bovine rabies cases rose in Trinidad and Tobago, during the first half of 2010, which is deemed to be atypical because it was notified as absent in 2009. The virus spreads through populations of vampire bats (*Desmodus rotundus*) that are migrating across the island. The strain had not been identified at the time of writing this report.
255. Another case is that of Ecuador, that has a bovine rabies programme to control the incidence of the disease in the Amazon Region and the highlands of El Oro Province where it is considered to be endemic. Bovine rabies is transmitted by vampire bats. Some of the main factors that contribute to the dissemination of rabies in domestic herbivores and the human population are the alteration of ecosystems, easy access to food given by the breeding of herds and the availability of natural shelters. In the 2006-2010 period there were 73 outbreaks of the disease in all, with an increase from 6 outbreaks in 2006 to 26 in 2009 and during the first six months of 2010, 8 outbreaks were notified.
256. In Uruguay, the disease is present in three departments (Rivera, Salto and Tacuarembó), where vaccination of cattle and equidae is mandatory. In the outbreaks all susceptible species are vaccinated, the premises must undergo a 60-day quarantine period and reservoirs are controlled (vampire bats with warfarin). There is no presence of the disease in the rest of the country and vaccination is voluntary.

257. The French territories of the Region, Guadeloupe, Martinique and St. Pierre et Miquelon have no cases of the disease and have a strict surveillance plan to avoid its introduction into the territory. In Guiana the disease is endemic; the last case of human rabies was seen in 2008 and one case in a bat in 2009; small ruminants and bovines are subject to biannual vaccination.
258. During the first half of 2010, according to the six-monthly reports sent by 21 countries and to the health report sent by Colombia for the Americas Conference, it can be seen that the disease was absent in 4 countries/territories: Chile, Guadeloupe (France), Honduras and Nicaragua. Only Argentina and Uruguay serotyped the virus, which was RABV. Despite the fact that the disease is hosted by wild species, 18% of the countries¹⁴ (4) declare that they have no information. Of the 18 countries that declare that the disease is present, three of them (the United States, Guiana and Haiti) have not given quantitative data. As it is evident in Graph 4, the species with the highest incidence during the first half of 2010 in the 15 countries that sent in quantitative data are bovines (1,443 cases), followed by canines (208 cases) and wild species (126 cases).
259. From the information provided in 2009 by the 16 Member Countries¹⁵ of the Americas that returned the questionnaire on wild species, 8 of those countries notified rabies cases in wild animals, declaring a total of 432 cases, 95% of which occurred in three countries – Brazil (241 cases), Canada (122 cases) and Chile (49 cases). Various families of bats (*Vespertilionidae*, *Phyllostomidae*, *Molossidae*, etc.) were hosts to 70% of the cases (303), the *Canidae* family (foxes, wolves, coyote, etc) accounted for 15% (65 cases) and the striped skunk (*Mephitis mephitis*) of the *Mephitidae* family for 11% (49 cases). The presence of the disease in mongooses emerges from the information obtained from the health report for the Americas of 2010 sent by Cuba and the Dominican Republic.
260. Thought must be given to some of the aspects mentioned earlier. The incursion of animal production frontiers to zones where rabies carriers in wild species cohabit (mainly vampire bats) calls for special response to disease control, educating the farmers, prophylactic control measures (vaccination), and others, that must be implemented by the veterinary or health services to avoid this major zoonotic disease. The absence of virus serotyping undermines the quality of the molecular epidemiological information that can be counted on. Lastly, under-notification of rabies cases in wild species is an issue that needs to be addressed by the region's countries.

Graph 4: Number of rabies cases notified in the Americas, first half 2010, by species



¹⁴ Ecuador, Guyana, Nicaragua and Peru

¹⁵ Argentina, Colombia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, United States of America and Uruguay

Brucellosis (Brucella abortus)

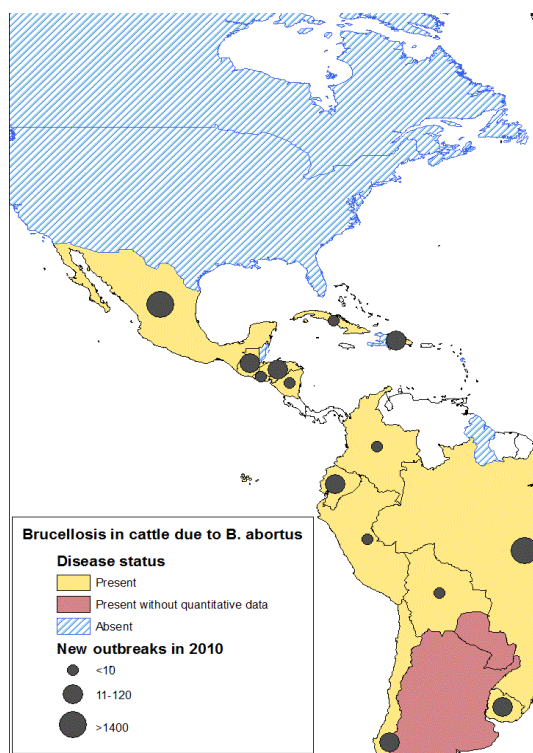
261. Brucellosis caused by *Brucella abortus* is an infectious disease widely spread in the world. It is a zoonosis, clinically characterised by one or more of the following signs: abortion, retained placenta, orchitis, epididymitis and, rarely, arthritis, with excretion of the organisms in uterine discharges and in milk. Veterinary Services in the Americas have official bovine brucellosis prevention, control or eradication programmes in order to reduce the negative impact of this zoonosis in public health and to improve the competitiveness of national animal production, since brucellosis is an endemic disease in most of the countries of the region.
262. The Canadian Food Inspection Agency recently conducted a national serological study in Canada to determine the presence of brucellosis, bluetongue and anaplasmosis. Between November 2007 and April 2008, 15,482 samples were collected. The study concludes that Canada's cattle population is free of brucellosis or has a prevalence of less than 0.02% with 95% confidence.
263. The United States of America initiated a nationwide eradication programme in 1934, when it had an 11.5% rate of reactors. In February 2008, 74 years after the programme was initiated, the 50 States, Puerto Rico and The Virgin Islands of the United States were designated free of brucellosis in stock animals. However, the presence of brucellosis in wildlife populations is a continuing challenge for eradication of the disease. The success of the brucellosis programme is primarily expressed in ability to adapt the programme activities to the various needs.
264. In French overseas territories of the Region, there is no record of the disease in Guadeloupe. Every two year in Guiana, all the cattle, sheep and goats undergo a brucellosis serological test; there has not been any case reported for the first half of 2010. Martinique performs brucellosis serology in slaughterhouses, and there is no reported case of the disease; besides, dairy animals undergo serological test with favourable results. St. Pierre et Miquelon is supplied exclusively by Canadian local production, where animals must have a brucellosis-free certificate before entering the country.
265. In Panama, the control and eradication programme of bovine brucellosis caused by *B. abortus* declared the province of Bocas del Toro technically free of bovine brucellosis and started the sampling plan for the declaration of Panama free of bovine brucellosis. In Paraguay, the District of Eulogio Estigarribia (Department of Caaguazú) is still a brucellosis-free zone and has a free farms certification in dairy basins.
266. The Official Veterinary Service for bovine brucellosis and tuberculosis in Barbados is performing a national survey in order to support the country's epidemiological surveillance programme. It is expected to be finished this year.
267. Brazil, Honduras, El Salvador and Nicaragua have their own national brucellosis and animal tuberculosis control and eradication programmes. Brazil's sanitary measures involve compulsory vaccination of females aged 3 to 8 months with strain B19 and the control of movement and voluntary certification of establishments free of bovine brucellosis caused by *B. abortus*. Nicaragua has certification of bovine brucellosis-free farms, keeps up general and targeted epidemiological surveillance, has disease-free provinces and during 2010 started nationwide epidemiological sampling to determine the prevalence of brucellosis in the country. In Honduras, during the first half of 2010, 22,552 serological samples were collected for brucellosis diagnosis. Out of a population of 4,159 animals, 265 gave positive results, obtaining a 6.37% outbreak prevalence and a national prevalence of 1.17%. A total of 434 animals were vaccinated with the RB51 vaccine. El Salvador, together with OIRSA (Regional International Organization for Plant Protection and Animal Health), have drawn up a "Design and performance of a study of the prevalence of bovine brucellosis and tuberculosis in El Salvador", which is hoped to be finalized in the second half of 2010. In addition, it has a certification system covering brucellosis-free farms.

268. In Colombia, vaccination has been the main plank of the programme to combat bovine brucellosis caused by *B. abortus*, by carrying out vaccination cycles in parallel with those of foot and mouth disease with 19 and RB51 strain vaccines. Guatemala, for its part, has a bovine brucellosis control and eradication programme due to *B. abortus*, presenting a low prevalence of 0.5%; however, it has encountered difficulty making headway with controlling the disease, as there is no compensation fund for the destruction of positive animals. In Uruguay, during the first half of 2010, a series of manuals on the bovine brucellosis control programme were approved and compensation insurance was introduced for controlling bovine brucellosis caused by *B. abortus*. Bovine brucellosis risk zones have been established per administrative unit, where at least one outbreak has been detected in the last year.
269. In Chile, various regions are brucellosis-free. The country has a national eradication programme of bovine brucellosis caused by *B. abortus* consisting of two main actions: surveillance (dairy farms, livestock markets and slaughterhouses) and quarantine and cleaning and disinfection of the premises in order to eliminate the disease. In 2010, during the January-July period, in 23 farms the quarantine was released and a total of 47 farms remain quarantined.
270. Cuba maintains a low presence of the disease. The country has a control programme in affected areas, where stamping-out of positive animals is carried out among other measures. Ecuador has a bovine brucellosis surveillance and monitoring programme; it is estimated that bovine brucellosis prevalence is 8.73%. A total of 587 free farms are brucellosis-free certified and 141 farms are recertified.
271. In the Dominican Republic, bovine brucellosis caused by *B. abortus* is an endemic disease; the surveillance systems take samples from farms around the outbreaks, performing serological tests on the cattle; vaccination is also carried out with strain 19 (official vaccine) and in some farms vaccination with the RB51 strain is used (zones with a high prevalence of brucellosis). During the January-June 2010 period, a total of 69,206 tests were carried out on a total of 482 positive animals with a prevalence of 0.7%.
272. Of the 21 countries that submitted their reports to the OIE for the first half of 2010, Belize is the only declaring bovine brucellosis caused by *B. abortus* never observed in the country. Canada, Guiana and the United States notify the disease as absent during the period, and Haiti and Guadeloupe (France) declare not to have data available. The other 15 countries notify the disease as clinical or clinical disease restricted to certain zones, or positive without clinical disease. In all the countries the disease is notifiable. Every country performs frontier control. Vaccination is prohibited in Belize, Canada and Nicaragua. Canada and the United States are the only countries performing control of reservoirs. Table 6 shows the other control measures during the first half of 2010.
273. Argentina and Paraguay do not provide quantitative data on bovine brucellosis caused by *B. abortus* during the first half of 2010. Mexico registered the majority of the cases during the period, with a total of 27,038 cases, followed by Brazil, 7,054 cases, and Dominican Republic, 1,241 cases (Figure 2).

Table 6: Control measures for bovine brucellosis caused by *Brucella abortus* indicated in the first six-monthly report of 2010 of the Americas

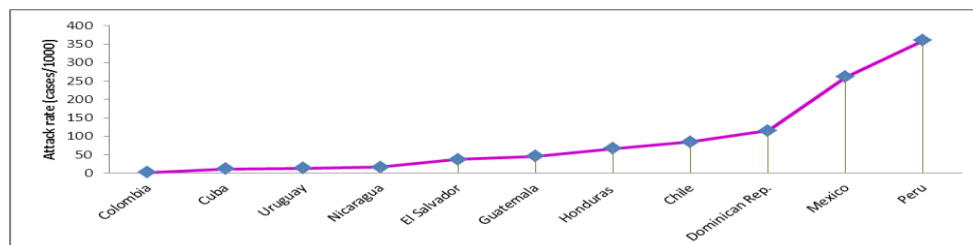
	COUNTRY	Monitoring	Screening	General and targeted surveillance	Mov. control	Stamping out	Free zones	Vaccination
1	Argentina	YES	YES	Both	YES	YES (modified)		YES
2	Belize			General				<i>Prohibited</i>
3	Brazil	YES	YES	Both	YES	YES (modified)		YES
4	Bolivia	YES	YES	General	YES			YES
5	Canada		YES	Both	YES	YES	YES	<i>Prohibited</i>
6	Chile	YES	YES	Both			YES	YES
7	Cuba	YES	YES		YES	YES (modified)		
8	Dominican Rep.	YES	YES	General	YES	YES		YES
9	Ecuador	YES	YES	Both				
10	El Salvador							YES
11	Guatemala	YES		General		YES (modified)		YES
12	Guiana	YES		General				
13	Guadeloupe (France)	No information						
14	Haiti	No information						
15	Honduras	YES	YES	Targeted		YES (modified)		YES
16	Mexico	YES	YES	Targeted	YES	YES	YES	YES
17	Nicaragua	YES		Targeted	YES	YES (modified)		<i>Prohibited</i>
18	Paraguay	YES	YES	Both		YES (modified)		YES
19	Peru							
20	United States	YES	YES	Both	YES	YES	YES	YES
21	Uruguay	YES	YES	Both	YES	YES (modified)	YES	YES

Figure 2: Distribution of brucellosis (*B. abortus*) in cattle in the Americas



274. It is possible to estimate the attack rate in the outbreaks in the countries that submitted all the quantitative data for 2010. It can be concluded that the infection rate goes from 2 cases out of 1,000 susceptible animals in Colombia to 360 cases out of 1,000 susceptible animals in Peru (Graph 5).

Graph 5: Attack rate involved in outbreaks of brucellosis in cattle during the first semester 2010 in the Americas (cases/1,000 susceptible animals)



275. In those countries where the disease has been eradicated in the domestic populations, the presence of brucellosis caused by *B. abortus* in wildlife populations is turning into a challenge for complete eradication. In the countries that have an on-going eradication programme, anticipated slaughter compensation insurance for the farmer is a strategic decision for progressing in eradicating the disease.

Bovine tuberculosis

276. Bovine tuberculosis is a chronic disease of humans and animals caused by a bacterium called *Mycobacterium bovis*. In many countries, the bovine tuberculosis is an important infectious disease of cattle, some other domestic animals and some wild animals' populations. Human transmission represents a public health issue. Like bovine brucellosis, most of the different Veterinary Services in the continent maintain official programmes of prevention, control or eradication of the bovine tuberculosis, since it is an endemic disease in the majority of the countries of the region.
277. Cuba has retained its bovine tuberculosis-free status in bovine cattle over the period, as no a single case was notified. However, three bubaline herds are affected by the disease under the control programme. For its part, Panama has a bovine tuberculosis control and eradication programme through which it has declared the Bocas del Toro province technically free of bovine tuberculosis.
278. The French overseas territories of the Region, Guadeloupe and Guiana carry out targeted surveillance in slaughterhouses to find tuberculosis lesions, and no clinical suspicion of the disease was found. Since 2001 Martinique has conducted a serological screening programme in slaughterhouses, in addition to tuberculin testing in dairies, all of which successfully passed. St. Pierre et Miquelon did not carry out disease detection during 2009, because it is exclusively supplied with local production from Canada, where the animals have to have a disease-free certificate before being allowed into the country.
279. As previously stated, Brazil, Honduras, El Salvador and Nicaragua have national brucellosis and animal tuberculosis control and eradication programmes in place. Brazil's sanitary measures consist of control of movement and voluntary certification of tuberculosis-free establishments. Nicaragua has certification of tuberculosis-free farms. It conducts general and targeted epidemiological surveillance, has provinces free of the disease and during 2010 started nationwide epidemiological sampling to determine the prevalence of tuberculosis in the country. In Honduras, 3,940 tests were conducted with bovine PPD (Purified Protein Derivate), 2 of which turned out to be positive out of a population of 325 animals, and were destroyed.
280. In Colombia, the tuberculosis programme is developed with greater emphasis in regions with a history of bovine tuberculosis (dairy zones). The policy of elimination of the infection consists on cleaning and disinfection of the premises and detection of reactor animals using the tuberculin test.
281. In Chile, the main tuberculosis initiatives focus on four lines of action: surveillance in slaughterhouses, sanitation process, certification of disease-free herds (accredited by the official service) and laboratory diagnosis. As it stands, a total of 2,693 farms have been checked with 468,821 bovines, resulting in a 0.8 reactor rate (3,755 bovines). The number of disease-free farms in the first half of 2010 is 1,740.

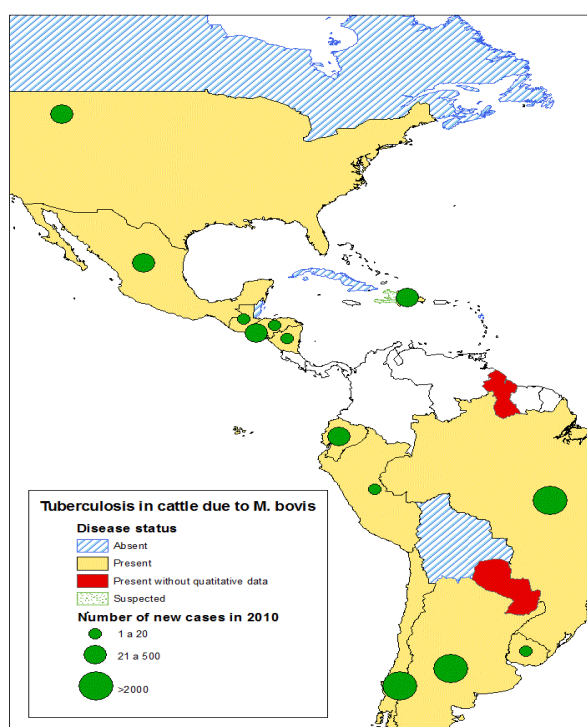
282. Guatemala has a bovine tuberculosis control and eradication programme, presenting low prevalence of tuberculosis to 0.2%, as it happens to brucellosis. It has been difficult to improve the control of the diseases because the country does not have a compensation fund for the slaughter of positive animals.
283. In Dominican Republic, the monitoring is carried out by means of sampling in farms using a tuberculin caudal test; tissue samplings of macroscopic lesion of tuberculosis are also practiced in industrial and municipal slaughterhouses. During the first half of 2010, a total of 57,752 tests were practiced, with a total of 278 positive animals and a prevalence of 0.53%.
284. In Uruguay, the diagnostic tests used are: i) intradermal tuberculin caudal fold test carried out by an accredited independent veterinary practitioner; ii) comparative tuberculin test in the neck carried out by the official veterinarian and confirmatory test. Animals are considered to be affected by tuberculosis if the confirmatory test returns a positive result. The affected farm is quarantined; sick animals are isolated, identified and sent for anticipated or compulsory slaughtering. The farms return to healthy status once the individual presumptive test (intradermal tuberculin caudal fold test) performed on bovines intended for reproduction over one year of age returns two negative results.
285. Of the 21 countries that submitted their reports, Guadeloupe (France) notified that the bovine tuberculosis has never been observed in the country; Bolivia, Canada and Cuba notified the disease as absent during this period. The other 16 countries notified the disease as clinical disease, restricted to, or absent in, certain areas. In all the countries the disease is notifiable. Every country performs frontier control. Canada and the United States are the only countries performing control of reservoirs. Table 7 shows the other control measures during the first half of 2010.

Table 7: Bovine tuberculosis control measures declared by country during the first half of 2010 in the Americas

	COUNTRY	Monitoring	Screening	General and targeted surveillance	Mov. control	Stamping out	Free zones
1	Argentina	YES	YES	Both	YES		
2	Belize			General			
3	Brazil	YES	YES	Both	YES	YES (modified)	
4	Bolivia	YES	YES	Both		YES (modified)	
5	Canada		YES	General	YES	YES	YES
6	Chile	YES	YES	Both			
7	Cuba	YES	YES		YES		
8	Dominican Rep.	YES	YES	General	YES	YES (modified)	
9	Ecuador		YES	Targeted			
10	El Salvador					YES (modified)	
11	Guadeloupe (France)	YES		Both			YES
12	Guatemala	YES		General			
13	Guiana	YES		Both	YES		
14	Haiti	No information					
15	Honduras	YES	YES	Targeted		YES (modified)	
16	Mexico		YES	Targeted	YES	YES	YES
17	Nicaragua	YES		Targeted	YES	YES (modified)	
18	Paraguay	YES	YES	Both			YES
19	Peru						
20	United States	YES	YES	Both	YES	YES	YES
21	Uruguay	YES	YES	Both	YES	YES (modified)	

286. Paraguay does not have quantitative data on bovine tuberculosis cases during the first half of 2010, but maintains the District of Eulogio Estigarribia (Department of Caaguazú) as a bovine tuberculosis-free zone. For this period, the higher number of cases occurred in Argentina with a total of 53,900 cases, followed by Chile, 4,137 cases, and Brazil, 2,234 cases (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Distribution of tuberculosis in cattle in the Americas



West Nile fever

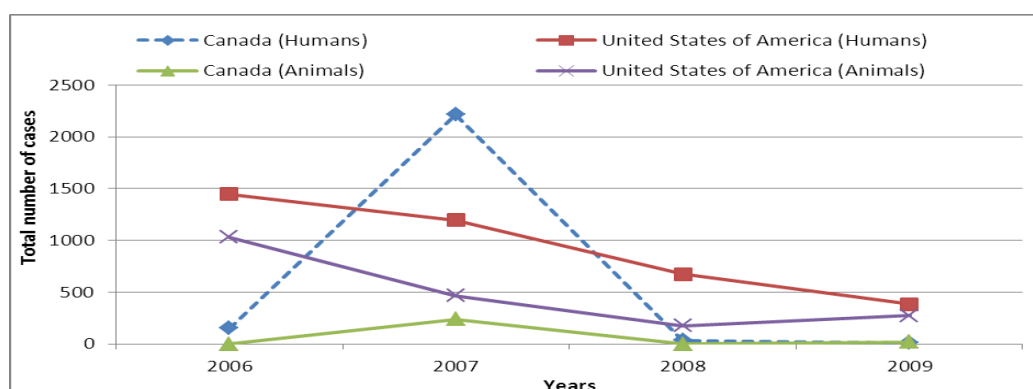
287. West Nile fever (WNF) is an OIE notifiable disease since January 2006. During the 2006-first half of 2010 period, WNF has been notified in animals in 10 countries in America: Argentina, Belize, Canada, Costa Rica, Cuba, Guadeloupe (France), Haiti, Guatemala, México and United States of America. Only six of those countries¹⁶ have submitted quantitative data.
288. During the 2006-2009 period, only two countries notified to the OIE cases of the disease in human through their annual reports: Canada and the United States of America. In this instance, Canada reported to the OIE human cases only in 2006. However, information retrieved from the Public Health Agency of Canada¹⁷, that reports on all the clinical cases with and without neurological syndrome and cases of the virus without specific symptomatology, indicates that the country's case-mix of human cases was low, having dropped from 151 cases in 2006 to 13 cases in 2009, except for 2007 when a total of 2,215 cases were notified¹⁸. The United States of America, in turn, notified the disease to the OIE in the four years (2006-2009), when the total number of individuals affected by the disease decreased permanently from 1,445 cases and 161 deaths in 2006 to 386 cases and 33 deaths in 2009. If the behaviour of the disease is compared in animals and humans, the trend is lower in those years (Graph 6).

¹⁶ Argentina, Belize, Canada, Costa Rica, Guadeloupe and United States

¹⁷ Public Health Agency of Canada, 2010, available on: <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/wn-no/index-eng.php>

¹⁸ These totals include some cases related to travel outside the province/ territory.

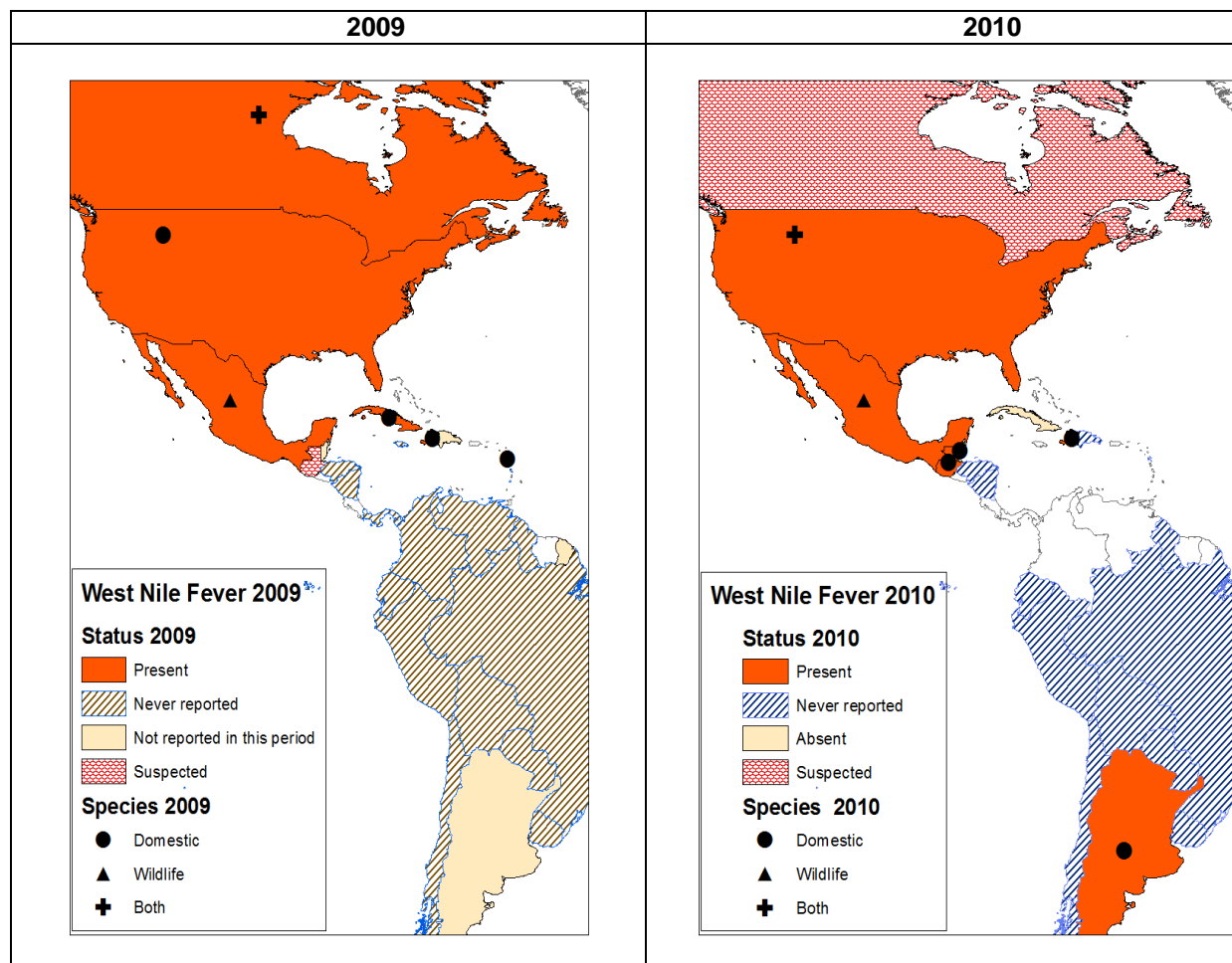
Graph 6: Total number of human and animal WNF cases, by country, 2006-2009



289. Of the 28 countries that submitted information on their WNF status in the Americas for year 2009, 57% (16) declared the disease as never observed and 14% (4) as not observed during 2009. A total of 25% of the countries (7) declared the disease as clinical disease during 2009: Canada, Costa Rica, Cuba, Guadeloupe (France), Haiti, Mexico and United States of America, with a spatial distribution of the disease in both Central and North America (Figure 4). It is important to say that only Canada, Costa Rica and the United States provided quantitative data on the disease during this year.
290. Guatemala is the only country that had a disease suspicion during 2009; however, in 2010 it confirmed the disease in equines. The country has a surveillance and monitoring programme and, since 2004, nationwide monitoring has been conducted to detect the presence of this disease. It has been hard to detect because of the presence of other types of Flavivirus (Dengue virus) which produce cross-immunity.
291. The two immediate notifications received for WNF during 2010 were submitted by Belize and Costa Rica. In June 2010, one case occurred in an equine which died through posterior ataxia after suffering from the disease for six days in the north of Belize, in Orange Walk district, which has a susceptible population of 75 animals. The difference between this outbreak and the previous one (2005) is that there are no watercourses where migratory birds could have landed. At the time this report was written, the disease was detected in August in the western district of Belize (Cayo), presenting 3 outbreaks with 8 susceptible animals, 4 cases (equines) and 2 dead animals. The authorities point to the presence of Venezuelan equine encephalomyelitis, which is endemic, with sporadic presentation in the zone, recommending vaccination for all the diseases.
292. Costa Rica notified three outbreaks of the disease in the Guanacaste region in November 2009, which were resolved in February 2010, with a total of 90 susceptible equines, 4 cases, 3 dead animals and 3 destroyed. The control measures used were the control of arthropods, quarantine and control of movement.
293. In French overseas territories of the Region, Guadeloupe has no record of the disease either in animal or in humans. In Martinique, research on equidae restarted in 2009; of 343 samples, only one was positive (an equine imported from France).
294. The disease is notifiable in Mexico. During 2010, the country carried out 38 investigations because of suspicion, without positive results. Nevertheless, for 2010, Mexico reported the disease as absent in domestic animals and present without clinical signs in wild animals.
295. After four years without clinical signs of the disease in Argentina, SENASA was notified of a case of encephalitis in equines in May 2010 on a farm in the department of Río Cuarto, Córdoba province, where the presence of the disease was confirmed by serology (ELISA), PCR (encephalon samples) and histopathology. There were other cases with nervous symptomatology in equines in the same province (Córdoba) and in the province of Santiago del Estero where the virus was ruled out, although at the time of writing this report some laboratory results were pending.

296. Of a total of 21 countries/territories having notified the disease by either six-monthly reports or immediate notifications during the first half of 2010, twelve countries/territories (57%) declare the disease as never observed 19 and six countries²⁰ (29%) as clinically present or having been confirmed by the laboratories; Canada reported suspicion in both domestic and wild animals, Cuba declared the disease as absent during the period and El Salvador does not have any data (Figure 4). Argentina, Belize, Costa Rica and Guatemala are the only countries having submitted quantitative data out of the six countries that notified the disease.

Figure 4: WNF situation in America in 2009-2010



297. Because of the epidemiology of the disease, it may easily spread through the continent. The situation in Argentina is a clear example of it, after four years the country declared the disease as re-emerging. Another key point that should be analysed is the fact that the countries having notified the disease in animals provide very few information of it regarding human health.

Classical swine fever

298. Classical swine fever (CSF) is caused by a virus of the genus Pestivirus of the family Flaviviridae, it is transmitted through direct contact. Wild and domestic pigs are the only natural reservoirs of CSF. The disease is still present in some countries in the Americas; it has been notified on immediate notifications by Brazil and Mexico only for 2009 and by Guatemala for 2010.

¹⁹ Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guadeloupe (France), Guiana, Honduras, Paraguay, Peru, Nicaragua, Uruguay

²⁰ Argentina, Belize, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Haiti: present in domestic animals - United States of America: present in domestic and wild animals - Mexico: present in wild animals.

299. Brazil has a national swine health programme and its main strategies for CSF are: creation of free zones, immediate notification, response to outbreaks, stamping out, control of movement, sero-epidemiological survey and serological monitoring in farms and slaughterhouses, serological study, inspection of properties, immediate response to CSF suspicions, susceptible animal, product and by-product entry control, emergency health system and certification of breeder farms. There are emergency manuals and specific contingency plans for dealing with suspected cases of CSF.
300. In Colombia, the activity has focused on the reduction of the disease in the Andes Region and the Inter-Andean valleys via vaccination across the country. The country improved both notification and epidemiological surveillance in the above-mentioned regions, and there were no outbreaks detected during the first half of 2010.
301. In Costa Rica, the disease appeared at the beginning of 1994, and the last notified case was reported in July 1995. The country has a surveillance system, both general and targeted to high-risk populations, allowing detecting suspected cases with epidemiological investigation in order to confirm or rule the virus.
302. In 2009, in the United States, 24 laboratories analysed a total of 14,494 samples, with no positive result, through their surveillance programme.
303. Honduras has a CSF control and eradication programme. The first nationwide serological sampling campaign was completed in January 2010, having collected a total of 3,950 samples, of which 837 samples were positive or suspicious in the antibody detection test. In May 2010, virological sampling started based on the serological sampling results and having collected 407 samples of whole blood, with negative antibody detection test results. The 18 departments are kept in eradication phase; during the first six months of 2010, 79 epidemiological tracking operations were conducted on 648 farms with a population of 8,021 pigs.
304. Since 1997, Mexico has a CSF eradication programme; the country implemented intensive vaccination programmes in eleven states, it reinforced the diagnosis infrastructure and the targeted surveillance of the disease. The last outbreak reported in Mexico occurred during the second half of 2009; however, in the first six-monthly report for 2010, the country notified the disease as clinical restricted to certain zones, but provides no quantitative data.
305. Paraguay has a national CSF eradication programme since 1998: the Western region has a free zone certification. In April 2010, the country approved the national swine health plan and the 2010–1012 CSF eradication programme; according to it, CSF vaccination will be suspended and prohibited across the country.
306. In Nicaragua, the CSF programme is in the eradication without vaccination stage. Nationwide health awareness and education campaigns are being conducted at the present time, primarily to inform pig farmers and the rest of the population and train community leaders in reporting suspected cases. The government proposes to declare the country CSF-free at the end of 2010.
307. Guatemala initiated a CSF control and eradication programme in 1997, with pig vaccination campaigns in rural areas to control the disease. From 2008 onwards, vaccination has been prohibited and in October 2009, Guatemala declared itself CSF-free without vaccination. However, in January 2010, there was an outbreak that was reported in an immediate notification and that ended in February 2010. The outbreak occurred in a small farm in a rural area with a population of 248 susceptible pigs, 30 cases and 18 deaths. An emergency plan was implemented involving the destruction of the entire susceptible population, quarantine, control of movement and disinfection. After the outbreak and up to the date of writing this report, nationwide serological monitoring has been conducted to detect CSF antibodies. All the results have been negative and no new outbreaks have occurred.

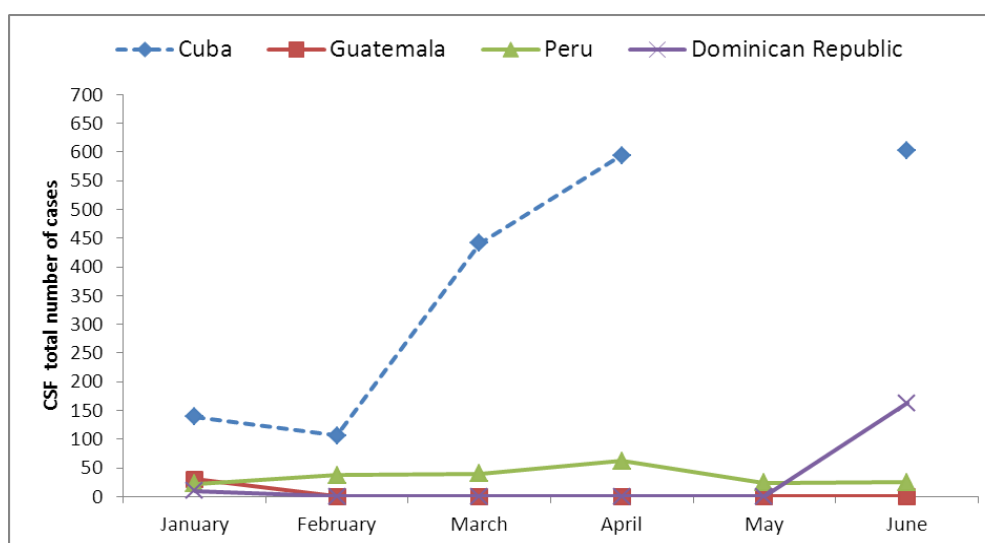
308. In Cuba, an annual total of 146 outbreaks across the country were declared during 2009. During the January-June 2010 period, 48 outbreaks were notified which is 30 less than at the same period in the previous year, which is a significant drop in the number of affected municipalities and geographic quadrants. Since 2005, there has been a steady downward trend in the number of outbreaks and a system approach to CSF vaccine production has been achieved, increasing the vaccination rate in backyard pigs – the sector that recorded 77% of the outbreaks. The disease control strategy was improved in 2009, and now includes conducting monthly checks at all levels applying the OIE's zoning and compartmentalization principles. Cuba's Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology (CIGB), an OIE Collaborating Centre for Vaccine Development and Production, Pharmaceutical Products and Veterinarian Diagnosis Devices through biotechnology, is working on the development of two vaccines by subunits for CSF control and rabbit haemorrhagic disease, both of which are in clinical trial phase. Laboratorios Biológicos Farmacéuticos (LABIOFAM) is developing a CSF tissue culture vaccine from the China strain.
309. In Ecuador, the presence of CSF since the 1940s has caused great losses to the national swine farming industry. The country has developed a public-private programme to: register swine farms, determine the current situation of CSF in the country, achieve high immunisation levels of swine population, monitor the farms through the control plan, and establish a system of CSF epidemiological surveillance. At the time this report was written, Ecuador was conducting a national swine census.
310. The Dominican Republic is conducting a CSF control and eradication programme that is currently in the control phase, applying the strategy of vaccinating all the pigs in the country. The vaccine used in the programme is the China strain, a live attenuated virus vaccine. At the same time, surveillance is going on, which entails taking samples in industrial and municipal slaughterhouses to detect virus-positive farms. Passive surveillance is conducted by recording notifications of disease suspicions made by pig farmers. In the January-June 2010 period, two outbreaks were detected in two provinces with a total of 173 cases, 58 animals destroyed, 3 slaughtered and 406 susceptible animals. A total of 454,427 vaccinations were administered at the same time.
311. At the time this report was written, of the 23 countries that submitted their reports for the first half of 2010 and their reports for the Conference for the Americas in which they notify the disease, 65% (15)²¹ notify CSF as absent during the period. Eight countries²² (35%) notify the disease only in domestic species, with clinical signs, clinical restricted to certain zones or present via diagnostic tests.
312. A total of 102 outbreaks were notified for the January-June 2010 period from the countries that recorded quantitative data²³. It is observed that the highest case-mix was presented in Cuba (1,882 cases and 43 outbreaks) with a monthly rising trend, except for the month of May when no new outbreaks were notified, followed by Peru with 210 cases and 53 outbreaks, the Dominican Republic with 173 cases and 2 outbreaks in January and June and lastly Guatemala with only 1 outbreak in January with 30 cases (Graph 7).

21 Argentina, Belize, Brazil, Canada, Chile, El Salvador, Guadeloupe (France), Guiana, Honduras, Nicaragua, Paraguay, United States and Uruguay. Colombia and Costa Rica notified it in their report for the Regional Conference for the Americas.

22 Bolivia, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Guatemala and Peru: with quantitative data. Ecuador, Haiti and Mexico: without quantitative data

23 Cuba, Dominican Republic, Guatemala and Peru: submitted data by month and by administrative division

Graph 7: Total number of CSF cases in the Americas, first half 2010, by country



313. In all the countries having notified CSF during the first half of 2010 (Table 8) the disease is notifiable. Every country performs frontier control. Table 11 shows the other control measures.

Table 8: CSF control measures indicated by country during the first half of 2010 in the Americas.

	COUNTRY	Monitoring	Screening	General and targeted surveillance	Mov. control	Stamping out	Zoning	Vaccination
1	Argentina	YES		Both		YES		Prohibited
2	Belize			Targeted				Prohibited
3	Bolivia			General	YES	YES		YES
4	Brazil	YES	YES	Both	YES	YES	YES	Prohibited
5	Canada			General	YES	YES		Prohibited
6	Chile							Prohibited
7	Cuba	YES			YES	YES		YES
8	Dominican Rep.	YES	YES	General	YES	YES		YES
9	Ecuador							
10	El Salvador	YES	YES	Both		YES		Prohibited
11	Guadeloupe (France)	YES	YES	Both	YES	YES	YES	Prohibited
12	Guatemala	YES		General	YES	YES		Prohibited
13	Guiana	YES		General	YES			
14	Haiti	YES	YES	Both	YES			YES
15	Honduras	YES	YES	Both	YES	YES (modified)	YES	Prohibited
16	Mexico	YES	YES	Targeted	YES	YES	YES	Prohibited
17	Nicaragua	YES		Targeted	YES	YES (modified)		Prohibited
18	Paraguay	YES		Targeted	YES	YES (modified)		Prohibited
19	Peru							YES
20	United States			Both		YES		Prohibited
21	Uruguay							Prohibited

314. In various American countries, CSF remains one of the major health issues in swine. Affected countries need to continue their efforts to control and eradicate the disease. Countries still having outbreaks should apply strategies and measures carried out by countries where the disease has been eradicated, particularly because there is a significant difference among the control systems of each country.

Infectious salmon anaemia

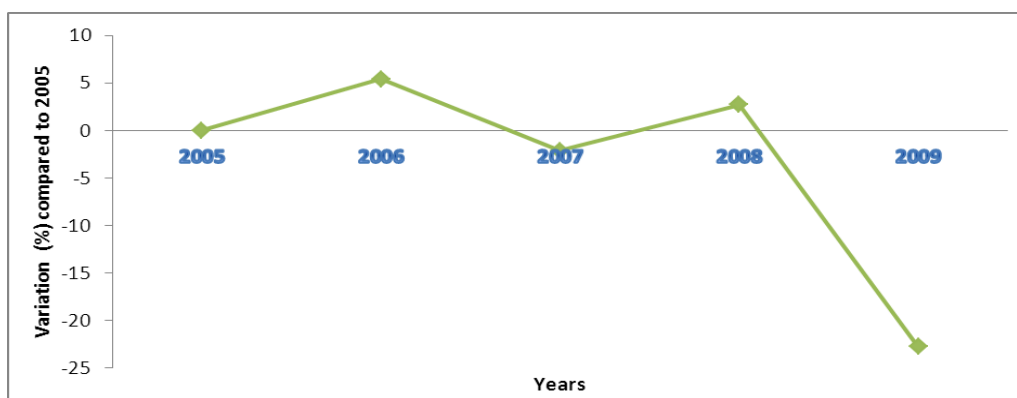
315. The infectious salmon anaemia (ISA) is an Orthomyxovirus infection of sea-farmed Atlantic salmon (*Salmo salar*) in sea water phase. It produces high mortality in salmon farms. Once isolated for the first time in Norway in 1984²⁴, the virus has spread to different latitudes, affecting the main salmon production sites in the world.

316. In August 2007, Chile, one of the world's major salmon producers, used the immediate notification procedure to inform the OIE of an ISA outbreak in the month of June of the same year in a new host species, the Atlantic salmon (*Salmo salar*) in the Los Lagos region. Previously (1999), ISA had only been detected in Chile in Coho salmon (*Oncorhynchus kisutch*) farmed in salt water in a semi-open production system.

317. In the 2007 outbreak, the health authorities implemented control measures including stamping out, quarantine, control of movement, zoning, disinfection of infected areas, emergency harvesting, prospective and retrospective follow-up, surveillance inside and outside the containment zone, vaccination prohibited and absence of treatment to the affected animals. While the origin of the disease has not been established, OIE reference laboratories for ISA confirmed in November 2007 that the virus in Chile matched the European genotype. Chile declared the disease to be endemic to the OIE in November 2008 given the impossibility of containing the disease.

318. Chile has been severely hit by the disease, in just three years, which explains the 22% fall (percentage variation in relation to 2005) in the total salmonidae population declared to the OIE (Graph 8). The reason for the sharp drop in production is disease mortality, stamping out in the infected farming centres, the delay in restocking the infected farming centres²⁵ and the relentless closures of Atlantic salmon (*Salmo salar*) farming centres in the wake of the ISA outbreak²⁶.

Graph 8: Variation (%) of salmon production compared to 2005



319. In November 2009, Canada notified to the OIE the first occurrence of infectious salmon anaemia in the province of Prince-Edward Island in a land-based research facility with a total of 49 cases and a susceptible population of 1,620 animals. The source of the virus has not been determined and there is no certification for movements of animals or propagative material for commercial purposes.

320. During year 2009, the United States of America reported the OIE of the suspicion of ISA in wild species; in the period of January-June 2010, it continues with a monthly monitoring on sea-farms of Atlantic

²⁴ Thorud, K., Djupvik, H.O., 1988. Infectious anaemia in Atlantic salmon (*Salmo salar* L.). Bulletin European Association of Fish Pathologists 8, 109-111.

²⁵ Mardones, F.O., Perez, A.M., Carpenter, T.E., 2009. Epidemiologic investigation of the re-emergence of infectious salmon anemia virus in Chile. Rev. Disease of aquatic organism. 84: 105-114, 2009

²⁶ Servicio Nacional de Pesca, Sernapesca. Chile.

salmon in the State of Maine, without presenting positive cases. In 2010, the United States notifies the disease as suspected in domestic and wild species.

321. Argentina sent the OIE its ISA-free self-declaration based on active surveillance since 2006 to date, to be published in the next OIE Bulletin. In compliance with Chapter 1.4 of the Aquatic Animal Health Code (2009) and Chapter 1.1.4 of the OIE Manual of Diagnostic Tests for Aquatic Animals, Argentina declares the “Cuenca Alta on the Limay River” zone, “which includes the stretch from the Alicura Dam to the Alicura hydroelectric plant, free of epizootic haematopoietic necrosis virus (EHNV), infectious haematopoietic necrosis virus (IHNV), viral haemorrhagic septicaemia (VHS) and infectious salmon anaemia (ISA)”. The free zone is in the Patagonia Region.
322. ISA is a clear example of how disease can transform major industrial farming operations, which leads to further thought on certain aspects. Early detection of the disease through immediate notification on suspicion and confirmation in reference laboratories are essential measures for rapid containment of this type of disease. Import controls on ova, placing emphasis on international ova certification. In turn, early response on the part of the veterinary authorities in applying control and containment measures such as stamping out, quarantine, control of movement and zoning, will continue to be crucial for mitigating the effects of this devastating disease in the future.

Diseases of amphibians: Infection with *Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis* and infection with ranavirus

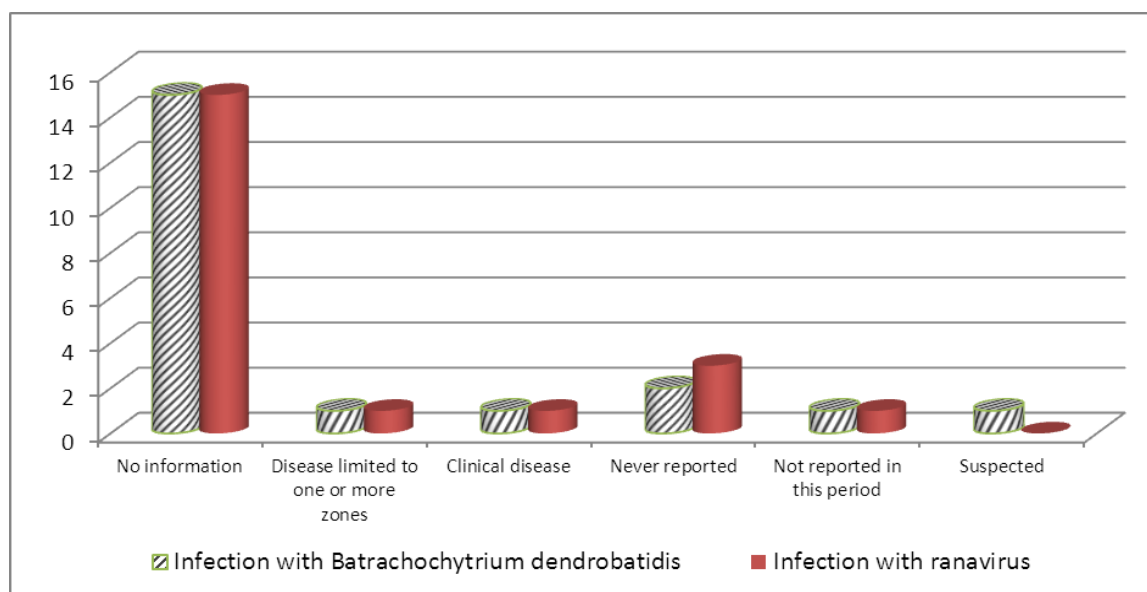
323. Since 2008, two diseases of amphibians are OIE-listed diseases: infection with *Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis* and infection with ranavirus. Both are associated with the decline of amphibian populations that is occurring globally. They were first notified through WAHIS in 2009.
324. Infection with the chytrid fungus *Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis* affects more than 350 amphibian species, both wild and domestic, and is present in all the continents, except for the Antarctic²⁷. During 2009, in the Americas, a total of 28 countries submitted their six-monthly reports; 75% (21 countries/territories²⁸) did not have information on the disease. This situation reoccurs in 2010; of a total of 21 countries/territories having sent their first six-monthly reports for 2010, 71% (15 countries/territories) do not have information on the disease. In both terms, Belize and Brazil notified the disease as never observed. Cuba notified it in 2010 as absent. The disease has only been notified in wild species, in the following countries: Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala and United States of America, as clinical or clinical disease restricted to certain zones.
325. Infection with ranavirus, caused by an iridovirus, infects cold blood invertebrates and vertebrates (fish, amphibians and reptiles). Its control is difficult, many species becoming reservoirs or hosts, in which they are easily spread. They are highly infectious, with a rate of mortality of the 100% affecting to larvae, metamorphic individuals and adults. Of the 28 countries that sent their six-monthly report in 2009, 79% (22 countries/territories²⁹) did not have information on the disease. This situation reoccurs in 2010, in which 71% (15 countries/territories) do not have information with respect to the disease. In both terms, the disease has been notified in wild species in North America, in the United States and Canada, as clinical or clinical disease restricted to certain zones, respectively. During 2010, Belize, Brazil and Guatemala notify the disease as never observed (Graph 9).

²⁷ Fisher M.C., Garner T.W.J., Walker S.F. (2009). - Global emergence of *Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis* and amphibian chytridiomycosis in space, time, and host. *Annual Review of Microbiology*, 63, 291-310.

²⁸ Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guadeloupe, Guiana, French Guiana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Martinique (France), Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela.

²⁹ Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guadeloupe, Guiana, French Guiana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Martinique (France), Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela.

Graph 9: Amphibian diseases situation in 2010



326. The lack of information on these diseases in American countries can be explained by the fact that they are newly OIE-listed diseases (2009); Member Countries and Territories should then begin notifying them in order to understand how they are spread in the continent.

Discussion

327. The Chairman of the Session congratulated Dr Ben Jebara for his clear presentation and invited the assembly to formulate questions and/or comments.
328. Dr Max Millen, Delegate for Haiti, thanked the speaker for his sound presentation and took the opportunity to comment on teschen disease, which is currently a problem in Haiti, as it makes the fight against the Classical swine fever more complicated. It explained that in the previous years the country had obtained positive results in the fight against CSF, but nowadays, with the appearance of teschen disease, CSF control seems to be blocked. If vaccination against classical swine fever is used in a zone and pigs die, the farmers blame it on the vaccination, but the real problem is teschen disease.
329. He also took the opportunity to thank the OIE for giving him the opportunity to present the situation to all the delegates of the world during the General Session of May 2010. Nevertheless, he emphasised that in the case of Haiti there had been too many promises but the help has not arrived yet. None of the laboratories has offered to help in vaccine production, and there are too many affected animals in the country.
330. The disease has not spread over the Americas yet, but the moment has come to do something to stop the spread, as the disease represents a risk for Dominican Republic and many other countries due to movements of commodities and people among countries of the region.
331. The teschen issue does not concern only Haiti, but many other countries. The findings of a molecular analysis of the virus showed one similarity between the virus found in 92% of Haitian isolates and the variant detected in Madagascar, providing a warning concerning the possible diffusion of the virus.
332. Dr Bernard Vallat confirmed that Haiti still needs help. It is necessary to consider Haiti as a priority in cooperation programmes. Teschen disease can be eradicated, there are strategies to do so, and we must eradicate it from Haiti.
333. He suggested Haiti to present again, in May, its request for including teschen in the list of OIE diseases.

334. Dr Emerio Serrano, Delegate for Cuba, congratulated the speaker and acknowledged the improvement of the disease notification systems. They are not anymore warning transcription systems but they allow a detailed analysis of the diseases taking into account time and location parameters.
335. Referring to CSF, he declared that the number of cases reduced by 50%.
336. Regarding, rabbit viral haemorrhagic disease, he reported two cases in a province of the central region of the country, which was previously free of the disease. He also informed that they are characterising the virus that, apparently does not have relation with previous outbreaks that took place around 5 years ago.
337. He highlighted the importance of virus characterisation for outbreaks analysis. The Biotechnology Research Centre is developing a vaccine obtained by biotechnological methods, unlike the classic vaccines that are obtained from viral extracts.
338. As for the teschen disease and the problems Haiti is facing up, although it is not mandatory to report it, Dr Serrano considers that the most important is to have tools and control methods to limit its spread, regardless of its status in the OIE-listed disease. In the past, this disease was included in the list.
339. He asked the countries to help Haiti, within the framework of one of the missions of the OIE related to international solidarity.
340. Dr Glen Halze, representing Peru, asked to include information on Bovine Brucellosis and Bovine Tuberculosis. He informed that Peru has programmes of Brucellosis and Tuberculosis control that are not mentioned in the report as well as the information relate to free areas.
341. Dr Michael David, Delegate for the United States, commented on the graph that refers to the cases of tuberculosis which illustrates a global group divided by the total population without considering the size of the affected livestock population. He suggested it would be useful to have a detailed context on the disease to better understand its impact considering the size of livestock farms.
342. Referring to the comments of the representative of Peru, Dr Karim Ben Jebara explained that no information was available when the report was issued
343. In reference to the comments of the Delegate for United States, Dr Ben Jebara pointed out that the denominator used for the analysis is the global number of animals because there is not a denominator by size of livestock. He indicated that the report could be more detailed if more information were available.

Aquatic Animal Health Standards Commission – Issues of interest to the Region - Challenges and proposals

344. The Chairman of the Session, Dr. Francisco Muzio invited Dr. Víctor Manuel Vidal, Member of the OIE Aquatic Animals Health Standards Commission, to present the topics of interest for the region.
345. Dr. Vidal explained that the purpose of his presentation was to inform on the contribution made by the OIE Aquatic Animals Health Standards Commission to the development of aquaculture worldwide. Of the 53 million tons of fish produced in the world through fishing and aquaculture, according to the FAO, the latter accounts for around 50 per cent.
346. He pointed out the, within the global context of aquaculture, the contribution made by developing nations has become particularly significant over the past three decades. However, global animal protein need projections suggest that aquaculture will be required to expand production by about 37 million tons by 2050. To that end, it will be necessary to intensify crops. This entails providing technical training to producers, and acknowledging the fact that more intensive crops might bring about the death of large numbers of aquatic animals. The latter is based on the OIE World Animal Health Information Database records on cultured aquatic organism diseases.

347. Between 2009 and 2010, the Americas have been hit by serious outbreaks of diseases in high- economic-value species subject to intensive culturing. Some examples include infectious anaemia in salmon (35 outbreaks in Chile) and white spot disease in shrimps (45 outbreaks in Mexico). To face up to this situation, the Aquatic Animal Commission updates the OIE list of diseases in the Aquatic Code and Manual two times a year, based on the information provided by the Member-Countries. Therefore, the AAC advises members to use the latest versions of the Aquatic Code and Manual, which can be accessed at www.oie.int. Furthermore, the AAC contributes to and fosters participation in focal points training workshops.
348. He finally stated that other OIE tools the AAC suggests using include the new PVS tool for aquatic organisms, the launching of lab-twinning projects and the incorporation of training in aquatic health into the degree courses in veterinary medicine worldwide. These are some of the alternatives proposed by OIE to face up to the health risks involved in the rapid expansion of aquaculture around the world, which are particularly significant for the developing nations.

Discussion

349. Dr. Barcos congratulated the new member of the Aquatic Animal Commission, Dr. Víctor Manuel Vidal, and took the opportunity to remind the audience that some of the countries present have not confirmed the participation of their focal point in the Roatan meeting. He urged them to confirm such participation without delay. He remarked that the OIE is making a huge investment and effort, and that they should participate as aquaculture is a tremendously important matter for the region. It is very important for Member Countries to enrol their focal points in the OIE workshops.
350. He brought to the attention of the audience that the day after the Focal Points meeting, there will be a further meeting of the Aquatic Animal Committee created two years ago at the proposal of Canada. This meeting will give the private Sector a chance to discuss with the audience the different proposals for including in the Code.
351. Haiti commented that the efforts made regarding terrestrial animals cannot be compared to those in respect of aquatic animals, due to the lack of knowledge on the latter. While veterinarians have been trained in this field, there is still not enough information on the importance of aquatic animals. He asked OIE to consider the possibility of training technical staff, not just focal points in this area.
352. Dr. Luis Barcos recalled that, as mentioned by Dr. Vallat, OIE is at the first stage of training focal points. However, he stressed the fact that in each country and in the regions there are different levels of knowledge, and that more advanced countries may help those needing training. Therefore, he invited the countries to take part in the various activities in the region, which will give them the chance to negotiate assistance amongst nations.
353. Dr. Vidal offered Mexico's help to those who may need training in aquatic animals.
354. Dr. Abelardo de Gracia mentioned that the OIRSA is developing training activities in the area of aquatic animals for all of its members. In the future, it desires to make available such activities to any countries that wish to take part in them. He also mentioned that the OIRSA has developed guidelines on the matter, and that they have just published a Manual of good practices for shrimp production, which they intend to bring to the seminar at Roatán.
355. Dr. Vidal commented that the Manual of good practices for fish will also be presented in Roatán.
356. Dr. Brian Evans, the delegate of Canada, commented that the Commission has responsibility for the Manual, for the recognition of Reference Laboratories and Collaborating Centers as well as for the Aquatic Animal Health Code. He complimented the Commission on the breath of work it has undertaken.
357. He also noted that Canada will be providing comments on the Commission's report of October 2010. However, he took the opportunity to raise that one of the specific points that Canada will comment refers to the species of decapode susceptible to White Spot virus and on which, Canada will provide specific scientific references to update the chapter accordingly.

358. To finalize, Dr Evans informed that Canada will submit an application for a VHS reference laboratory for the consideration of the Commission.
359. Dr. Vidal assured he would forward all the comments to the Chairperson of the commission and suggested that the Manual should be prepared taking into consideration space-time and geo-epidemiological aspects.

Committees in the Region supporting the Region's Veterinary Services results, prospects and challenges

360. The chairman Dr Francisco Muzio requested Dr Jose Joaquin Oreamuno, OIE Sub Regional Representative for Central America to present the Committees in the Region supporting the Region's Veterinary Services.
361. Dr Oreamuno started his presentation Technical commenting that the Committees of the Americas are specialized groups formed by different sectors of each country, which facilitate the exchange of technical consultations, reaffirming the role of the OIE as a world organism of reference as to health and animal welfare, as well as in the international trade of animals, its products and by-products through the elaboration of regulations, guidelines and international standards.
362. Dr Oreamuno enumerated the existing Committees as follows:
- American Committee of Veterinary Medicines (CAMEVET),
 - Inter-American Committee of Poultry Health (CISA),
 - Inter-American Committee of Aquaculture Health and
 - Inter-American Committee of Animal Welfare.
363. He highlighted the General Aims of Committees which are:
- To promote the application of the guidelines, procedure, standards and recommendations of the OIE, to propose modifications to the guidelines, procedure and standards of the OIE,
 - to stimulate the transparency in the notification of the sanitary situation of OIE Member Countries of the Americas, to promote the exchange of scientific and technical information,
 - to propose harmonized methodologies of technical procedures,
 - to promote programs of health education and animal welfare,
 - to propose meetings and seminars in the frame of the raised aims, support on the Experts identification, Laboratories of Reference and Regional Collaborating Centers, and to promote and to facilitate the mechanism of bilateral consultations on the adoption of sanitary measures, which affect the trade, using established procedures in the Sanitary Codes of the Terrestrial and Aquatic Animals of the OIE.
364. He concluded mentioning that the principal outcomes of Committees are:
- harmonization of guidelines,
 - specific proposals for the elaboration and modification of OIE standards,
 - training in current topics, r
 - egional solidarity,
 - public – private education alliance in regional consensus on specific topics.

Discussion

365. The Delegate of Honduras thanked Dr. José Joaquín Oreamuno for his support in the action taken with the Committees. He recalled that the CISA has been an example and has guided the private and public sectors, thereby making it possible to harmonize actions and guarantee safe trade. It is the Committees' role to make specific proposals on issues that are common to different countries, such as brucellosis and tuberculosis, two diseases that affect so many countries in the region of the Americas. Committees help better monitor compliance with OIE standards.

366. The Delegate of El Salvador confirmed that their countries have been given an excellent opportunity. Working in the committees has enabled them to review the OIE Code and work jointly with the private sector. He stressed the fact that it was necessary to continue to support the creation of these committees in the region.
367. Dr. Michael David, Representative of the United States, stated that while the creation of the Committees is valuable indeed, it is also important to bear in mind that they would also be running the risk of creating too many committees, and that in that case it would be complicated to manage all the activities. Considering that many OIE chapters are horizontal, he suggested gathering the committees in order to discuss matters together.
368. Dr. José Oreamuno mentioned that the Committees should be run and supported by the countries' private sector.
369. Dr. Luis Barcos stated that, as regards the creation of committees in the Americas, the following procedure has been followed: each committee is proposed and adopted by the Regional Commission. He added that two new proposals have been received. Such proposals will be analyzed by the executive board and will then be submitted to the Commission for approval. Dr. Barcos explained that, for the time being, it was not a good idea to group the Committees from the strategic point of view. The executive board will analyze the future of the Committees later on.
370. The Representative of ALA said he was very pleased to see that CISA's work stood out among that done by all the Committees. As regards the work carried out by ALA, he said that, to a great extent, CISA has represented the driving force of the organization. The collaboration with the OIE through the creation of this committee has been most helpful and a remarkable success.
371. Regarding the United States representative's proposal, he added that he cannot see himself sharing experiences in a wider platform. It is best to carry on with the current practice of sharing experiences within the regional platform of the Committee, and then share them with the rest of the countries in the world through the OIE.

Wednesday 17 November 2010

Technical item II

OIE Strategy for the control and eradication of foot and mouth disease at regional and global levels

372. The Chairman of the session, Dr. Brian Evans, Delegate of Canada briefly introduced Dr. Gideon Bruckner, President of the OIE Scientific Commission and speaker of the Technical Item II.
373. Dr. Gideon Bruckner started his presentation by providing the audience with a perspective regarding the eradication of foot and mouth disease (FMD). He explained that although some parts of the world have been successful in eradicating FMD and despite intensive global, regional and national effort to get ahead of the disease, more than 100 developing and transitional countries are still not free of the disease. He reminded that based on the success of rinderpest eradication, a resolution adopted at the OIE/FAO Global Conference on FMD held in Asuncion tasked the OIE and FAO to jointly work together on a program for the global control of FMD.
374. Dr. Bruckner gave an overview on the global status regarding FMD worldwide by providing details on the serotypes circulating and explaining that there are seven (7) distinct regional pools of FMD virus (FMDV). In that context, he suggested that the control of the disease thus need to be approached from different angles of which the regional approach has been accepted as the most proven method to illicit a common commitment between countries sharing similar or closely related geographical, cultural, trade and other interests relevant to the control of the disease. He highlighted that two regions of the world already proved that the regional approach can work and contribute to progressively moving towards achieving FMD freedom, namely South America and South-East Asia. He described those successful regional programs.

375. Dr. Bruckner then presented the essential elements of a global strategy for the control of foot and mouth disease. Among those elements, he first explained the efforts of the OIE, since 1994, in providing international standards and guidelines to enable a system for officially recognizing Member countries free from the disease and the gradual evolution of those standards and guidelines to recognize zones and even compartments. He said that those processes were however relatively slow and costly and not all countries were having the resources to go through the steps. Thus, he suggested that the international community could gain in helping countries to become active participants in the global eradication.
376. He explained also that the OIE involvement in the attempt of countries to gain recognition for country or zone freedom becomes evident only when the countries are in the final stage of recognition. However, he stressed that many countries wishing to obtain official recognition not only need to receive guidance and support from the international community but also need some sort of recognition of their strategy to control the disease. He then explained the Progressive Control Pathway (PCP) developed by the FAO where the steps towards the ultimate ideal of obtaining official freedom from FMD are described. He indicated that the OIE Scientific Commission for Animal Diseases acknowledge the and endorsed the PCP but in order to further assist countries, the Commission developed legal text for the OIE Terrestrial Code that would allow the official recognition of the control strategic plans of Members. The proposed text will be submitted for adoption by the OIE World Assembly of Delegates during the 79th OIE General Session in May 2011. The adoption of this text will allow countries to apply for official recognition of their strategic plan which could be used to negotiate support and recognition by trade partners and politicians.
377. He stated that the ad hoc Group of experts on FMD formulated a draft strategy for the global control of FMD. This draft strategy was endorsed by the Scientific Commission and addresses several critical and essential aspects of a global strategy such as regional strategies, the need for global, regional and national cooperation, the involvement of key players and stakeholders, sustainability, surveillance, vaccination, diagnostic needs and auditing of the process. He stated that the overall objective of a global FMD control strategy is to consolidate disease free regions by a gradual reduction in the incidence of FMD in three distinct approaches: to maintain the status in FMD free countries and zones without vaccination; to maintain the status in FMD free countries and zones applying vaccination; and to gradually improve control in FMD infected countries aiming at an OIE recognized status.
378. Dr. Bruckner then suggested that the global strategy for the control of FMD should be based on essential elements such as regional strategies that take into account the fact that different regions of the world face a variety of unique circumstances. He then emphasize on the need for coordination of all activities starting at national level, then regional and finally global level making sure that all stakeholders are involved. In order to fulfill the objective of the global control, he stated that regional strategies need to consider the current FMD status of the countries or zones. For countries or zones free without vaccination, he reminded that the effort should be made on prevention, early detection, emergency response, and vaccination strategy should it be needed during an outbreak. For FMD free countries or zones with vaccination, the same factors as per free countries or zone without vaccinations should be considered while ensuring that the vaccination coverage is sufficient and stop virus circulation. For infected countries or zones, Dr. Bruckner suggested using processes developed by the OIE and FAO. The proposed FAO PCP strategy is based on a progressive approach to the control of FMD. It includes six (6) stages ranging from level zero (0), where there is continuous virus circulating to level five where the country is officially recognized by the OIE as being free without vaccination. He explained that currently, the OIE recognizes only three different statuses: countries not free of FMD (PCP stages 0-3), FMD free countries or zones applying vaccination (PCP stage 4), and FMD free countries or zones without vaccination (PCP state 5). As both processes are complementary and in order to strengthen the level of coordination between both approaches, he recalled that it is proposed that the OIE recognizes the effort of FMD infected counties by endorsing their FMD control programs as an additional step in the process. While this endorsement will not change the status of a country or a zone, it will provide additional assurance that a country or zone has control over the situation and thus act as an incentive to increase their efforts. He highlighted that this could enhance the credibility when compliance with requirements contained the Code chapter on FMD for specific commodities is certified and may also contribute to safer trade in animals and their products between countries of equivalent status.

379. He then provided a comprehensive list of other factors to be considered in a global control strategy: the efficiency of veterinary services that can be evaluated using the OIE PVS Tool, the engagement of key players, the political support and sources of funding, the disease surveillance and its coverage, the diagnostic capability using OIE Reference laboratories and twinning when necessary, the vaccination parameters, the importance of research, the emergency response plan, the compensation programs. He also reiterated the importance of regional integration where national control programs should be in line with regional efforts. On this matter, he reminded that the OIE/FAO coordination mechanism GF-TADs should play a major role in the coordination and implementation of the PCP process.
380. Dr. Bruckner reminded the audience that the veterinary profession will soon demonstrate to the world that, through regional cooperation, donor support, the countries commitment and the full support and guidance of international organization such as OIE and FAO, it has succeeded in eradicating rinderpest. Consequently, although the challenges are different, there is no reason that with the same international commitment foot and mouth disease could also be controlled if not eradicated globally.

Discussion

381. Dr. Jorge Dillon, Representative of Argentina, made some comments in the name of the CVP. He also congratulated Dr. Bruckner for the clear presentation performed in which he stated the willingness of all the member countries of the world to encourage the disease control procedures. The CVP analyzed this issue in depth, which was already mentioned in the documents received, and conveyed his concern since they are not quite certain that the proposal of the OIE is most appropriate for the Americas. He also requested a clearer and more detailed explanation of the process for the control; whether it will include a field trip or a questionnaire. He also mentioned that this issue could imply other diseases and added that the process, which will presumably be applied to FMD, could serve as a disincentive, at regional level, for the successful achievement of other diseases control programmes and this could make things worse.
382. Dr. Muzio offered his congratulations to Dr. Bruckner and stated that since the World Conference held in Asunción, there is already an outline regarding FMD yet no positive evolution has occurred; on the contrary, incidence of the disease was found where they were not present, and he quoted the case occurred in the south west of Asia. He ratified that the proposal for the control presented by Dr. Bruckner is outstanding and the programs adjust to the best control method. However, he shared the ideas conveyed by Dr. Dillon as to the way in which the programs are to be monitored. The achievement of a regional approach to the situation must be a precondition to achieve the control of the disease. The advances of a country would not be sustainable if they are not achieved jointly. A regional commitment and a coordination of the programs is of paramount importance in order to move forward.
383. Dr. Jamil Gómez congratulated Dr. Bruckner for his speech and made some comments on the strategy proposed by the OIE. He reminded the participants that in South America, the process to eradicate FMD has advanced and that the application of a new OIE concept can affect the decision of some countries. Countries that comply with the new “status” could stop moving toward the eradication of the virus in the region. This situation could cause problems in the sustainability of the hemispheric plan. However, he mentioned that, in case the new OIE concept be approved, the OIE should establish a mechanism to help countries to move towards the FMD free status.
384. The Representative of Bolivia pointed out that Dr. Bruckner’s proposal shows that a status is not being created, and considered that it is of utmost importance that the OIE accompanies the countries along the way towards the free status of the disease. This should imply enough support for a country to achieve the status which is indeed recognized by the OIE, namely the free status of a country where vaccination is practiced. He acknowledged that the tools created by the OIE such as PVS and Gap Analysis are key to achieving such recognition, and they provide a stronger support for said struggle. To conclude, he stressed the fact that this support in the struggles for the disease control is what the countries expect from the OIE.
385. Dr. Bruckner stated that the main purpose of the proposal of the Commission for the Recognition of FMD Control Plans was aimed at supporting the countries in the initiation of the control and eradication process. He also acknowledged that all the countries are willing to reach the last level of freedom of the disease and confirmed that they are willing to use the most adequate process. The proposal of the Commission is plainly a tool to support the countries in the way towards the eradication of the disease.

386. Dr Vallat expressed his enthusiasm to speak about this proposal during the meeting since the discussions are to collaborate with the improvement of the strategy to be proposed in May to the World Assembly of Delegates. He also stressed the fact that the opinion of all the countries was of considerable weight for the final improvement of the documents prepared. This was elaborated on the basis of the recommendations adopted during the Conference held in Paraguay. It is a global proposal and, although each region has its own specific features, the global approach is of great importance for it helps to control at a regional level, and he stated the case of the United Kingdom which was a country free from FMD and in the year 2001 it was infected by an Asian Strain. In order to get ride of the disease that country had to proceed to the stamping out of 6 million animals.
387. Dr Vallat also underlined how lucky they were to be in the presence of Dr. Bruckner since he was going to directly intercede in the elaboration of this proposal, as well as Dr. Alex Thiermann, President of the Code Commission who will make the proposal in May 2011.
388. He also added another positive aspect for the countries which are not free from the disease; the plan for the control indicates a process which is to start from the very beginning in many countries; several countries in America are in that situation. The idea is to start from zero, and committing to complete the whole process and achieve the status of freedom. It constitutes a technical commitment which also provides the opportunity for the politicians to get involved in the matter as well.
389. As an example, he quoted the PVS tool which started with the commitment of one country in order to have a different independent opinion on their internal system and to be able to accept the donors' assistance. The proposal of the global strategy for the control of FMD is similar to the PVS tool and in the future, it shall be used for all the diseases.
390. Dr Alejandro Thiermann added that the utmost important matter was to clarify the situation regarding the FMD eradication plan. The standards and the trade conditions are not to change unless the countries propose so. This document provides help, and constitutes a map that indicates the countries how to move from zero to free without changing the regular commitments of the countries. He considered that this plan will provide the Veterinary Services the political support and encouragement on behalf of the donors. For the countries that are involved in trade, it is an auditing tool to verify whether the country is complying with the previous stages to become free in the future. The PVS constitutes a tool as well as this document. They both provide the countries with the assistance needed to ensure transparency and show how the work is being performed.
391. Dr Deyanira Barrero, Representative of Colombia stated that a country supports the proposal, since it constitutes a complementary and it does not affect the commitments being carried out in the FMD eradication hemispheric plan. It provides assistance to the countries in stage zero or one in order to take steps forward on the matter. Then she asserted that it was positive for the Andean region and it would help to more clearly define the export activities with the neighbor countries.

OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Standards Commission – Issues of interest to the Region- Challenges and proposals

392. The Chairman of the Session, Dr. Francisco Muzio, invited Dr. Alex Thiermann, President of the OIE Code Commission and Dr. Jorge Caetano Junior, Secretary General of the OIE Code Commission to present the issues of interest for the region.
393. Dr Thiermann provided an update on the most recent activities of the Code Commission. He gave a brief review on the work and recommendations from the Code Commission on the most relevant chapters for the region.
394. He also explained the OIE standard setting process more in detail and provided the Delegates with recommendations as to how to improve their participation during the course of the year.
395. He spoke on the improvement of the specific chapters which improves the notification requirements for listed diseases. Regarding the status of OIE listed diseases, he presented the diseases proposed for suppression from the list. He also mentioned the new questionnaires on African horse sickness to be prepared for status recognition and the changes, regarding the national strategy for the control of FMD, proposed on the Code.

396. He commented on the future inclusion on new PVS criteria (management, communication), the draft chapter on pet food, the revision on the salmonellosis text, the continued work on animal welfare and the revision of the chapter on rabies to be submitted for adoption.
397. Dr Thiermann also informed that all chapters on diseases of bees were revised and that at in reference to the chapter on bovine spongiform encephalopathy there were no proposals for change from Members for first time after close to twenty years.
398. Finally, he mentioned the new chapter prepared on enzootic abortion of ewes and the chapter on swine vesicular disease already revised by the Commission and to be submitted for adoption.
399. Dr Thiermann highlighted the future activities and dates for next meetings, which were already planned by the Code Commission in order to consider Member's future comments.

Discussion

400. Dr. Carlos Correa thanked Dr. Thiermann for the relevance and clarity of his presentation. He asked about the Teschen disease and the possibility of maintaining it in the list of diseases bearing in mind that several countries are looking forward to it to be listed.
401. Dr. Thiermann explained that, taking into account the today's criteria approved by the Member Countries, the Teschen disease should not be in the list. However, he reminded the participants that the OIE is willing to receive recommendations regarding the criteria to list diseases and, although many are not listed and thus not included in the Code, they are important for the OIE and their recommendations could be published in the OIE Website.
402. Dr. Michael David, Representative of the United States of America, asked some clarification with regards to the current situation of the Reference Laboratories for the diseases which are not in the OIE list.
403. In response, Dr. Vallat asserted that the fact that a disease is not listed does not necessarily mean it lacks importance. He also reiterated that the OIE Reference Laboratories and Collaborating Centers for these diseases must be maintained, as long as they remain actives.
404. Dr. Thiermann recalled that these Reference Laboratories are deeply committed in the identification of experts and resources' supply. The OIE is not going to remove these diseases from the list if the Laboratories continue providing scientific assistance.
405. Dr. Abelardo de Gracia, Representative for OIRSA reported that for the last two years, OIRSA has been trying to organize the Countries of the region so that they issue the comments to the Code. He also consulted about the possibility of extending the deadline of the delivery of comments.
406. For that purpose, Dr. Thiermann explained that it is still difficult to adjust the dates and reported that the meeting to be held in February can not be postponed due to the mandatory legal period for informing Members before the General Session. He stated that the modification of the date is not possible for the moment. He reminded the participants that the time for receiving comments was already extended of a month as the provisional report was published a month earlier.
407. Dr. Serrano acknowledged the innovative aspects of the chapters to be presented and also requested to consider the possibility of extending the deadline of the delivery of comments by adding 15 more days. He also supported the proposal carried out by Dr. Thiermann of including the proposal in FMD which does not hinder but helps to improve the organization in the control of diseases.
408. Regarding leptospirosis, Dr. Karim Ben Jebara conveyed his idea of removing the general leptospira and including the pathogen serotypes.
409. Regarding this topic, Dr. Luis Barcos suggested that the leptospirosis in general should be removed from the list and the pathogen serotypes should be included simultaneously so as not to create any confusion among the Members. He reminded the public that many countries use the Code, not only as a guide for trade, but also as a basis for the design of national programs and legislation.

410. Dr. Brian Evans, OIE Delegate for Canada congratulated Dr. Thiermann for his great contribution as President of the Commission and expressed appreciation to Dr Caetano on his representation of the Americas and to Dr Bonbon who was also in attendance. He also stated the importance of working on the harmonization of the chapters of the Code and focussed on how significant it was to recognize the actual risk implied in the commercialization of some animal products.
411. He issued some comments on the complexity of associating the incidence of climate change in the emergence and re-emergence of animal diseases and the challenge this will pose for expanding the list of diseases for official recognition status which are vector borne.
412. He supported Dr. Vallat's opinion to continue to recognize Reference Laboratories even though the diseases are not listed in the OIE list and appropriate diagnostic standards by referenced in the Manual.
413. Dr. Thiermann conveyed his agreement with the harmonization of the work and the focus on the listed diseases.
414. Dr. Vallat also agreed with the proposal of the Scientific Commission and the Code of avoiding referring to the diseases which are not listed since, on the basis of the OIE agreement with the WTO, the presence of a disease in the list implies an impact on trade. However, this does not apply to the Manual, he explained. Although a disease may be removed from the list of notifiable diseases in the Code, it shall remain in the Manual. The Reference Laboratories in delisted diseases must continue their activities.
415. Dr. José Naranjo, regarding the comments issued by Dr. Barcos, reiterated that not only the Code is seen by the community to facilitate the trade among countries but it is also used to regulate domestic actions. The countries shall turn to the Code for all their domestic actions; therefore, the listing or removal from the list is regarded as a lack of information.
416. In that sense, he mentioned the case of Swine Influenza. The Code allows directing and taking actions in the different situations. He suggested the possibility of providing a manual or guide for the treatment of certain diseases that do not appear in the Code.
417. Dr. Thiermann reminded that the purpose of the Code is to apply the requests of the Members; to date, these requests have focused on dedicating chapters on notifiable diseases.
418. He asked the countries to be careful since all the diseases mentioned in the Code shall be immediately taken into account by the WTO for the different regulations regarding trade. He reiterated that apart from the Code, the OIE has more tools which serve as a guideline for the Members.
419. Dr. Vallat conveyed that the OIE has a great responsibility in this matter, since the Codes (Terrestrial and Aquatic) has become an extremely useful instrument for the Veterinary Services, including the non-exporting countries. Currently, the countries use it as a guide for the performance of their actions. He reminded that at first, the Code must serve as scientific reference to the agreement with the WTO and now, it is not clear what the next step to take is, i.e. whether to continue under this idea or to create a new strategy. It will be necessary to begin the debate regarding this subject and receive the proposals of the Members.
420. Regarding the FMD eradication programs within the continent, Dr. Jamil Gomes de Souza expressed his doubts whether this eradication was actually possible within the continent in a close future, due to the notoriously wide range of epidemiologic situations, as well as the levels of development of the Veterinary Services. As to the tools provided by the OIE for the evaluation of the Veterinary Services, Dr. Gomes de Souza considered how long it is to take to the less developed countries to achieve the required initial level in the systems in operation for the eradication of this disease, which would restrict the obtaining of results at a continental level.
421. As to wildlife, he stated that today's application of the standards regarding animal welfare is complex, and that including wildlife would hamper even more the activities carried out by the Veterinary Services.

422. In this regard, Dr. Thiermann explained that the importance of including wildlife would be limited to those species for which a role in the epidemiology of the diseases is recognized and would depend on the importance for trade. Also the fact that wildlife activities monitoring, in some cases, is not part of the Veterinary services functions, will have to be considered.
423. Dra. Deyanira Barrero León pointed out the issue regarding the existence of private standards and their increasing impact on international trade. These standards are being discussed at WTO and cover those aspects which are not covered by the OIE.
424. In such matter, Dr. Thiermann and Dr. Vallat agreed on reasserting the activities carried out by the OIE as to their connection with the main organizations that carry out the settlement and certification of these requisites, for the purpose of restricting the scope of their effects that hamper commerce, and achieving their adaptation to the guidelines set in force by the OIE standards.
425. Dr. Vallat confirmed that the issue regarding sanitary risk could not be part of the private standards as it is part of the Agreement that Members have with the WTO. The Animal Welfare topic is even more complicated as it is not included in the Agreements within the WTO. However, the Governments make a commitment when they adopt OIE standards.

OIE Scientific Commission for Animal Diseases – Issues of interest to the Region- Challenges and proposals

426. The Chairman Dr Francisco Muzio invited Dr Gideon Bruckner, President of the Scientific Commission of the OIE and Dr Sergio Duffy, Member of the Scientific Commission of the OIE to present the Issues of Interest on the region.
427. Dr Bruckner started his presentation informing that the Commission had its first meeting since the 78th OIE General Session at the OIE headquarters in Paris from 7 to 10 September 2010.
428. He informed that the Commission reviewed its activities and priorities for the year following issues that emanated from the 78th General Session.
429. Dr Bruckner presented in detail some important issues that were discussed and decided are:
- The OIE/FAO strategy for the global control of foot and mouth disease – the Commission adopted text for insertion into the Code chapter on FMD to give recognition to national strategic plans for FMD control and also adopted a draft strategy plan for the global control of FMD.
 - The program of ad hoc Groups for the year was scheduled to also make provision for possible amendment to the chapter on Classical swine fever to allow for the official recognition by the OIE of the CSF status of Members. The first meeting of the ad hoc Group will be in November 2010.
 - In depth discussions were held to simplify and make the process for country evaluations more transparent and user-friendly to Members. A circular by the Director General to reflect the recommendations of the Commission, will be distributed to Members.
 - The Commission considered the request of the MERCOSUR countries to re-instate the disease free status for FMD to the status prior to the signing of the Agreement between the OIE and the CVP. While the Commission had no objection to this request, it was decided to have the relevant dossiers evaluated by the ad hoc Group on FMD to enable a fast-track decision by the Commission following the meeting and recommendations of the ad hoc Group.
 - The Commission discussed and recommended the revised chapter on rabies to the Code Commission for circulation to Members for comment and possible adoption during the 79th General Session.
 - Good progress has been recorded on the Handbook on Animal Health Surveillance by the designated ad hoc Group.
 - A draft policy document to advise the OIE on issues to be considered relative to the livestock/wildlife interface was completed and submitted to the Code Commission for comments.
 - A decision of the Commission to extend the inspection visits to Members to assess compliance with the OIE requirements for disease free status was again discussed and confirmed. A mission to the MERCOSUR countries during the first quarter of 2011 is tentatively scheduled.

Discussions

430. Dr. Correa was grateful to Dr. Bruckner for his presentation and expressed his satisfaction with the advances achieved on the work of the OIE Specialized Commissions. He reminded that all the information and reports of the works of the Committees is available in the OIE website and how important it is that the delegates share this information with the focal points of their countries so as to be able to contribute with comments and observations to the work. Regrettably, only a few countries in the region actually issue any comments. Dr. Correa suggested all the countries that they should gather in groups and send their respective comments.
431. Dr. Fernando Leanes, from the PAHO, stated that the chapter of the Code that covers the stray dog population control is regarded as a reference in the development of the population control planes.
432. On the other hand, and in relation with the modifications to be carried out in the certification of zones free from rabies, he considered that the effect will be remarkably positive since today there are many countries and zones free of rabies circulation among dogs that will require certifications as it is the case for the Oriental Republic of Uruguay.

GF-TADs Activities in the Americas

433. The Chairman of the Session, Dr Francisco Muzio requested that Dr Luis Barcos, Regional Representative for the Americas, present the GF-TADs activities in the region.
434. Dr Barcos commented on the component for the American Continent of the Programme Framework for the progressive control of Transboundary Animal Diseases (GF-TADs) adopted by PAHO, PANAFTOSA, OIRSA, CAN, CARICOM, CariVET, CVP, IICA, NAAHC, COMEXA, ALA, MERCOSUR/FARM, whose purpose is to facilitate coordination mechanisms at the regional level for controlling transboundary diseases, create synergies and concentrate on various control programmes for TADs and to avoid replication and contradiction in applying health measures.
435. Dr Barcos reiterated the priority diseases in the region, FMD, Bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE), Screwworm (Myiasis), HPAI, Classical swine flu, Rabies and emerging and re-emerging diseases.
436. The Regional Representative gave a brief summary of the principal recommendations of the most recent GF-TADs meeting in the Americas in Buenos Aires in December, 2009, where the importance of using the Regional Steering Committee for GF-TADs as a consultative mechanism for health projects to be implemented in the region was highlighted, while retaining the consultative and prior approval authority of the Veterinary Authorities.
437. Dr Barcos also emphasised the recommendation regarding the strengthening of the evaluation of National Veterinary Services, by Members of the GF-TADs committee, using the OIE PVS tool and GAP analysis, the leadership support and coordination of the OPS/PANAFTOSA during control and eradication of FMD operations and subsequently the calling of a donor community meeting during the upcoming COSALFA meeting.
438. He also emphasised the need to establish and update a regional control and eradication strategy for each of the transboundary diseases in conjunction with international and regional organisations that are GF-TADs Members.
439. Some of the recommendations underscored by Dr Barcos are: the continued sponsoring and leadership in the cost-benefit area, veterinary legislation, use of the PVS tool and GAP analysis concept, private standards, the impact of climate change on animal health, governance of Veterinary Services, training for Veterinary Services and veterinary education, the possible inclusion by OIE of classical swine fever and Newcastle disease as syndromes for which OIE officially recognises the disease status, continuing the establishment of the Network of Veterinary Service Laboratories of the Americas and the use of WAHIS by the OIE as the sole official notification system worldwide of diseases, and the GLEWS of OIE/OMS/FAO as a platform for helping making the "One Health" concept more visible.

440. Lastly, he remarked on OIE leadership in the standards establishing process, and on the FAO in managing support allocated to countries in applying them. He highlighted the coordination in various fields, including continuous monitoring of GF-TADs activities in a global context, bolstering of VS, the laboratory network and organising forums and meetings on strategic themes for the region.

Date, venue and selection of the technical item for the 21th OIE Regional Conference for the Americas

441. The President of the Commission asked to the Delegates attending the conference if a country would like to host the 21st Conference of the Regional Commission for the Americas.
442. The Delegate of Barbados reiterated the desire of his country to organise the next conference as already proposed two years ago.
443. This proposal of Barbados was approved unanimously.
444. Dr Trotman, Delegate of Barbados presented a video of his country to the audience.
445. It has been proposed to carry out the Conference from 13 to 16 November 2012.
446. Regarding the Technical Items, it was reminded that one of them will include responses of the Members of the OIE Regional Commission to a questionnaire that will be prepared on a specific item. This item will be decided during the next meeting of the Regional Commission for the Americas that will take place during the General Session of May 2011. The other item will be on a subject of timely interest that will be proposed by the Regional Commission and approved by the International Committee during the General Session that will precede the Conference which means the General Session in May 2012. This item will not include a questionnaire.
447. Dr Carlos Correa informed all participants that all the updated information related to the Conference can be found through the Conference website.
448. Dr. Francisco Muzio apologized on behalf of the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries, Mr Tabare Aguerre who will not be available for the afternoon session to provide the audience with a speech.

Presentations of international and regional organisations

World Customs Organisation

449. Mr Jorge Iribarnegaray stated that matters pertaining to animal disease control strategies are of the essence when it comes to the international trade of products and sub-products of animal origin, and went on to describe the challenges faced by international trade and the various external influences it is exposed to.
450. According to Mr Iribarnegaray, it is of the utmost importance to reinforce the commitment to manage borders on the part of the World Customs Organization and the administrations of its member countries, which calls for coordination and cooperation among all the authorities and bodies responsible for the security on the borders, as well as standard requirements for passengers, goods and transportation media crossing the borders.
451. He stressed the fact that such coordination commitment becomes particularly significant in the face of potential animal health threats, where Customs and specialized technical services must make every effort to safeguard productive activities and the development of communities.

World Bank

452. The Representative of the World Bank, Dr. Francois Le Gall, reinforced the World Bank's commitment to the activities conducted by the OIE as Global Public Good, the noble endeavor to improve animal health worldwide, and the support given to Chief Veterinary Officers in the performance of their duties in their respective countries, as well as at the regional and international levels.

453. Dr. Le Gall further explained that the World Bank's participation in OIE activities evidences the close and systematic cooperation between both Organizations.
454. Cooperation comprises supporting the OIE and the World Fund, supporting the Good Governance of Veterinary Services, taking part in the "One Health" approach, participating in many of the events organized by the OIE, contributing to the OIE strategic, economic and technical publications, implementing the PVS Tool and Gap Analysis, and also the animal health projects funded by the World Bank.
455. He further informed that the World Bank supports the OIE 5th Strategic Plan, as well as the new initiatives in such areas as "One Health", Veterinary Education, and Livestock Production and the Environment (including biodiversity and climate change).
456. He finally remarked that the principle of solidarity of the OIE resonates well with the World Bank's Mandate, and praised the OIE for its constant endeavor to assist its Member-Countries in matters related to animal health.

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

457. Dr. Moisés Vargas Terán, Animal Health Officer at the FAO Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean, explained that his duties include coordinating activities aimed at fighting hunger, and that such aim can be achieved through livestock production within the framework of natural resource sustainability and veterinary public health support.
458. In connection with resource sustainability, he detailed some of the activities developed, which involved recovering degraded soils by turning them into woods and grazing land, as well as developing strategies aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions and promoting good handling practices mainly on family farms.
459. Regarding the promotion of Veterinary Public Health, he described the actions taken to support Mexico during the 2009 H1N1 influenza epidemic, in a coordinated effort with international organizations. At the request of several countries, an emergency program was implemented for the purpose of detecting the presence of the H1N1 virus in swine and creating a sub-regional emergency center for transboundary animal diseases. Such actions further helped develop activities within the framework of the "One Health" concept.
460. As regards good animal feeding practices and the prevention of transmissible spongiform encephalopathies (TSEs), there are assistance projects underway in several countries in the region, having helped Panama achieve the status of controlled risk country.
461. As to the strategies for preventing, controlling and eradicating Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD), the progressive control pathway (PCP) was described as an indicator of the progress in the control of this disease.
462. Because in many regions 80% of swine are raised on small-scale family farms, great importance has been placed on the implementation of the continent-wide program for eradicating classical swine fever (CSF), which is expected to reach its goal by 2020.
463. He finally highlighted that endeavoring to achieve social justice through livestock production means reducing poverty and preserving legitimate means for making a living.

European Union (EU)

464. Dr. Etienne Bonbon thanked for the invitation to the event in his own name and Doctor Bernard Van Goethem's, and said that the European Commission and the Member States are developing their own new animal health strategy adhering to the general principle "Prevention is better than cure".
465. He then focused on four matters related to international affairs, international cooperation and the OIE.

466. First, he stressed the importance of having the best possible animal and public health authorities through the availability of qualified professionals and a good organization for achieving effective animal disease control and certification. He further mentioned the role of the EU as donor for OIE actions, highlighting the “PVS Process”.
467. He highlighted the important role of the “One Health” concept not only for communication, and remarked that only through active and joint cooperation with public health services is it possible to fight animal zoonoses and promote food hygiene.
468. Dr. Bonbon further mentioned the categorization of diseases and the prioritization of the actions as a new EU strategy, and the funding of the OIE studies, which will be used as a tool for achieving greater objectivity in the regulation and selection of health policies, more flexibility, better response to epidemiological changes, and better distribution of expenses and responsibilities at the regional, national or private levels.
469. He added that the EU, in the elaboration of this new legislation, will use the International Standards, especially OIE’s standards, as a basis and highlighted the importance of cooperation between countries and regions around the world.
470. Dr. Bonbon finally listed the conferences that the EU is to finance jointly, namely the ones on veterinary legislation, animals wildlife, aquatic animals and rabies.

General Secretariat of the Andean Community of Nations (GSCAN)

471. Dr. Rosa Guerrero, CAN Animal Health and Food Safety Officer from the General Secretariat of the Andean Community, presented the main activities developed in the area of Animal Health.
472. She detailed the contents of the regulatory framework in force, whose aim is to protect animal health and prevent the dissemination of plagues and diseases by implementing coordinated monitoring systems among Member Countries, seeking to harmonize regulations, and minimizing the impact of health measures on trade.
473. GSCAN has in place regulatory instruments such as community standards in plant and animal health certification systems, as well as instruments for supporting the system, such as the Andean Plant and Animal Health Information and Monitoring System (SAIVECAN), and procedures for obtaining the free of plagues or diseases status, in addition to the joint action programs between Member Countries.
474. Regarding harmonization activities, she stated that they have comprised such issues as establishing the Andean animal plant and health system, the veterinary product register, control, commercialization and use, the application of risk analysis at community level and the sub-regional Foot and Mouth disease program, as well as issues related to quarantine. She further stressed that the standards established by the OIE are used as a reference.
475. Finally, she briefly described the Andean Plant and Animal Health Monitoring System, which is currently being implemented.

Discussion

476. Regarding SAIVECAN, Dr. Karim Ben Jebara suggested interacting directly with the OIE WAHIS, so as to avoid processing information more than once.
477. He further added that it is essential for information systems to operate in a coordinated way, both in the format of the data and in the definition of diseases.

Pan-American Health Organization - PANAFTOSA

478. Dr. Ottorino Cosivi, Coordinator of the Project and Director of the Pan-American Foot-and-Mouth Disease Center (PANAFTOSA-PAHO/WHO), described the activities developed by this Center.
479. He described the actions taken in order to eradicate canine rabies from the continent, which is closely connected with the “One Health” initiative. In line with these activities, he prioritized strategic alliances with other health organizations, as well as training and awareness-raising activities at municipal and zoonoses centers.
480. Regarding epidemiologic monitoring activities, he stressed the need to work in coordination with other organizations.
481. He made a point to mention the fostering of farming and the fight against zoonoses based on primary health care.
482. As regards the Hemispheric Program for the Eradication of Foot and Mouth Disease from South America (PHEFA), he said it represents the political and strategic framework for eradicating this disease at regional level.
483. As for their Action Plan for the 2011-2020 period, it is developed in different areas, such as political and strategic guidelines, technical and epidemiological guidelines, and action management and coordination. He further remarked the essential role of International and Regional organizations’ cooperation, and of the coordination through OIE/FAO GF-TAD’s.
484. He also mentioned the supply of reference reagents for the laboratories in the region, as well as the capacity building activities in the area of food-related disease risk analysis and food safety networking.
485. Finally, he referred to the training activities developed by the Center, highlighting the advantages of the use of technologies in distant learning.

Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA)

486. The IICA Representative, Agronomist Lourdes Fonalleras, described some of the activities carried out during the past year in connection with animal health. Among these, she highlighted official Veterinary Service capacity building, helping countries and regions build capacities to manage emergent affairs or emergencies, and take actions in the areas of Foot-and Mouth Disease and Avian Influenza.
487. Ms. Fonalleras further described the actions conducted in the South Region, such as the renewal of the CAS agreement and the IICA for providing technical and management assistance to the CVP.
488. She specially mentioned a study aimed at identifying the economic and legal incidence of private standards (PS) on beef trade in the CVP region.
489. In the Andean Region, the IICA also has in place several technical advice and support programs.
490. In the Caribbean, various activities were carried out within the framework of the Project for the Creation and Strengthening of a Network of Epidemiologists and Para-Epidemiologists (the VEP Project). In 2009 the IICA also took part in the annual meeting of the CaribVET (Jamaica), the meeting of the CaribVET work group on Classical Swine Fever (Haiti), the meeting of the CaribVET work group on ticks and tick-borne diseases (Fort Collins, Colorado, United States), and the fifth meeting of the CaribVET work group on epidemiology (Antigua and Barbuda).
491. Two training workshops on Classical Swine Fever were organized in the Dominican Republic, further supporting five field mock tests in this country.
492. After the earthquake, Haiti was assisted in many areas, including various aspects of animal health, in some cases in close collaboration with the US Department of Agriculture (USDA).

493. The IICA has served as administrative and technical collaborator within the World Bank project (TF-092679) for the Prevention and Control of Human and Avian Influenza in Haiti and the Dominican Republic.
494. In the Central Region it helped implement animal and plant health actions within the framework of the Central American Agricultural Policy (PACA), and prepared a Training Manual as a contribution to the capacity building processes, collective learning and social innovation for the territory's rural development.

Caribbean Animal Health Surveillance Network (CaribVET)

495. First, Dr. Gongora informed that CaribVET mainly focuses on epidemiology and surveillance activities in the Caribbean. Among the activities developed by the organization, he highlighted the importance of strengthening the capacities of the Veterinary Services and laboratories in the Region. He again remarked the advantages of having networks that seek to guarantee diagnostic capacity.

Regional International Organization for Health in Agriculture (OIRSA)

496. Dr. Abelardo De Gracia Scanapieco, OIRSA Regional Coordinator of Animal Health, summarized the activities developed in order to assist the countries in the region. He explained that, with a view to making the most of each specialist's capacities, such activities were divided by specialized area.
497. He informed on the creation of ad-hoc groups in the area of aquatic, swine and bee health and animal welfare, as well as the group responsible for discussing the reforms to be made to the Code in order to perform joint actions with the public and private sectors.
498. In addition, he briefly described brucellosis and tuberculosis prevalence studies underway in El Salvador, Nicaragua, Honduras and, in the near future, Guatemala.
499. He mentioned that Belize, Costa Rica, Panama, El Salvador and Guatemala have achieved the status of CSF-free countries, while Honduras and Nicaragua will be ready to reach such status next year. As for the Dominican Republic, it is still in the control stage.
500. He then described the joint work carried out with the OIE in the use of the PVS tool, Gap Analysis and other actions and projects, in addition to the support given to the secretary of the OIE Aquaculture Health Commission for the Americas.
501. Dr. De Gracia went on to expound on the joint work done with the FAO in the development of a Technical Cooperation Project for BSE monitoring, which help Panama attain the status of controlled-risk country, and informed that a Project for monitoring H1N1 Influenza is underway.
502. He also mentioned that OIRSA has worked with OSPESCA on a regional aquatic health project, and that CEBASEV developed an on-going professional training Program for the prevention, control and eradication of diseases.
503. He finally explained that the international organizations such as OIE, FAO, IICA, OPS, APHIS, OIRSA and WSPA are working in close coordination at a subregional level.

Discussion of recommendations for Technical Items 1 and 2

504. The recommendations 1 and 2 on the technical items of the Conference were presented for discussion with the participants. Some modifications were notified on both recommendations that were presented for final adoption on Friday.
505. The Delegate of Costa Rica made a comment regarding the creation of a Collaborating Center in her country for the strengthening of Veterinary Services that would prioritise Good Governance, the 'One Health' concept and veterinary training and Phytosanitary Measures Agreement. The comment was well received by the Regional Commission.
506. Dr Vallat reminded that there was already an official procedure that should be followed.

507. He suggested to Costa Rica to present a written proposal to the OIE Headquarters to be presented to the Specialist Commission.

Thursday 18 November 2010

Professional and Cultural visit

508. The participants enjoyed the professional and cultural trip organized by the host country to establishments and the identification and traceability operation systems of Uruguay which concluded with a pleasant visit to *Punta del Este*. They expressed their gratefulness to the organisers of the trip for the warm hospitality.

Friday 19 November 2010

Adoption of the Final Report and Recommendations 1 and 2

509. Dr Vallat explained the procedure to be followed for adopting the conference report and recommendations. The Delegates could make comments or suggest changes that would be taken into account during the conference. They could make additional comments on the report up to 3 December 2010. These comments had to be sent to OIE Headquarters and would be reflected in the final version of the report. However, the recommendations had to be adopted during the session and could not be amended afterwards.
510. The report was adopted with a few additional amendments.
511. Recommendations 1 and 2 were also adopted.
512. Dr Jamil Gomes de Souza, Delegate of Brazil to the OIE and President of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas, read out the acknowledgements on behalf of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas, the Director General and all the participants.

Closing ceremony

513. Mr José Alberto Mujica Cordano, President of the Oriental Republic of Uruguay, honoured the Commission with his presence and addressed the conference closing ceremony.
514. The President of the Republic spoke a few words of thanks, highlighted the importance of the veterinary profession and the work of the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) and reiterated the national recognition that had been accorded to the event.
515. In his address, the President of the Republic stressed that the industrialized world was demanding ever more from countries in the region and that, with its unflagging work, Uruguay had demonstrated its ability to mediate the challenges of today's world with quality and reliability, including safeguarding animal health as an essential element of strategies for developing nations.
516. The President emphasised that stronger cooperation among nations was certain to be key to meeting the challenges facing the modern world.
517. OIE Director General, Dr Vallat, thanked the participants for their lively discussions and the speakers for their interesting presentations. He also reviewed the main points in the recommendations adopted at the conference. Dr Vallat said that the conference had provided the members of the region with an excellent opportunity to discuss areas and consider issues of mutual interest. He congratulated the OIE Secretariat and other OIE Headquarters staff for their active and fruitful participation. He commended the excellent organisation and coordination of the conference.

518. He added that the conference had been a great success thanks to the dedication of the Government of Uruguay and, in particular, of Dr Carlos Correa Messuti, Delegate of Uruguay and current President of the OIE World Assembly of Delegates who, together with his colleagues, had worked intensively and tirelessly with OIE Headquarters to guarantee the success of the conference. Dr Vallat also thanked the Uruguayan people for their hospitality, which had guaranteed a pleasant week's work.
519. Dr Carlos Correa Messuti, Delegate of Uruguay and current President of the World Assembly of Delegates, thanked all 121 representatives from 25 OIE member countries for their active participation. He was grateful for the opportunity to host all his veterinary colleagues for the conference in his home country.
520. Dr Correa Messuti thanked everyone in the Uruguay team and the OIE Secretariat for their excellent work in ensuring the success of the conference. He also thanked the members of the Regional Commission for the trust they had placed in Uruguay's Veterinary Services and for having allowed the conference to be held in Montevideo. He extended thanks to the OIE Director General and OIE staff and to the Office of the Regional Commission for their support in organising the conference. He mentioned the good relationship between Uruguay and the OIE and the importance that his country placed on international cooperation in the area of animal health in the Americas.
521. Dr Correa Messuti concluded by thanking everyone who had contributed to the success of the conference and declared the 20th Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas officially closed at 11.30 a.m.

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Agenda

- I. Fifth OIE Strategic Plan and OIE Global Programme of Strengthening Veterinary Services (including PVS, PVS Gap Analysis, legislation and communication support in America and the world)
- II. Report on the activities of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas.
- III. Report on the activities of the OIE Regional Representation for the Americas and proposal of activities for 2010-2011
- IV. Technical item I: Climate change and its link with animal diseases and animal production
- V. Analysis of the animal health situation in the Region up to June 2010 and perspectives for the future
- VI. Aquatic Animal Health Standards Commission – Issues of interest to the Region - Challenges and proposals.
- VII. Committees in the Region supporting the Region’s Veterinary Services: results, prospects and challenges.
- VIII. Technical item II: OIE Strategy for the control and eradication of foot and mouth disease at regional and global levels.
- IX. OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Standards Commission – Issues of interest to the Region- Challenges and proposals.
- X. OIE Scientific Commission for Animal Diseases – Issues of interest to the Region- Challenges and proposals.
- XI. GF-TADs Activities in the Americas
- XII. Presentations by international and regional organisations
- XIII. Other matters:
 - Selection of the technical item for the 21st Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas
 - Date, venue and agenda for the 21st Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas

Programme

MONDAY 15 NOVEMBER 2010

15 h 00 Registration of participants and document distribution

18 h 00 Registrations closing time

TUESDAY 16 NOVEMBER 2010

08 h 00 Registration of participants and document distribution (cont.)

09 h 00 Opening ceremony

- Dr Jamil Gomes De Souza, Delegate of Brazil and President of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas
- Dr Luis O Barcos – OIE Regional Representative for the Americas
- Dr Carlos Correa- Delegate of Uruguay and President of the World Assembly of Delegates
- Dr Bernard Vallat, OIE Director General
- Representative of the Government – Uruguay

09 h 45 Break

10 h 30 * ...Election of the Conference Committee (Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and General Rapporteur)
* Adoption of the Provisional Agenda and Timetable
* Designation of session chairpersons and rapporteurs (Technical items and animal health situation)

10 h 45 FIFTH OIE STRATEGIC PLAN AND OIE GLOBAL PROGRAMME OF STRENGTHENING VETERINARY SERVICES (INCLUDING PVS, PVS GAP ANALYSIS, LEGISLATION AND COMMUNICATION SUPPORT IN AMERICA AND THE WORLD)
(Dr Bernard Vallat, OIE Director General)

11 h 45 Discussions

12 h 00 Report on the activities of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas
(Dr Jamil Gomes De Souza, Delegate of Brazil and President of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas)

12 h 15 Report on the activities of the OIE Regional and Sub Regional Representations for the Americas and Proposal of activities for 2010/2011 (Dr Luis Barcos, OIE Regional Representative for the Americas)

12 h 45 Discussions

13 h 00 Lunch

14 h 30 Administrative Issues – Report of the recent meeting of the Council (Dr Carlos Correa, Delegate of Uruguay and President of the World Assembly of Delegates – Dr Brian Evans, Delegate of Canada and Member of the OIE Council)

14 h 45 Discussions

- 15 h 00 TECHNICAL ITEM I
CLIMATE CHANGE AND ITS LINK WITH ANIMAL DISEASES AND ANIMAL PRODUCTION-
(Ing Walter Oyhantcabal, Dr Edgardo Vitale, Dra Patricia Lagarmilla)
- 15 h 45 Discussions
- 16 h 15 Break
(Preparation of the Recommendation 1 by the appointed group)
- 16 h 45 ANALYSIS OF THE ANIMAL HEALTH SITUATION IN THE REGION UP TO JUNE 2010 AND PERSPECTIVES
FOR THE FUTURE (Dr Karim Ben Jebara, Head OIE Animal Health Information Department)
- 17 h 30 Discussions
- 18 h 00 Aquatic Animal Health Standards Commission – Issues of interest to the Region - Challenges and
proposals (Member of the OIE Aquatic Commission)
- 18 h 30 Committees in the Region supporting the Region’s Veterinary Services: results, prospects and
challenges (Dr José Joaquin Oreamuno, OIE Sub-regional Representative for Central America)
- 20 h 30 Reception hosted by the OIE

WEDNESDAY 17 NOVEMBER 2010

- 08 h 30 TECHNICAL ITEM II
OIE STRATEGY FOR THE CONTROL AND ERADICATION OF FOOT AND MOUTH DISEASE AT REGIONAL
AND GLOBAL LEVELS
(Dr Gideon Bruckner, President OIE Scientific Commission – Representative OPS-
PANAFTOSA)
- 09 h 15 Discussions
- 09 h 45 OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Standards Commission – Issues of interest to the Region-
Challenges and proposals (Dr Alex Thiermann, President OIE Code Commission and Dr Jorge
Caetano Junior, Secretary General OIE Code Commission)
- 10 h 15 Discussions
- 10 h 45 Break
(Preparation of the Recommendation 2 by the appointed group)
- 11 h 15 OIE Scientific Commission for Animal Diseases – Issues of interest to the Region- Challenges and
proposals (Dr Gideon Bruckner, President of OIE Scientific Commission and Dr Sergio Duffy,
Member of the OIE Scientific Commission)
- 11 h 45 Discussions
- 12 h 00 GF-TADs Activities in the Americas (Dr Luis Barcos, OIE Regional Representative for the
Americas)
- 12 h 30 Discussion
- 12 h 45 Date, venue and selection of the technical item for the 21th OIE Regional Conference for the
Americas
- 13 h 00 Lunch
- 14 h 00 Presentations of international and regional organisations
- 15 h 00 Discussion
- 15 h 30 Break

- 16 h 00 Minister of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries of Uruguay, Ing. Agr. Tabaré Aguerre
- 16 h 15 Discussion of recommendations for Technical Items 1 and 2
- 19 h 15 Departure from Hotel to Solís Theatre Gala
- 20 h 00 Reception hosted by the Government of Uruguay

THURSDAY 18 NOVEMBER 2010

Technical and cultural visit

- 08 h 00 Visit to production premises, and operation of animal Identification and traceability system in Uruguay
Lunch
Visit to Punta del Este

FRIDAY 19 NOVEMBER 2010

- 09 h 00 Adoption of the Final Report and Recommendations 1 and 2
- 10h 30 Break
- 11 h 00 Closing ceremony
- 12 h 00 Press Conference

Recommendation Technical Item I

Climate change and its link with animal diseases and animal production

CONSIDERING THAT:

1. According to the OIE experts and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), climate and environmental change could be associated with many emerging and re-emerging animal diseases, including zoonoses;
2. Long term climate changes make it difficult to predict the exact distribution and scale of the emergence and re-emergence of many animal diseases in the Region, or the precise impact on terrestrial and aquatic animal production, and public health;
3. The general trend towards the intensification and industrialization of animal production will continue and could increase the likelihood of emerging and re-emerging diseases occurring, including zoonoses;
4. Further scientific information and research are needed urgently in order to assess the real impact of climate change on terrestrial and aquatic animal disease incidence and production and consequently on public health;
5. Factors, such as globalization, increase the risk of the emergence and re-emergence of diseases;
6. OIE Members are concerned about the likely impact of climate change on emerging and re-emerging animal diseases;
7. One of the OIE's objectives is to contribute to food security for a growing world population;
8. Veterinary Services are responsible for ensuring the early detection and rapid response to emerging and re-emerging animal diseases and must be strengthened entirely to be able to face the new challenges related to globalisation, climate and environmental changes and necessity to increase livestock and aquatic animals production in order to satisfy the worldwide demand in animal proteins;
9. The projection for 2030 indicates that demand for animal proteins (milk, eggs, meat) will increase by 50%. However, the negative public perception of the impact of animal production on climate change could undermine the consumption of animal products.

THE REGIONAL COMMISSION FOR THE AMERICAS
RECOMMENDS THAT:

1. The OIE continue its support for building the technical management and good governance capacity of Veterinary Services in conjunction with the private sector, in order to guarantee that demand for animal protein is met while minimising the negative environmental impact;
2. The countries of the Region be encouraged to share best practices and adopt the concept of building institutional adaptability in order to tackle the new challenges of climate change more effectively;
3. The OIE continue its work in supporting Members by means of programmes such as the evaluation of Performance of Veterinary Services (PVS Tool) for, PVS Gap Analysis and Legislation missions, in order to ensure the early-detection and rapid-response of Veterinary Services for the control of terrestrial and aquatic animal diseases;

4. The OIE, in collaboration with other international organisations, including those having expertise in the subject, help veterinary authorities to develop surveillance, modelling, and other decision-making frameworks that take into account new information on the evolving possible association between climate change and emerging and re-emerging animal diseases, and that this approach recognise the need for appropriate policy responses;
5. The Director General of the OIE contact the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) to promote the inclusion of the potential effects of climate change on animal health and animal production in the IPCC Fifth Assessment Report for 2015, considering that the 2007 report made no specific reference to the issue;
6. The OIE support member countries by creating opportunities for training Veterinary Services, emphasising the need to share information and experiences among countries of the Region for the implementation of preventive and adaptation measures against climate change-related emerging diseases;
7. The countries of the Region be encouraged to coordinate and intensify the research on the impact of climate change on emerging and re-emerging diseases and on animal production and public health;
8. The OIE conduct communication and related activities on climate changes aimed at ensuring a balance in the public understanding of the positive and negative impact of livestock production as a basis for its sustainable development, while addressing the demand for animal protein;
9. The development and improvement of linkages between human and animal health and the environment sectors be fostered in a coordinated and consistent manner in the framework of the FAO/OIE/WHO tripartite concept note.

Recommendation Technical Item II

OIE strategy for the control and eradication of foot and mouth disease at regional and global levels

CONSIDERING THAT:

1. Foot and mouth disease (FMD) has for centuries been known as a serious threat to the health and welfare of the domestic and wild animal ruminant and swine population of the world, with negative impacts on the livelihoods of animal keepers, rural and national economies;
2. Countries infected with FMD are more prone to food insecurity and rural poverty as a result of the impact of FMD at household level and through reduced access to local, national and international markets;
3. The control and eventual eradication of FMD in a country, region or worldwide could only be achieved if the international community recognizes that the control of FMD is a global public good that will benefit all populations and future generations;
4. Sixty six countries in the world and sixteen zones within countries are already officially recognized by the OIE as free from FMD with or without vaccination while more than 100 countries are still either considered as non-officially free and/or are endemically or sporadically infected with the disease;
5. There is a need for a strong commitment of all countries at a high political level to harmonise global, regional and national policies for FMD control;
6. The FMD virus serotypes and strains are distributed into several major virus ecological setting or reservoirs, each containing distinct regional viral strains from which new variants may emerge, which creates a demand for advanced laboratory services and technical advice to select appropriate vaccines;
7. Unprecedented globalization of trade and movement of people and animals opens the door for any virus strain to infect any part of the world;
8. It will be necessary, in a long term approach, to strengthen the efforts and establish regional agreements to address the threats of FMD viruses and animal reservoirs or environmental persistence;
9. There is an OIE proposal for the official recognition of the strategic plans and their continuing implementation by countries to control and eradicate FMD with the eventual aim of obtaining zonal and country freedom from FMD that is an important element in the drive towards the global control of FMD. However, some countries expressed their concern on that respect.
10. Many developing and in transition countries are in need of assistance as they lack the necessary resources and effective veterinary services to initiate, implement or sustain a national disease control program for FMD;
11. Initiating an FMD control program with limited financial resources requires targeted technical support and guidance to optimize the strategy and actions to achieve rapid gains on the investment, that could stimulate further cost effective public and private expenditures;
12. Realising an ideal of global control of FMD will be a costly and long-term process relying heavily on the sustainable availability of sufficient public and private financial resources from Governments, producers and market chain actors, and the international donor community;
13. Good veterinary governance is an essential pre-requisite to ensure the efficient implementation of national programs and to encourage the establishment of sustainable public-private partnerships and international support for the control of FMD on a national, regional and global level;

14. There is an urgent need for research in vaccines that will improve the access of countries to good quality vaccines that are fit for purpose against the prevailing field strains of the FMD virus in each virus reservoir, in each relevant species, and which can be cost effective and used in challenging environmental conditions;
15. Good examples of successful regionally co-ordinated approaches that have delivered freedom from FMD in part or whole of the areas involved are seen in the European region, in South-East Asia and South America. These long term regional programs can provide important templates for formulating co-ordinated regional and national FMD control strategies in the other affected regions of the world;
16. Due to the concerted efforts of the countries participating with the help of the private sector in the Hemispheric Foot-and-Mouth Disease Plan (PHEFA), 85% of the 350 million head of bovine and buffaloes are now living in zones free with and without vaccination in South America thereby contributing to the major share of beef and pork from these countries in the global market, also these achievements being due to the huge contribution of national Veterinary services as well as to global and regional organisations, particularly the PANAFTOSA center, donors, and strategic alliances with the private sector;
17. Following the Agreement between the CVP and the OIE to establish a regional control program for FMD on the mutual borders between Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia and Paraguay, successive control measures were instituted and implemented with no recorded outbreaks of the FMD in that zone since the signing of the Agreement in 2007;
18. There is a need for all countries currently affected by FMD to be able to enter into a regional co-ordinated program against FMD through a progressive control pathway towards FMD freedom with or without vaccination as endorsed by the OIE to progressively advance towards official recognition of FMD freedom of zones and countries;
19. Countries and zones already free of the disease and able to support global control of FMD can contribute to a win-win situation resulting in reduced poverty in infected countries and a reduced the risk to their own territory from virus reintroductions;
20. International standards of the OIE for good veterinary governance, the control methods for FMD, the production and use of vaccines, the trade in and movement of animals and animal products and the diagnosis of the disease are integral in formulating a strategy for the global control of FMD;
21. The OIE and FAO through the GF-TADs coordinating mechanism, reference laboratories, collaborating and reference centers, will provide an important support mechanism to ensure a sustainable global control program for FMD;

**THE OIE REGIONAL COMMISSION FOR THE AMERICAS
RECOMMENDS THAT:**

1. The OIE and FAO together with the world political fora (G8 and G20, etc), the governments, producers and other international, regional and national role players and stakeholders must reaffirm and communicate the economic and social justification for recognizing officially the global control and eventual eradication of FMD as a global public good for the benefit of all populations and future generations;
2. A strategy for the global control of FMD should be regarded as an international priority and should be managed and coordinated jointly by the OIE and FAO under the GF-TADs platform, in consultation with the relevant international, regional and national stakeholders and donor community;
3. The global program for the control and eradication of FMD must take into account the interests of countries already FMD free and must propose training and surveillance programs aiming that objective.
4. The OIE, FAO and other international and regional organizations concerned with FMD control develop a strategic communication and advocacy plan to convince the high level policy makers in infected countries to consider FMD control as a priority to contribute to global food security and socio-economic prosperity;

5. The OIE with the support of its Members and FAO pursue and further intensify its efforts to establish the application of good veterinary governance in developing and in transition countries to pave the way for sustainable public-private partnerships and involvement of the international donor community in support of a global strategy for the control of FMD;
6. A strategy for the global control for FMD should incorporate and acknowledge existing and ongoing national and regional mechanisms that have already achieved progress in moving towards the regional control of FMD such as those of the Hemispheric FMD Eradication Plan (PHEFA), the technical and practical support brought by COSALFA, the technical support brought by PANAFATOSA to this plan, the border agreements between countries, the CVP/MERCOSUR, SEAFMD, European Union and the EUFMD;
7. The Hemispheric FMD Eradication Plan for South America be reviewed to focus specifically on the needs of the remaining endemic FMD countries and zones which pose a risk to those countries and zones already free from disease;
8. The CVP, within the framework of the agreement with the OIE, continue to maintain the vigilance in terms of disease control and disease surveillance to maintain the free status of FMD on the borders of the countries party to the Agreement;
9. OIE standards regarding quality of vaccines must be strictly respected by all countries worldwide, and mechanisms for quality assurance observed;
10. Further research on the development of effective and quality vaccines in compliance with OIE standards and the availability of vaccines at diminished cost for all prevailing field strains of the FMD virus for all susceptible domestic animals be encouraged and expedited with the emphasis on the availability, cost-effectiveness and safe use under challenging environmental conditions;
11. The OIE with the support of FAO and in collaboration with the international donor community, consider the establishment of vaccine banks for FMD vaccines in strategic locations and in support of regional FMD control programs and define the processes and strategies for its use;
12. The establishment of and access to diagnostic facilities for the quick and efficient diagnosis of FMD be further enhanced through initiatives such as the OIE laboratory twinning program, OIE focal points and the network of national laboratories in the region and the FAO laboratories network development program. Diagnostic tests must comply with standards of the OIE Manual of Diagnostic Tests and Vaccines for Terrestrial Animals and their inscription, when appropriate, into the OIE register of diagnostic tests is promoted;
13. The OIE continue to update existing international standards for FMD and encourage the official recognition of the countries and zones listed free from the disease as well as the official recognition of free countries or zones with or without vaccination;
14. That the recognition of the strategic plans of countries and their continuing implementation to control and eradicate FMD, as proposed by the OIE, be clarified with more details;
15. In the updating of international standards the OIE should encourage further research to allow the safe trade in animal products without unjustified barriers to trade while recognizing the needs of developing and in transition countries which are still progressing along the pathway towards the progressive control or eradication of foot and mouth disease;
16. The OIE strengthen its relations with CAN and the other countries from the Andean region in order to provide help in the control of FMD;
17. OIE and FAO organise a global pledging conference with free and infected countries, and relevant organisations and donors, to support a global control program.

Press release

Montevideo, 19 November 2010 – High-ranking officials from all OIE Member Countries in the Americas, including the Caribbean, and from national, regional and world organisations, including the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), attended the 20th Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas, held in Montevideo (Uruguay) from 16 to 19 November 2010.

Regional and global control of foot and mouth disease

During the Conference, the global and regional strategy for the control of foot and mouth disease (FMD), a formidable animal disease causing considerable economic losses and poverty in the world, was the subject of a consensus based on the application of the recommendations issued by the Global Conference on FMD held in Asunción in 2009.

The consensus is based on the implementation of official OIE recognition of national and regional eradication plans developed taking into account the epidemiological and socioeconomic characteristics of each region and with the continuous methodological support of the OIE and FAO, within the framework of an alliance between the two organisations decided at the global level.

“Today, only 66 of the 177 Member Countries worldwide are officially recognised by the OIE as being FMD free. With this new strategy, we expect to be able to increase the figure to more than 100 FMD-free countries in the coming years, while helping countries that have become FMD free to remain so”, declared Dr Bernard Vallat, Director General of the OIE.

How to respond to the risks related to climate change

The subject of links between climate change, animal production and emerging and re-emerging diseases, most of which are transmissible to humans, prompted a lively debate resulting in Conference participants reaching common positions on the need to strengthen the national Veterinary Services in compliance with the standards of quality issued by the OIE to help them address the new health risks associated with climate change.

There was also a consensus on acknowledging the great complexity of the debate on the link between animal production and climate change and on the need for further studies on the subject, while at the same time recognising the considerable contribution that livestock make to human welfare. The need for good practices to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and for appropriate scientific research programmes was also emphasised.

Disease prevention and control

Each Member Country described the animal health situation in its territory, programmes underway to eliminate diseases still present and programmes to prevent the introduction of new pathogens.

These presentations clearly showed that the animal health situation in the Americas is evolving favourably but that a strong, shared political will and coordinated large-scale investments are still required in order to eliminate the most devastating diseases.

Participants also welcomed the OIE’s creation of networks of OIE national focal points to assist national Delegates in key areas such as animal disease information, veterinary products and laboratories.

The Conference was kindly hosted by the Government of Uruguay. The Honourable Danilo Astori, Vice-president of the Oriental Republic of Uruguay, opened the Conference, which was chaired by Dr Francisco Muzio, Director of the Veterinary Services of Uruguay, with the support of the OIE Headquarters and the OIE Regional Representation for the Américas.

MOTION OF THANKS

The President and the Members of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas, the Director General of the OIE, the members of delegations, country representatives, representatives of international and regional organisations and observers, wish to express their deep gratitude to the Government of Uruguay, the Host Country of the 20th Conference of the OIE Regional Commission, held from 16 to 19 November 2010, for the warm welcome accorded to the participants, for all facilities made available to them during their stay in Montevideo and for the excellent organisation of the conference.