

JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME
CODEX COMMITTEE ON FOOD IMPORT AND EXPORT INSPECTION
AND CERTIFICATION SYSTEMS

Twenty-third Session

ACTIVITIES OF FAO AND WHO AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS
RELEVANT TO THE WORK OF CCFICS

(Report of OIE)

OIE Contribution to the 22nd Session of the Codex Committee on Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems

The World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) thanks the Codex Alimentarius Commission and the Codex Committee on Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems (CCFICS) for the opportunity to contribute to its standards development process.

A collaborative approach by OIE and Codex to standard-setting on certain key topics is important to ensure harmonisation of standards and recommendations, when relevant, while avoiding duplication of effort, overlap and gaps in standard setting work.

General information

The OIE continues its global initiative to support Member Countries wishing to strengthen Veterinary Services and Aquatic Animal Health Services (AAHS) using the OIE PVS Pathway. At the specific request of an OIE Member Country, the OIE conducts assessments of the quality of Veterinary Services and Aquatic Animal Health Services using the OIE PVS Tool. Subsequent steps in the PVS Pathway include PVS Gap Analysis, specific capacity building projects and programmes for veterinary legislation, laboratories, education, etc. and PVS follow up missions, to help improve compliance of the Veterinary Services with the OIE standards set out in the *Terrestrial* and *Aquatic Codes*.

The PVS Tool involves the assessment of 47 Critical Competencies, and specifically addresses food safety under the critical competencies for establishments that produce, process and distribute food of animal origin; ante- and post mortem inspection; food processing premises and the certification of animal products for trade.

In the most recent edition of the OIE Tool for the Evaluation of Performance of Veterinary Services (2013) the critical competency on food safety was expanded to include points that address the standards of food producing premises. The first edition of the PVS Tool: Aquatic specifically for the evaluation of Aquatic Animal Health Services was also published in 2013, and again includes a critical competency on food safety.

Over 136 Member Countries actively engaged via requesting an OIE PVS Evaluation mission, with over 100 of those also requesting the next step of an OIE PVS Gap Analysis mission, and nearly 50 requesting a second round through a PVS Evaluation Follow-up mission.

Contrary to a prevailing myth that the PVS Pathway was only suitable for developing countries, recent years have seen interest and full, active engagement from highly developed nations including Australia (OIE PVS Evaluation mission in 2015), Japan (OIE PVS Evaluation mission in 2016) and Canada (OIE PVS Evaluation mission in 2017). This is all firmly aligned with OIE's core mission of improving animal health and welfare around the world.

In 2017, the OIE is also planning a review of its flagship PVS Pathway programme to ensure that it continues to evolve to best serve the needs of its Member Countries and to set directions for an even brighter PVS Pathway future.

Relevant information may be found at: <http://www.oie.int/en/support-to-oie-members/pvs-evaluations/status-of-missions/>

Current work of CCFICS

The OIE continues to follow the work of CCFICS, in particular the 'Draft guidance for monitoring the performance of national food control systems', and the discussions on the use of electronic certificates by

competent authorities and migration to paperless certification as well as the development of guidance on the use of systems equivalence.

Electronic certification

The OIE notes that the IPPC have recently initiated their own efforts in the area of e-certification and has become a member of the Project Advisory Committee of IPPC's STDF project titled 'An ePhyto Solution: Enhancing safe trade in plants and plant products through innovation'. The Terrestrial and Aquatic Animal Health Codes of the OIE both include a chapter 5.2. 'Certification procedures' that contains a substantially identical article titled 'Electronic certification.' The relevant article in these chapters was reviewed in 2014. The OIE is presently undertaking preliminary work to collate activities currently being undertaken by relevant international organisations and certain countries regarding e-certification, but has no immediate plan to review Chapter 5.2 of the two Codes.

Role of Veterinary Services in Food Safety

A new draft Chapter 6.1., "The role of veterinary services in food safety", has been circulated to OIE Member Countries for comments. The purpose of this chapter is to provide guidance to Member Countries on the role and responsibilities of Veterinary Services in food safety systems and is cross-referenced to appropriate Codex texts such as the Principles and Guidelines for National Food Control Systems (CAC/GL 82-2013), General Principles of Food Hygiene (CAC/RCP 1-1969), Code of Hygienic Practice for Meat (CAC/RCP 58-2005), Code of Practice on Good Animal Feeding (CAC/RCP 54-2004), and Guidelines for the Design and Implementation of National Regulatory Food Safety Assurance Programmes Associated with the Use of Veterinary Drugs in Food Producing Animals (CAC/GL 71-2009).

WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement

Implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement will focus attention on the performance of border agencies, including those responsible for assessing adequacy of SPS certificates and documentation accompanying traded animals and animal products.

The OIE is aware of examples that illustrate room for performance improvement in this area, and expects to see further attention to measurement of consignment compliance with certification requirements, and efficiency of resolution of non-compliances by the relevant authorities. We also recognise that effective prevention of fraud associated with trade in animal products, veterinary medicines, bioterrorism, and smuggling endangered species all depend on strong collaboration between the government agencies responsible for effective and efficient certification of traded animals and animal products.

The OIE continues to actively develop its relationship with the World Customs Organisation (WCO) at the global and regional level. The WCO and its Members are actively exploring the implementation of obligations arising from the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement, which has a close interaction with the WTO Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) and Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) Agreements. The OIE and WCO will hold a pilot workshop to facilitate engagement between national authorities for customs and veterinary services amongst regional trading partners. The workshop will be held in Argentina from 29 May to 2 June 2017.

Harmonisation of OIE and Codex approaches to standard setting in the food production continuum

The OIE and the Codex Alimentarius Commission are two of the three international standard setting organizations recognised under the World Trade Organization (WTO) SPS Agreement. In this context, the OIE is responsible for setting standards on animal health (including zoonotic diseases) and the CAC on food safety. For food products of animal origin, hazards to human health may arise at the farm or at any subsequent stage in the food production continuum. Since 2001, at the request of its Members, the OIE mandate has included setting standards for animal production food safety, i.e. the management of risks arising from the level of the farm to primary processing.

The permanent Working Group on Animal Production Food Safety, established by the Director General in 2002, held its sixteenth meeting in December 2016. The Animal Production Food Safety Working Group has, since its establishment, made a significant contribution to the development of a strong working relationship with Codex and the development of standards that, when implemented, ensure the production of safe food of animal origin. The work on animal production food safety benefits from cooperation between the OIE, the FAO and WHO, which provide additional expert advice and expertise in regard to food safety, food borne zoonotic diseases and related issues,

In 2016 the OIE undertook a review of its permanent working groups and as a result of that review it considers that the work in relation to animal production food safety is now fully integrated into the work of the OIE, such that the OIE is proposing to the forthcoming session of the General Assembly that the mandate of the Working Group on Animal Production Food Safety not be renewed after May 2017. However, to preserve the need for ongoing collaboration, it has been agreed to establish an inter-agency coordination group with representatives from FAO, WHO, OIE and the Codex Secretariat under the FAO/OIE/WHO Tripartite agreement. The purpose

of this group will be to ensure ongoing collaboration and coordination between FAO/WHO/OIE and Codex in regard to international food safety standard setting.

Through this mechanism and through participation in each other's standard setting procedures, the OIE and Codex will continue to collaborate closely in the development of standards relevant to the whole food production continuum, taking care to avoid gaps, duplications and contradictions in the SPS standards of these two WTO reference organisations. OIE Members strongly support this collaboration.

Collaboration between OIE and Codex should not occur uniquely at the international level. The OIE actively encourages its national Delegates to collaborate with their national delegations to Codex to ensure, at national level, alignment of their national approach to relevant standards under development by the OIE and Codex.

The OIE will continue to address food safety-related issues as a high priority in its standard-setting work and will work closely with Codex and its Committees, and with other international bodies in promoting safe international trade in animals and animal products.