



World Organisation  
for Animal Health

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27th Conference of the  
Regional Commission for the Americas  
Quito, Ecuador, 25 to 29 November 2024

**FINAL REPORT**

## Introduction

1. Following the kind invitation of the Government of Ecuador, the 27th Conference of the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) Regional Commission for the Americas was held in Quito, Ecuador, from 25 to 29 November 2024.
2. A total of 95 participants, comprising WOAH Delegates and representatives of 23 Members of the Region and senior officers from 11 regional and international organisations, attended the Conference. In addition, representatives of the private sector as well as private veterinary organisations from the Region and from the host country were present.

Members of the Commission: Argentina, Barbados, Belize, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Curaçao, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, France, Jamaica, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, San Vincent and Grenadines, Saint Lucia, Uruguay, United States of America.

International/regional/national organisations: Asociación Latinoamericana de Avicultura (*Latin American Poultry Association*) (ALA), Caribbean Agricultural Health and Food Safety Agency (CAHFSA), Comunidad Andina (*Andean Community*) (CAN), Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO), Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), Organismo Internacional Regional de Sanidad Agropecuaria (*Regional International Organisation for Animal and Plant Health*) (OIRSA), Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization (PAHO/WHO), Pan American Center for Foot-and-Mouth Disease and Veterinary Public Health (PANAFTOSA/VPH), World Small Animal Veterinary Association (WSAVA).

3. Dr Wilson Patricio Almeida Granja, Delegate of Ecuador, Dr Susana Pombo, President of the World Assembly of Delegates and Delegate of Portugal, Dr Emmanuelle Soubeyran, Director General, Dr Luis Barcos, Regional Representative for the Americas, Dr Catya Martinez Rivas, Sub-Regional Representative for Central America and the Caribbean, Dr Alicia Gallardo, President of the Aquatic Animal Health Standards Commission, Dr Gaston Funes, Vice President of the Code Commission, also participated in the Conference. The speakers of the two main Technical Items, namely Dr Barbara Borges Cordeiro, General Coordinator at the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock in Brazil for the Technical Item I, and Prof. Claus Köbrich Gruebler, Associate Professor at the University of Chile, for the Technical Item II, also honoured the Conference with their presence.

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## TUESDAY 26 NOVEMBER 2024

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### Opening ceremony

4. The following authorities gave a welcome address:
  - Dr Wilson Patricio Almeida Granja, Delegate of Ecuador;
  - Dr Luis Barcos, Regional Representative for the Americas;
  - Dr Rosemary Sifford, President of the Regional Commission and Delegate of the United States of America (through video recording);
  - Dr Susana Pombo, President of the World Assembly of Delegates and Delegate of Portugal;
  - Dr Emmanuelle Soubeyran, WOAH Director General;
5. Delegates and participants were honoured by the opening address of the Honourable Mr Danilo Palacios, Minister of Agriculture of Ecuador.

### **Approval of the Programme**

6. Dr Rafael Rodriguez Alvarado, Vice President of the Regional Commission presented the provisional programme, which was adopted without amendment. The final programme is available in Annex 1.

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

7. In order to facilitate the appointment of the Conference Committee, the Vice President of the Regional Commission presented to the Delegates, for their suggestions and comments, a proposal drawn up by the Bureau of the Regional Core Group, taking into account geographical representativeness.
8. The Conference Committee was elected by Delegates as follows:

Chairperson:	Dr Patricio Almeida / Dr Christian Zambrano (Ecuador)
Vice-Chairperson:	Dr Osbil Watson (Jamaica)
Rapporteur General:	Dr Marcelo de Andrade Mota (Brazil)

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

9. In order to facilitate the appointment of the Session Chairpersons and Rapporteurs, the Vice President of the Regional Commission presented to the Delegates, for their suggestions and comments, a proposal drawn up by the Regional Core Group, taking into account geographical representativeness.
10. Chairpersons and Rapporteurs were designated for the Technical Items as follows:

Technical Item I:	Dr Kathian Hackshaw (San Vincent and Grenadines) (Chairperson) Dr Cristobal Arredondo (Cuba) (Rapporteur)
Technical Item II:	Dr Roxana Alvarez (Belize) (Chairperson) Dr Edilberto Brito (Colombia) (Rapporteur)

### **Empowering Veterinary Services, increasing visibility and modernising WOAHA to face animal health challenges**

11. Dr Emmanuelle Soubeyran, WOAHA Director General, addressed her first keynote speech to the Regional Commission for the Americas, “Empowering Veterinary Services, increasing visibility and modernising WOAHA to face animal health challenges”.
12. She began her presentation by reminding the Regional Commission of what WOAHA offers to its Members. She emphasised that although there is still work to be done, WOAHA is currently making progress and achieving significant improvements. Among the key points highlighted by the Director General were that:
  - WOAHA is the global leader in disease data collection and the development of animal health and zoonoses standards that enable early detection, control of pathogens and ensure safe international trade in animals and animal products, thereby supporting sustainable and safer animal health practices.
  - By officially recognising animal health status, WOAHA facilitates safe trade, increases economic opportunities, and improves access to regional and international markets.
  - WOAHA plays a vital role in sustainable economic growth, poverty alleviation, and food security by guiding and supporting the implementation of strategies aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals.

- As a key player in global health governance, WOAHA works with partners to address global health challenges, particularly through frameworks such as the Quadripartite and the GF-TADs.
  - The organisation is also dedicated to building the capacity of Veterinary Services through its PVS Pathway programme, and
  - With over 800 global experts and its collaboration with the Reference Centres, WOAHA develops and disseminates technical information and facilitates regional cooperation to improve global animal health.
13. Dr Soubeyran then highlighted the current challenges faced by WOAHA and its Members, such as the increasing burden of vector-borne diseases, current societal demands for environmentally sustainable practices in agriculture and food production to combat climate change and protect ecosystems, growing public concern about animal welfare, the prioritisation of transparency in food supply chains and ethically sourced products, which require responsible and humane production methods. In addition, there is a growing expectation of community involvement in decision-making processes related to agricultural, animal health and environmental policies, ensuring inclusivity and consideration of diverse perspectives. In this sense, the Director General recognised the importance of being aware of these challenges and clearly identifying them in order to efficiently adapt future actions.
14. The Director General then outlined the future actions that WOAHA will take to ensure that it is ready to respond to the needs of its Members. She emphasised that WOAHA is committed to ensuring that Veterinary Services can operate at optimum capacity and therefore the Organisation is ready to adapt quickly, adjust its activities and embrace new ideas and solutions by reviewing its governance, policies and activities to ensure relevant approaches to help Members meet current and future challenges.
15. She highlighted her three main priorities: increasing the visibility of the Organisation, strengthening the Veterinary Services and modernising WOAHA.
16. Dr Soubeyran concluded by asking Members to reconsider their current level of contribution to the Organisation as the future of WOAHA depends on sustainable and equitable funding and statutory contributions are the cornerstone of this foundation. She urged Members to increase their statutory contributions, where possible, to help WOAHA distribute its costs more fairly.
17. Main conclusions from Dr Soubeyran's presentation were as follows:
- WOAHA is deeply committed to serving each and every one of its Members. In order to do this effectively, it must have secure funding through its regular budget, to continue to meet its Members' needs, foster networks, and build capacity across all regions. Ensuring that WOAHA has the necessary resources to staff and support its activities is essential to maintaining its ability to respond to the challenges face by its Members.
  - Sustainable funding for WOAHA could be provided by increasing contributions from Members (both statutory contributions (by changing the category), and voluntary contributions). Also, through secondment of staff, and of course through extraordinary contributions by Members and through donors' support.
  - By increasing their statutory contributions to WOAHA's regular budget, Members enable WOAHA to support all regions equitably and expand its work in a sustainable way. This will allow the Organisation to focus on the specific needs of Members rather than the priorities of external funding partners.
  - There is an urgent need to increase the visibility of Veterinary Services, their leadership in animal health, the relevance of their work and of the importance of the Animal Health and WOAHA (including at national level) and the key role they all play in the global health.
  - There is also an urgent need to ensure that the voice of the Veterinary Services and the voice of WOAHA is heard at a global level in all key political fora.
  - VS need to be provided with the necessary resources allowing them to fulfil their mission.
  - The importance of ensuring cooperation within the region and between Members to better address current and future challenges. And also, cooperation between WOAHA and the

regional partners, each one a key actor with its own specific role, but all complementary in operationalising the OH concept.

- The need to better involve the Veterinary sector in the One Health agenda and to ensure cooperation of the public, animal and environmental sectors.
- The importance of fostering trust among Members and ensuring transparency, both of which are key to controlling animal diseases and ensuring safer trade.
- The need to translate the technical aspects of WOAHA into a more political language that can reach policy makers including Ministers of finance so that they can recognise the key role that animal health plays in global health and therefore provide the necessary financial resources.
- The need for targeted advocacy adapted to the interests of the different Members and to the subregional specificities.
- The need to actively involve Members in the preparation of the 8th Strategic plan.
- The need to find ways to better collaborate with the private sector, especially in the Americas, given the key role it plays in the region due, among others, to the fact that the region is a big exporter of animal products.
- The need to develop arguments based on economic data to convince ministers, governments in general, and donors that the cost of inaction is much higher than the cost of prevention and therefore, supporting the VS and engaging with WOAHA is vital for the future of our society, including as a driver of prosperity.
- The importance of regional and international organisations and the good coordination among them is something we must continue to promote in order to move forward and work well together.

### **Technical item I: Current scenario of critical veterinary products**

18. Technical Item I, entitled “*Current scenario of critical veterinary products*”, presented by Dr Barbara Borges Cordeiro, General Coordinator at the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock of Brazil, allowed the Regional Commission for the Americas to elaborate a recommendation in accordance with the WOAHA General Rules. Final recommendation available in Annex 2.

### **Host country presentation**

19. Ms Katherine Yépez, Coordinator of the Social Communication Unit of Agrocalidad – Ecuador, made a brief presentation regarding Ecuador’s experiences in crisis communication management.
20. She described the Avian Influenza crisis that Ecuador faced in 2022 and how Agrocalidad managed the situation to provide the better answer and support to affected parties, through a communication contingency plan. Among the main actions done in terms of communication, she explained that Agrocalidad officially notified the governing body, activated a crisis committee, ensured immediate information in the first hours, ensured that Agrocalidad was the first source for media and other audiences and segmented the audiences for a better national reach.
21. Ms Yépez highlighted that communication during crisis needs to be open, interactive, repetitive, transparent, timely and should include valuable information and data. Content should be of high impact with messages calling to keep the calm and build confidence for consumers and trust in laboratory testing results.
22. Finally, she highlighted the challenges that communication can face during a crisis, including difficulties in ensuring full coverage on the ground, pressure from political actors, producers and journalists, questioning of evidence and analysis, biased messages by political actors, denunciation by extremist and activist organisations, and speculation on prices and supplies availability.
23. Following Ms Yépez presentation, Dr Yahira Piedrahita, Executive Director of the National Chamber of Aquaculture took the floor to present the shrimp production industry and health

management activities in Ecuador.

24. Dr Piedrahita provided details about the shrimp production in Ecuador and its productive results. The shrimp is the second largest export product in Ecuador after oil and accounts for 5.3% of GDP.
25. She provided details of the challenges in production and how the country has addressed them, such as disease control, for which Ecuador ensures local sourcing of broodstock tolerant/ resistant to pathogens and uses Artificial Intelligence (AI) to assess the health of the animals. Dr Piedrahita explained that the Ecuadorian shrimp production model has shown that it is possible to maintain sustainable growth with a production model based on pathogen resistance/tolerance. She commented that the Infectious Hypodermal and Hematopoietic Necrosis Virus (IHHNV) remains a WOAHA-listed pathogen and that most importing country authorities do not allow the entry of live shrimp and even frozen products intended for human consumption, making IHHNV a non-tariff barrier that prevents access to important markets.
26. Dr Piedrahita concluded by calling for some consideration by the WOAHA to update the PCR methods listed in the Aquatic Manual as they cannot distinguish between live IHHNV and EVEs unless IHHNV sequencing is performed. She also mentioned that IHHNV does not currently meet criterion 4 for inclusion as a disease in the WOAHA List, so this also needs to be discussed.
27. The Regional Commission for the Americas welcomed the two interesting and informative presentations by Ecuador which highlighted the importance to invest in communication contingency plans to better manage situations of crisis mainly in the current era where public from all levels have access to social media and the need to create trust in the productive sector.

### **Aquatic Animal Health: The Challenge for the Americas**

28. Dr Alicia Gallardo, President of the Aquatic Animal Health Standards Commission, provided an update on the status of aquatic animal health in the region and the barriers to the implementation of aquatic animal health standards.
29. She began by reminding participants of the recommendations of the 4th Global Conference on Aquatic Animal Health, held in Chile in 2019. Among the recommendations, she highlighted the need to strengthen surveillance and reporting, and a call for the implementation of biosecurity measures and the promotion of responsible and prudent use of antimicrobials. The importance of ensuring the implementation of and compliance with WOAHA international standards for ensuring a sustainable aquaculture and the protection of both animal health and biodiversity was also highlighted in the recommendations.
30. Dr Gallardo also referred to the objectives of the WOAHA Aquatic Animal Health Strategy and provided details of the activities to be carried out to respond to Objective 4 of the Strategy (Leadership), which include the promotion of international partnership and active participation and use of WOAHA scientific networks and capacity building activities. She mentioned the key elements to ensure the health and welfare of aquatic animals in the regions and globally, which includes, among others, improving the management and better support to the authorities responsible for aquatic animals, which will support production and improve risk prevention in the aquatic sector.
31. Dr Gallardo gave details of the work carried out in support of the Aquatic Animal Health Strategy and the information available for Members. She also presented comparative figures on aquaculture production by species group and environment worldwide, in Latin America and the Caribbean. She commented on the barriers to the implementation of the WOAHA standards for aquatic animals, highlighting the need for capacity building, particularly in the areas of surveillance, risk prevention and disease prevention and control.

32. She then commented about the challenges for the Aquatic Animal Health in the region, which include needs in capacity building, climate change, innovation and use of technologies in production (including Artificial Intelligence), disease prevention (early diagnosis), vaccines, AMR, alternatives to antimicrobials, sustainability and One Health, among others.
33. She also mentioned the spread of antimicrobial resistance in aquaculture and the importance of the EcoAMR series of reports, which provides data on the economic burden of antimicrobial resistance in food-producing animals to inform responses and decision-making and to support more effective implementation of science-based national action plans. She also provided details on the proposal for a new chapter on the movement of ornamental aquatic animals.
34. Following Dr Gallardo's presentation, the Regional Commission noted the following key points:
  - The need to develop science-based standards, promote regional partnerships, including public-private partnerships and partnerships with academia.
  - The importance of promoting cooperation and collaboration at regional level to share experiences and best practices.
  - The importance of complementing the work of public authorities and the private sector with the work of the academia.
  - The importance of inviting the private sector to key regional meetings to engage them in discussions and foster collaboration.
  - The need to strengthen the capacity of the aquaculture sector in the region.

### **African Swine Fever and Avian Influenza: Main Challenges in the Americas**

35. Dr Jaime Romero, Vice-President of the Regional GF-TADs Steering Committee and Agricultural Health and Food Safety Specialist at IICA, delivered a presentation on the African Swine Fever (ASF) and Avian Influenza (AI) situation, as two of the priority diseases in the Americas.
36. Dr Romero presented main epidemiological highlights related to ASF and AI for the region.
37. He provided a context of the recommendations developed for the countries and organisations during the 18th Regional Steering Committee Meeting, the Second Meeting of GF-TADs Standing Group of Experts on Avian Influenza (SGE-AI), and the Fifth Meeting of GF-TADs Standing Group of Experts on African Swine Fever (SGE-ASF).
38. He briefly explained the global and regional situation for Classic Swine Fever (CSF) highlighting the main priorities and proposals for the Americas region.
39. He concluded by underlining that so far the main priorities for the region to be addressed under the GF-TADs umbrella are HPAI, ASF, CSF and Screwworm.
40. Following Dr Romero presentation, the Regional Commission underlined the following key points:
  - One of the main challenges in GF-TAD cooperation is to maintain cohesion, especially considering that in emergencies, where there is greater vulnerability, it is crucial to foster cooperation.
  - International and regional organisations are key to supporting and facilitating coordination at the regional level.
  - The exchange of best practices and experiences among Members remains key to improving the control and prevention of animal diseases.
  - The importance of socio-economic studies showing impact with figures is key to sensitise policy makers.
  - It is essential that WOA's Collaborating Centre for Animal Health Economics looks at ways to raise awareness in the region with studies that simulate the economic impact of disease.



- Public-private partnerships remain a key association in the region to support disease control and prevention.
- The GF-TADs initiative remains a key tool to facilitate cooperation and coordination in the region, facilitating collective action.
- Consideration of a collective contingency plan at sub-regional, regional or intergovernmental level could be of great value for the Region.

## **WEDNESDAY 27 NOVEMBER 2024**

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### **WAHIS: what has changed, and what is in it for you**

41. Dr Jenny Hutchison, Head of the World Animal Health Information and Analysis Department (WAHIAD), delivered a presentation on the latest enhancements of the World Animal Health Information System (WAHIS), and the reporting situation of Members from the Americas.
42. She provided a context of reporting of high pathogenicity avian influenza (HPAI) in the Americas to support a panel discussion on the use of WAHIS and reporting practices with particular emphasis on the use of stable events.
43. Five panellists (from Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Panama, and the United States of America) participated in the discussion. The following points can be drawn from the exchange between the panellists
  - WAHIS and its official information is important to support decision making, especially in relation to trade, but other sources of information (especially original sources) are also used.
  - It is challenging to report events with many outbreaks and multiple levels of detail, which can affect the timeliness of reporting.
  - Some panellists expressed concern that the declaration of events as stable could have adverse and unjustified effects on trade, and others mentioned the need for more information on the possibility and procedures for resolving stable events.
  - The need for WAHIS to accept bulk uploads and downloads of data was raised by several panellists.
  - Another request referred to the development of a mobile phone application to receive and consult immediate notification alerts.

### **Technical item II**

#### **New World screwworm (*Cochliomyia hominivorax*) and its economic impact on the affected countries**

44. Technical Item II, entitled “New World screwworm (*Cochliomyia hominivorax*) and its economic impact on the affected countries”, presented by Dr Köbrich Gruebler, Associate Professor at the University of Chile, prompted interesting discussions among participants, allowing the Regional Commission for the Americas to elaborate a recommendation in accordance with the WOAHP General Rules. Final recommendation available in Annex 3.



**WOAH Standards Setting Process panel discussion:  
Aquatic Code and Manual, Terrestrial Code and Manual**

45. The session was moderated by Dr Francisco D'Alessio, Deputy Head of WOAHS Standards Department, with active participation from the Delegates. It focused on the WOAHS standards setting process.
46. The panel included Dr Alicia Gallardo Lagno, President of the Aquatic Animals Commission (AAHSC), Prof Emmanuel Couacy-Hymann, President of the Biological Standards Commission (BSC), who participated virtually, and Dr Gaston Funes, Vice President of the Terrestrial Code Commission (TAHSC). The panellists provided an overview of the process for establishing the work programmes for the development and review of the Terrestrial Code, the Aquatic Code, the Terrestrial Manual and the Aquatic Manual. Participants were provided with the work programmes and priorities as circulated in the September 2024 reports of the Specialist Commissions.
47. The open discussion saw active participation from Delegates, who shared valuable perspectives on regional priorities, areas of interest and feedback for future consideration. While no decisions were taken, the contributions will serve as critical input for the upcoming sessions of the Specialist Commissions in February 2025. The meeting achieved its objective of fostering dialogue and gathering actionable insights to inform the continued refinement of WOAHS Standards.
48. Dr Luis Barcos, Regional Representative for the Americas, informed the Conference that on Monday 25 November, prior to the start of the Regional Commission meeting, the WOAHS Regional Representation for the Americas, in collaboration with the WOAHS Standards Department, Ecuador, and thank to the EU funding, organised the "Regional Workshop on WOAHS International Standards - Promoting Members Participation in the Standard-Setting Process".
49. He explained that the workshop aimed to strengthen support networks for Delegates by providing updates on key aspects of WOAHS standards and recent developments in the WOAHS standards-setting process. Dr Barcos noted that the event brought together 47 participants, including 17 Delegates, representatives from 25 countries, international organisations and the private sector. He highlighted the interactive format, which facilitated discussions on regional experiences and practical exercises to navigate the standard setting process. He also emphasised the importance of Members participation to ensure that standards are both scientifically robust and contextually relevant. Updates included the introduction of consistent procedures, standardised comment guides and the decision to publish responses to feedback.
50. Dr Barcos concluded that the workshop had generated valuable ideas for improving engagement that will guide future efforts at both regional and Headquarters levels, and invited participants to share their experiences and suggestions during the conference.
51. The Delegate of Chile thanked WOAHS for organising the workshop, which had promoted participation in the standard-setting process, and highlighted its transparency, inclusiveness and integrated approach to standards for both aquatic and terrestrial animals.
52. Chile presented key proposals to strengthen the process: (1) unify and simplify standard-setting communications to improve clarity, (2) develop a practical guide for Delegates with concrete steps for participation, (3) encourage private sector involvement from the outset to facilitate effective adoption of standards, and (4) promote the establishment of a single national focal point to coordinate and ensure continuous follow-up, engage experts and stakeholders, and prepare timely and effective comments to be submitted by the national Delegate. This focal point should receive specific training and sustainable funding through donor support. These initiatives aim to strengthen regional cooperation and the implementation of standards.

**WOAH Governance Review Committee**

53. Mr Rodney de Souza, Head of Legal Unit, and Ms Josephine Dooley, Senior Legal Officer, gave a presentation on the WOAHS Governance Review Committee (Committee), which was established under Resolution No. 12 of 2024 to carry out further work to revise the WOAHS Basic Texts.

54. They highlighted that the WOAHA Governance Review Committee would consider the external analysis of WOAHA's governance ([91GS/Adm-13](#)) and provide recommendations to the Assembly on reforms to WOAHA's technical, financial, institutional and regional governance and its legal framework. The Committee's draft work programme of its multi-year activities would be submitted to the Assembly for adoption at the 92nd General Session.
55. Mr de Souza emphasised that the Regional Commissions were responsible for identifying WOAHA Members to participate in the Committee to ensure its inclusiveness and representativity for all Members, and there would be ongoing consultations between the members of the Committee and the Regional Commissions on its work.

### **One Health: from theory to practice**

56. Dr Javier Yugueros Marcos, Head of WOAHA Antimicrobial Resistance and Veterinary Products Department, delivered a virtual presentation on the United Nations Political Declaration on AMR and its implementation timeline. This allowed the Regional Commission to note that addressing this critical issue is key to the credibility of the Veterinary Services and the animal health sector and that immediate action is essential to safeguard the future. The UN Political Declaration provides a powerful, actionable framework for prioritising animal health, strengthening Veterinary Services and mobilising resources. Within five years to act, Members have a huge responsibility to ensure a sustainable future for next generations.
57. Dr Gaston Funes, Vice-President of the Code Commission, provided details and explanations on the recently adopted Chapter on antimicrobial resistance. He highlighted some recommendations to Members, including: 1) to ensure that competent authorities are involved/contribute to the development and implementation of National Action Plans (NAPs) on antimicrobial resistance to ensure representation of the animal health sector, 2) to consider the inclusion of companion animals in NAPs, including through awareness campaigns and surveillance programmes, 3) to report AMR data for companion animals to WOAHA's ANIMUSE, 4) to consider the inclusion of animal-related environmental considerations in NAPs, and 5) to encourage farmers' organisations to work closely with veterinary organisations on guidelines for responsible Antimicrobial Use. Finally, he reminded that awareness materials on responsible Antimicrobial Use in companion animals are available in 4 languages.
58. Mrs Ellen van Nierop, Past President of the World Small Animal Veterinary Association (WSAVA), briefly commented on the key role of companion animals in the fight against antimicrobial resistance. She recalled that the Terrestrial Animal Health Code already includes companion animals in Chapter 6.10 and stressed that it is not enough to simply add "and companion animals" to existing laws and regulations, as they are different and require specific treatment. Therefore, she urged Members: 1) to ensure that the voice of all stakeholders, including companion animal practitioners, is heard in the development of the National Action Plan, 2) to consider that any profession that can prescribe antibiotics needs to have a thorough understanding of the issue of antimicrobial resistance and its management, which is key to ensuring that everyone is delivering the same message to the general public, 3) to ensure data collection from companion animal clinics, as it is important to guide and measure the success of National Action Plans against AMR.
59. Dr Martin Minassian, Technical Assistant of the Regional Representation moderated a panel discussion on the Quadripartite implementation of One Health. The animated discussion involved various stakeholders, including representatives of the Quadripartite, regional and subregional organisations, Members and industry associations. The session allowed the Regional Commission to highlight the importance of regional support to strengthen national actions on One Health, with emphasis on the critical role of the production sector, veterinarians, aquatic animal health professionals, academia and researchers in driving change and ensuring the operationalisation of the OH concept in the Americas.

**Wildlife framework: engaging discussions and collecting feedback  
for a wildlife strategy and health programme adapted to  
Members needs-Interactive Session**

60. Dr Claire Cayol, Project Manager for Wildlife Health Information, provided details regarding the Wildlife Health programme, its objectives and ways to achieve them.
61. She highlighted the development and review process of the WOAHP Wildlife Health Framework (WHF), which was designed to support wildlife health management as part of the One Health approach. WOAHP Members, through surveys and consultations, have actively contributed to shaping this framework, showing strong engagement. The WHF is a critical component of broader health surveillance systems, focusing on wildlife health throughout the supply chain.
62. Key milestones include the Members' consultations in 2020 and 2022–2023, with significant input from WOAHP Delegates and the adoption of Resolution #31 (2021 GS), which underscores the importance of wildlife health in achieving One Health resilience. Under the Wildlife Health Framework funded by 6 Members and the EU, collaborations were enhanced, guidelines were produced, data use was emphasised, training and capacity building were catalysed and multiple communication tools were produced.
63. Finally, she informed that WOAHP was preparing the next phase of the Wildlife Health programme [2026-2030], involving the review of the strategy, the development of a Logic model, and the analysis of the achievements of the implementation programme.
64. She underlined that Members' opinions and priorities will be key to guide the next Wildlife Health Strategy ensuring that the framework remains aligned with Members' needs and effectively supports wildlife health and surveillance efforts globally.
65. Finally, Dr Cayol invited Delegates to provide input in real-time on the impact of the current WHF and areas of interest for the future WOAHP wildlife health program using an interactive presentation tool. These data, combined with feedback from Delegates from other WOAHP Regions will inform the next WOAHP Wildlife health strategy development.

**Discussion of Recommendations**

66. Dr Emmanuelle Soubeyran presented draft Recommendations 1 and 2 on the two Technical Items of the Conference to Delegates for discussion. Both draft recommendations will be submitted for adoption at the Friday session with amendments as per participants' suggestions and discussions.
67. Following adoption by the Regional Commission, the Recommendations will be submitted for endorsement by the World Assembly of Delegates in May 2025. Once endorsed by the Assembly, they will serve as an important guideline for Members of the Regional Commission for the Americas, as well as for the Organisation as a whole.

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**THURSDAY 28 NOVEMBER 2024**

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**Cultural visit**

68. Participants greatly appreciated the cultural visit organised for the day by the host country. Sincere thanks were expressed to the organisers for their warm welcome and hospitality.
69. The day-long activities provided a unique opportunity for all participants to share knowledge and gain a deeper understanding of the rich cultural and historical heritage of Ecuador. It also provided networking opportunities among the Regional Commission Members and key WOAHP partners.

## **FRIDAY 29 NOVEMBER 2024**

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### **The New Standards Navigation tool**

70. Dr Francisco D'Alessio, Deputy Head of the WOAAH Standards Department, quickly commented on the new WOAAH Standards Navigation Tool, which should be launched soon.
71. He explained that this new tool is in line with the 7th Strategic Plan Framework, as it is in line with the objectives of digital transformation and innovation, strengthening global health security, and using technology to support Members.
72. Dr D'Alessio explained that the tool will provide a single point of access to WOAAH standards with an intuitive search and filter system for easy navigation of WOAAH's terrestrial and aquatic codes and manuals. It will allow users to visualise recommendations for safe international trade by commodity. And, in the case of WOAAH internal use, it will provide a dedicated platform to centralise and efficiently manage and update WOAAH International Standards following the adoption of new or revised texts by the WOAAH General Assembly.
73. He also commented that this tool offers potential for future integration with other WOAAH tools to enhance data usage and cross-referencing of standards data with other organisational platforms. It will also open up new opportunities for data analysis and insight, allowing long inaccessible data to be used to improve understanding and standardisation of data elements within the standards.
74. The Regional Commission welcomed the progress made by WOAAH to facilitate the Standards navigation making them more accessible and manageable.

### **The PVS Information System (PVS IS): Objectives, access to, and use of PVS data**

75. Ms Jennifer Lasley, Senior Programme Coordinator of WOAAH Capacity Building Department, provided all the conference participants with a training session on how to use PVS data in the PVS IS and evidence to defend investment cases for VS and act on PVS recommendations made so that the VS can provide billions of people with access to key services they lack to impact their livelihoods and improve animal health and welfare.
76. Delegates used PVS data, insights, and dashboards contained in the PVS IS to complete interactive exercises that helped them to discover how relevant data can be found, analysed, presented and to exploit the PVS IS to develop investment cases and strategic plans for performance maintenance and improvement
77. After the hands-on experience, Delegates concluded that failure to create attractive investment cases can be a bottleneck for investment in VS and that evidence-based investment cases are key to meeting infrastructure and service gaps in the Veterinary Services to inspire confidence among investors, demonstrate financial viability, and promote accountability and transparency.

### **Plan of activities of the Regional Representation**

78. Dr Luis Barcos, Regional Representative for the Americas, briefly summarised the activities foreseen for the forthcoming year including activities related to the preparation of the General Session, Regional Core Group activities, GF TADs relevant activities, key regional meetings, and partners relevant meetings.

### **Conference conclusions and Adoption of Recommendations**

79. Dr Emmanuelle Soubeyran presented the Recommendation to the Delegates, including all the comments made during the discussion session. She explained the procedures for the adoption of recommendations, stressing that they must be adopted during the current session and cannot be amended subsequently, only editing being accepted.
80. The two draft recommendations were unanimously adopted with a small last amendment done and will be published along with the final report.
81. Dr Soubeyran then summarised the main conclusions of the conference, in which visibility, resources, cooperation and transparency were highlighted as essential elements to ensure sustainability and responsiveness of all actions related to animal health and welfare.
82. The Director General mentioned that the interactive and fruitful exchanges during the week had enabled her to better understand the needs and challenges of Members in the region, which would be key in adapting the Organisation's activities and shaping its future strategies. She hoped that the week's discussions would also enable Members to understand the need for active engagement with WOA, including in terms of financial sustainability.
83. She noted that there was a good balance between presentations and interaction with participants, allowing for lively discussions and interesting exchanges. The various bilateral meetings organised with Members, Regional Economic Communities and partners allowed for important discussions on challenges and expectations and provided a very good overview of specific needs and expectations that can feed into the region's programming. The Recommendations will also support the implementation of activities at the regional level over the next two years, with a view to presenting progress on implementation at the next Regional Conference.

### **Proposal of date and venue of the 28th Conference of the Regional Commission**

84. The Vice President of the Regional Commission asked the Delegates present if any of them wished to host the 28th Conference of the Regional Commission for the Americas in 2026.
85. The Delegate of Jamaica mentioned that he would like to propose his own country to host the next Conference but internal discussions with his authorities were needed before making an official proposal.
86. The Delegate of Paraguay also expressed the interest of his country to host the next Conference.
87. The Regional Commission welcomed Jamaica and Paraguay's proposal to host the next Conference.
88. The proposals will be discussed during the next Regional Core Group meeting, and will be confirmed at the Regional Commission meeting in May 2025 and submitted to the World Assembly of Delegates for formal endorsement.
89. Exact dates will then be decided in consultation with WOA Director General.

### **Closing ceremony**

90. Dr Emmanuelle Soubeyran thanked and congratulated Ecuador for being an excellent host and for the warm welcome accorded to the participants, making their stay in Quito pleasant and memorable allowing participants to go back with great memories of the Conference. She mentioned that it has been an interesting week of shared ideas, meaningful discussions and collective efforts to improve animal health, animal welfare and food safety in animal production in the Region.
91. She particularly thanked Mr Danilo Palacios, Minister of Agriculture and Livestock of Ecuador, and Mr Esteban del Hierro, Vice-Minister of Agricultural Productive Development, for their

leadership and support of the country's ongoing efforts to protect animal health including the great support provided to organisation of the Conference which was key for its success.

92. Dr Soubeyran also expressed her sincere gratitude to Mr Patricio Almeida, Executive Director of Agrocalidad and WOAHA Delegate of Ecuador, and Mr Christian Zambrano, Animal Health Coordinator of Agrocalidad for hosting this very important event for the region, for the warm welcome provided to her and to all the participants during these days and for the great collaboration with WOAHA team and all the efforts they have made to ensure the success of the Conference.
93. She thanked everyone who had made this conference a success, the speakers, the Delegates, the interpreters, and all WOAHA team.
94. Finally, she reiterated that WOAHA will continue to work to ensure that its programmes remain relevant and responsive to the expectations of its Members, and reminded everyone that feedback from Delegates is vital to WOAHA in order to ensure that it is better able to respond to the needs of its Members.
95. She wished all participants a safe trip back home.
96. Mr Christian Zambrano, Animal Health Coordinator of Agrocalidad, on behalf of his Government and himself, thanked all participants for their active participation in the week's discussions and activities, the speakers, the local organisers and the WOAHA team for the productive conference. He wished the participants a safe journey home and hoped that they would have enjoyed their stay in Quito.
97. The Conference was officially closed at 12:30 p.m.



**World Organisation  
for Animal Health**  
Founded as OIE

**27th Conference of the Regional Commission for the Americas**  
Quito, Ecuador, from 25 to 29 November 2024

**PROGRAMME**

**MONDAY 25 NOVEMBER 2024**

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9:00 a.m. to 06:00 p.m.      Training on Standards  
(address to the contact points for standards of the Members of the region)  
Arrival of participants

**TUESDAY 26 NOVEMBER 2024**

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9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.      Distribution of Conference materials

10:00 a.m.      Opening ceremony

11:00 a.m.      Break /Group Photo/Open posters session

11:30 a.m.      Approval of the Programme  
Appointment of the Conference Committee  
(Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, General Rapporteur)  
Appointment of session chairpersons and rapporteurs  
(Technical items)

11:40 a.m.      Empowering Veterinary Services, increasing visibility and modernising WOA to face animal health challenges (Dr Emmanuelle Soubeyran, WOA Director General)

12:10 p.m.      Discussion

12:40 p.m.      Lunch break

2:00 p.m.      Technical Item I: Current scenario of critical veterinary products (Dr Barbara Borges Cordeiro, General Coordinator, Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, Brazil)

2:30 p.m.      Discussion

3:00 p.m.      Experiences in crisis communication (Ms Katherine Yépez, Ecuador)

3:15 p.m.      Shrimp production and health activities (Dr Yahaira Piedrahita, Executive Director of the National Chamber of Aquaculture, Ecuador)

3:30 p.m.      Discussion

3:45 p.m.      Break  
*Preparation of Recommendation No. 1 by designated small group*



4:15 p.m.	Aquatic animal health the Challenge for the Americas (Dr Alicia Gallardo, President of the Aquatic Animal Health Standards Commission)
4:35 p.m.	Discussion
5:00 p.m.	African swine fever and Avian Influenza: Main challenges in the Americas (Dr Jaime Romero, IICA)
5:30 p.m.	Discussion
6.00 p.m.	End of the day
7:00 p.m.	Official dinner hosted by Ecuador

### **WEDNESDAY 27 NOVEMBER 2024**

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8:45 a.m.	WAHIS: what has changed, and what is in it for you (presentation and panel discussion) (Dr Jenny Hutchison, Head of WOAHP World Animal Health Information and Analysis Department)
9:45 a.m.	Technical item II: New World screwworm ( <i>Cochliomyia hominivorax</i> ) and its economic impact on the affected countries (Dr Claus Köbrich Gruebler, Associate Professor, University of Chile)
10:15 a.m.	Discussion
10:45 a.m.	Break <i>Preparation of Recommendation No. 2 by designated small group</i>
11:15 a.m.	WOAH Standards Setting Process panel discussion: Aquatic Code and Manual, Terrestrial Code and Manual and feedback on the standards training (Speakers: Members of the Specialist Commissions) (Facilitator: Dr Francisco D'Alessio, Deputy Head Standards Department)
11:45 a.m.	Discussion
12:15 p.m.	WOAH Governance Review Committee (Mr Rodney de Souza, Head of WOAHP Legal Affairs Unit and Ms Josephine Dooley, Senior Legal Officer)
1:00 p.m.	Lunch
2:00 p.m.	One Health: from theory to practice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quadripartite secretariat and panel discussion on quadripartite implementation at regional level (PAHO, UNEP, WOAHP, FAO)</li> <li>• Update of AMR (implementation of the recently adopted Chapter) (Dr Gaston Funes, Vice President of the Code Commission)</li> <li>• WSAVA 's intervention (Ms Ellen van Nierop)</li> <li>• UNGA political declaration on AMR and Forecasting the Fallout from AMR: Economic Impacts of Antimicrobial Resistance in Food-Producing Animals (Dr Javier Yugueros Marcos, Head of WOAHP Antimicrobial Resistance and Veterinary Products Department)</li> </ul>
4:00 p.m.	Wildlife framework: engaging discussions and collecting feedback for a wildlife strategy and health programme adapted to Members needs-Interactive Session (Dr Claire Cayol, Project Manager, WOAHP Wildlife Health Information Systems)
5:00 p.m.	Break

- 5:30 p.m.        Discussion of the proposed Recommendations Nos 1 and 2
- 6:30 p.m.        End of the day
- 7:30 p.m.        Official dinner hosted by WOA

#### **THURSDAY 28 NOVEMBER 2024**

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Cultural visit organised by Ecuador

#### **FRIDAY 29 NOVEMBER 2024**

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- 08:30 a.m.        The New WOA Standards Navigation tool (interactive session) (Dr Francisco D'Alessio)
- 9:00 a.m.        The PVS Information System: Objectives, access to, and use of PVS data (Ms Jennifer Lasley, Senior Programme Coordinator, WOA Capacity Building Department)
- 10:30 a.m.        Break
- 11:00 a.m.        Plan of activities of the Regional Representation (Dr Luis Barcos, Regional Representative for the Americas)
- 11:30 a.m.        Discussion
- 12:00 p.m.        Conference conclusions and Adoption of Recommendations
- 12:30 p.m.        Proposal of date and venue of the 28th Conference of the Regional Commission
- 12:45 a.m.        Closing ceremony
- 1:00 p.m.        End of the Conference/Lunch



Recommendation 1

**Current scenario of critical veterinary products**

CONSIDERING THAT:

1. Veterinary products play a key role in the prevention and control of animal diseases;
2. Access to Veterinary products is essential for both animal health and welfare, influencing and having an impact on “One Health” results, including the fight against antimicrobial resistance;
3. According to Chapter 6.10 on *Responsible and prudent use of antimicrobial agents in veterinary medicine* of the *Terrestrial Animal Health Code*, Veterinary Authorities should promote the availability of authorised antimicrobial products on the market in collaboration with the veterinary pharmaceutical industry to follow-up any potential products shortages;
4. According to the same Chapter, the pharmaceutical industry should endeavour to ensure that authorised antimicrobial products are available and cooperate with the Competent Authority to forecast and avoid any shortages;
5. Ensuring that everybody has a role to play in the availability of critical veterinary products. This includes the national Competent Authorities, the veterinary pharmaceutical industry and their international associations, the wholesale and retail distributors, the veterinarians, and the breeders, owners and keepers of animals;
6. Veterinary product shortages may cause negative impacts on animal health and welfare, public health and even food production chains;
7. There is no harmonised definition of critical or essential veterinary products, besides specific initiatives such as the *WOAH List of antimicrobial agents of veterinary importance* and the *List of essential medicines for food producing animals* developed by Brooke and the World Veterinary Association (WVA);
8. It is important to identify the causes and impact of essential or critical veterinary product shortages to define effective measures to prevent and solve the lack of availability;
9. In most Members of the Regional Commission for the Americas, no plans or programmes were identified either to define and study the causes of shortages or to implement measures to avoid essential or critical veterinary product shortages.

THE REGIONAL COMMISSION FOR THE AMERICAS

RECOMMENDS THAT:

THE VETERINARY AUTHORITIES OF THE MEMBERS:

1. Draw up a list of essential or critical veterinary products taking into consideration existing lists defined by international organisations, including the *List of antimicrobial agents of veterinary importance* compiled by WOAHP and the WVA/Brooke *List of essential medicines for food producing animals*, as well as the epidemiological characteristics of the country itself, ensuring that such document is continually updated;
2. Design an action programme including measures to prevent, combat and mitigate shortages of essential or critical veterinary product shortages;
3. Involve all the relevant actors in the veterinary products manufacturing and distribution chain, as well as veterinary professionals and society in the development and implementation of such a programme;
4. Participate and promote in the existing initiatives aiming for the harmonisation of technical requirements for the registration of veterinary products including the International Cooperation on Harmonisation of Technical Requirements for Registration of Veterinary Medicinal Products (VICH) and the Americas Committee for Veterinary Products (CAMEVET). Collaborative actions should be directed to reduce regulatory barriers;
5. Create a task force or working group to identify and assess all aspects related to essential product shortages, including the characterisation of the shortages, the definition of the causes and their impact;
6. Establish communication mechanisms with information exchanges on critical products shortages between the regulatory authorities and private sector companies such as manufacturers, importers, distributors and marketers, so that a critical veterinary product stockout risk assessment system can be introduced;
7. Establish contingency measures for shortage crisis situations, evaluating the adoption of procedures such as import and use authorisations in emergency situations, the use of inputs whose manufacture may have been suspended because of failures in Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) or the lengthening of product shelf lives, always as part of a risk-benefit approach;
8. Promote incentives through formal recognition of companies that operate highly efficient quality systems;
9. Foster improving quality systems to avoid the risk of product supply disruptions.
10. Advocate for the development of policies and regulatory frameworks that support access to innovative veterinary products.

WOAH:

1. Develop guidelines to assist Members in defining critical or essential veterinary products, adapted to the needs and specificities of each country, in particular some relevant criteria that countries should take into account when drawing up their own list of essential or critical veterinary products;
2. Promote cooperation and harmonisation of technical requirements between countries in cases of shortages of veterinary medicine in all situations, including crisis, through the National Focal Points for Veterinary Products;
3. Facilitate discussion platforms to enable solidarity-based cooperation with countries facing shortages of essential veterinary products and restrictions on their supply, particularly in crisis situations.



Recommendation 2

**New World screwworm (*Cochliomyia hominivorax*)  
and its economic impact on the affected countries**

CONSIDERING THAT:

1. Globalisation of trade, increased movement of people and animals, climate change and other environmental and socio-economic factors, as well as the lack of awareness, contribute to the global spread of pathogens and vectors;
2. Besides being a zoonosis, the New World screwworm (NWS) generates significant economic losses in livestock farming, due to inadequate husbandry practices affecting animals;
3. The disease affects farm, companion animals, and wildlife, being a threat to biodiversity and also affecting the human population;
4. The decision to implement preventive and curative treatments, control, eradication programmes or temporary control measures depends not only on the immediate cost-benefit analysis but also on the evaluation of the long-term consequences in terms of competitiveness and sustainability of livestock farming in the affected regions;
5. The development of socio-economic studies to support the definition of disease control and eradication measures requires epidemiological data as a scientific basis for policy decisions;
6. The NWS, which was successfully eradicated in Central America through a strategy based on epidemiological surveillance, education and the environmental dispersal of sterile flies, managed to cross the barrier established by the Panama - United States Commission for the Eradication and Prevention of Screwworm (COPEG), progressively affecting animals in Panama, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Honduras and Guatemala, and being detected in Mexico;
7. The response of countries and individuals to any threat or danger is related to their perception of the level of actual or potential losses, the risk to which they are exposed and the possibilities they have to reduce, avoid or mitigate it;
8. Prevention, control and eradication of the NWS is possible through close collaboration between public and private sectors;
9. The best prevention and control strategy relies on promoting epidemiological surveillance to ensure early detection and monitoring of outbreaks, the dispersal of sterile flies, education, promoting coordination among farmers, veterinarians, physicians, national and local competent authorities, and national animal health programmes to foster the flow of epidemiological information under a OH approach.

## THE REGIONAL COMMISSION FOR THE AMERICAS

### RECOMMENDS THAT:

#### WOAH:

1. Promote notification of disease outbreaks and the prevalence of NWS in endemic areas to provide accurate epidemiological information enabling decision-making for the prevention, control and eradication of the disease;
2. Promote collaborative work among countries in the region, with the participation of the private sector, with the aim of reducing the risk of outbreak spreading as well as reducing the impact of outbreaks when they occur;
3. Support the development of methodologies and tools to estimate the economic impact of NWS infestation in countries where it is present and in those still free;
4. Coordinate the actions of all international, regional and sub-regional organisations under the umbrella of the GF-TADs;
5. Prioritise the revision of the current Chapter on NSW in the Terrestrial Code.

#### WOAH MEMBERS:

6. Promote coordinated regional efforts to implement prevention and control measures, including surveillance as well as training, awareness-raising and good livestock practices.
7. Maintain a state of alertness and prevention on NWS consistent with the situation in neighbouring countries and the geographical spread in affected areas;
8. Develop community information and education programmes consistent with the epidemiological risk of NWS for animals and the human population;
9. Work in coordination with the Ministries of Health and Environment on the prevention and control of cases in the human population;
10. Increase the production capacity of sterile flies.

#### AFFECTED MEMBERS:

11. Implement a national control and eradication programme, as appropriate, based on epidemiological surveillance, education, good zootechnical practices, and the use of sterile insect technique (SIT) and its efficacy evaluation, combined with a robust epidemiological surveillance system and biosecurity measures.

#### THE VETERINARY AUTHORITIES OF MEMBERS:

12. Work on strengthening their capacities to monitor and track fly populations and animals affected by NWS. To that effect, it is important to apply animal health economics concepts to prioritise activities according to their economic and social impact;
13. Implement public-private partnership and financing strategies for monitoring, control or eradication as appropriate, with a design using economic principles to define and share responsibilities between public and private sectors, including financing and compensation mechanisms.