

PACE Programme: 11th Advisory Committee Meeting

17-19 October 2005

Nairobi, Kenya

Advisory Committee Members present:

Chairman: Dr B. Vallat (OIE¹)

Secretary: Dr D. Sibartie (OIE)

Members: Dr M. Traore (AU/IBAR²)

Mr O. Moller (EC, Nairobi)

Dr T. Barrett, (IAH/ WRL³ for Rinderpest, Pirbright)

Dr A. Diallo (FAO⁴-IAEA⁵)

Dr W. Amanfu (FAO-AGAH.⁶)

Mr J. F. Renard (CIRAD/EMVT⁷ WRL for CBPP⁸)

The Advisory Committee (AC) of the Pan African Programme for the Control of Epizootics (PACE) met from 17 to 19 October 2005 in Nairobi, Kenya.

Presentations were made by the PACE personnel, their collaborators and some National PACE Coordinators as follows:

- Progress in the implementation of PACE Programme (PACE Coordination Unit),
- Assessment of national epidemio-surveillance networks (Epidemiology Unit),
- Case study on costs-benefits and sustainability of epidemio-surveillance systems in Benin, Senegal, Ghana, Uganda, Tanzania and Mauritania (Epidemiology Unit),
- Current situation of rinderpest eradication in PACE Member Countries: Specific case of Somali ecosystem (Epidemiology Unit),
- Progress report on peste des petits ruminants (PPR) vaccine trials (Muguga, KARI),
- Establishment of Sustainable Animal Resources information network in PACE Member Countries (Information& Communication Unit),
- PACE Financial Unit Progress Unit (Finance Unit),

¹ OIE: World Organisation for Animal Health

² AU/IBAR: AfricanUnion/Interafrican Bureau for Animal Resources

³ IAH/WRL: Institute for Animal Health/World Reference Laboratory

⁴ FAO: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

⁵ IAEA: International Atomic Energy Agency

⁶ AGAH: Animal Health Service

⁷ CIRAD/EMVT: Centre de Coopération Internationale en Recherche Agronomique pour le Développement/Elevage et Médecine Vétérinaire des Pays Tropicaux.

⁸ CBPP: Contagious bovine pleuropneumonia

- Progress achievements and lessons learnt in PACE National Components (National coordinators of the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Guinea Bissau and Kenya)
- Progress in the implementation of the Somali Animal Health Services Project (SAHSP)
- Concept note on the consolidation of PACE achievements (PACE Coordination Unit)

The AC expressed appreciation for the high quality of presentations by the staff of AU/IBAR, their collaborators and the National PACE Coordinators. The AC also complimented Dr René Bessin for a clear description of the follow up actions of the PACE Programme.

The AC recognises that after a difficult start, the PACE Programme is now progressing satisfactorily. The overall approach to coordination and evaluation at an African level of the national epidemiological systems is appreciated. The AC also welcomes the importance given to national components of the programme as illustrated by the invitations and presentations of five National Coordinators. It is hoped that the same approach will be adopted for forthcoming AC meetings. The AC also appreciates the quality of posters displayed during the meeting.

The AC discussed various issues raised and made the following recommendations:

1. Future of the PACE Programme

The AC notes that the extension phase of the PACE Programme will come to an end in about a year's time and is concerned that all the objectives of PACE may be difficult to achieve despite significant progress made under the PACE Programme especially during the past two years. It is anticipated that the effective control of major animal diseases will remain an important issue in Africa. However, the AC believes that the current international situation regarding highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI), the ability of the causal agent to spread to all continents including Africa as well as its potential to cause a human pandemic should be a cause of deep concern not only to the international scientific community but also to all Governments, Regional and International Organisations and Donors. The AC also takes into consideration that Africa is one of the least prepared of all continents to face outbreaks of avian influenza.

In this context, the AC recognises the significant importance to Africa of the Meeting of Ministers responsible for livestock to be held in Kigali, Rwanda in October/November 2005 and recommends that AU/IBAR submit a strong persuasive document to the Ministers detailing firm recommendations on the continent-wide initiatives consolidating and enhancing the achievements of PACE. The document will be drafted with the support of AC members and will outline the importance of the Veterinary Services in their role in the early detection and rapid response to outbreaks of major transboundary animal diseases and the necessity to provide these services with adequate resources in order to enable them to comply with OIE international standards on quality of Veterinary Services and disease surveillance and control methods. This will assist countries in protecting animal and human health (including food safety) and also to boost animal production and improve market access to alleviate poverty in Africa. The recommendation should also mention that the current initiatives such as Alive and the joint FAO/OIE Framework for the Progressive control of transboundary animal diseases (GF-TADs) will be essential to

support Africa in the control of animal diseases. In this context, the PACE programme will play a key role in the implementation of technical projects for which urgent additional funding is required to ensure sustainability of current achievements and future emergency actions. The progress report to ministers by the Director of AU/IBAR will include conclusions already adopted during various meetings particularly the symposium on HPAI organised by AU/IBAR in September 2005, the meeting of the 5th Executive Committee of Alive and the conclusions of OIE Regional Commission meeting in Khartoum, Sudan. The outcome of the Kigali meeting will be communicated by AU/IBAR during the WHO/FAO/OIE/World Bank Conference on avian flu in Geneva, Switzerland to be held from 7 to 9 November 2005. This will also be urgently communicated to the European Commission.

2. Evaluation of country dossiers by the OIE for freedom from rinderpest

The AC notes that five PACE Member Countries were unable to submit their dossiers in time for evaluation for rinderpest freedom by the OIE Ad hoc Group of experts but acknowledges that these countries are now quite advanced in the preparation of their dossiers.

Taking into account that the recommendations of the Ad hoc Group will only be examined by the OIE Scientific Commission for Animal Diseases (Scientific Commission) in January 2006 and that the dossiers may be evaluated electronically by members of the Ad hoc Group and their recommendations submitted to the Scientific Commission, the AC recommends that the OIE Director General request the Scientific Commission to accept an electronic evaluation of these dossiers provided all documents are received electronically at the OIE Central Bureau by 15 November 2005.

3. Coordination and harmonisation of animal disease information systems

The AC recognises with interest the development of the PACE Animal Resource Information System (ARIS) and notes the assertion of the DMU that the software is based on the 'Sequential Query Language' which allows the integration of import and export data from and to other current disease information systems in Africa. However, the AC believes that the existence of several national, regional or sub-regional systems of animal disease information in Africa may not only result in duplication of activities by different organisations, but may also cause considerable confusion and lead to erratic interpretations by other member countries as well as by international organisations that use the data.

The AC stresses the importance of coordination and harmonisation of data regarding animal diseases and recommends that a common seminar be held under the aegis of OIE, IBAR/FAO and FAO-IAEA Joint Division on a cost sharing basis, to discuss the existence and implications of current animal disease information systems with a view to harmonising the systems for use in Africa and which can confidently be used by Member Countries when reporting to AU/IBAR, OIE and other international organisations in line with their national and international needs and obligations. The AC recommends that diagnostic test results management module be included in ARIS as soon as possible.

4. Evaluation of epidemiological networks and the role of farmers

The AC approves the efforts made by PACE in the assessment of the national epidemiological surveillance networks and recommends that these assessments be strengthened taking also into account the compliance of Veterinary Services with OIE international standards. In addition, the AC recommends that the PCU highlight the role of farmers as key players in the surveillance of animal diseases.

5. Somali ecosystem rinderpest eradication coordination unit (SERECU)

The AC notes that progress has been achieved with regard to the rinderpest eradication in the Somali ecosystem and considers that this is in line with the strategic plan presented and adopted during the 10th AC meeting held in Mali, Bamako. Considering the urgency of the rinderpest eradication from this last focus in the world, the AC urges the PCU to complete the programme estimate and submit it to the EC Delegation in Nairobi for endorsement to enable the programme to start with effect from 01 November 2005.

Considering the role of SERECU in harmonising and coordinating activities in the SES as well as in the support of National programmes including the Somalia Animal Health Services Project, the AC recommends that all efforts be deployed to strengthen the dialogue between PACE Epidemiology Unit and EC Somalia operations to ensure implementation of field activities through regular meetings. The AC also recommends that in order to establish and strengthen the operations in the SES as outlined in the respective MOUs between SERECU and the countries involved in the PEU, regular harmonisation meetings be held under the auspices of AU/IBAR.

As agreed during the 10th AC meeting, the PCU is urged to finalise the contract arrangement with FAO and the EC Delegation in Nairobi regarding the appointment of the TA Epidemiologist to SERECU.

6. PPR Vaccine Trials in Cattle

The AC notes with deep concern, the considerable delays in the implementation of scientific protocols designed and agreed to previously, on studies on the possible use of *peste des petits ruminants* (PPR) vaccines to protect cattle from rinderpest. Considering the effect the delays have had and continue to have on the finalisation of the relevant Chapter in the OIE *Terrestrial Animal Health Code* relating to the potential use of PPR vaccines as a form of a marked vaccine and the implications for their use in case of an inadvertent outbreak of rinderpest in future, the AC strongly recommends that all efforts be made by AU-IBAR and KARI to speed up with the studies in order to reach completion before the next AC Meeting. The AC also notes that at the time KARI was designated to act as the executing institution for these studies, it was an OIE Reference Laboratory for rinderpest. This designation having been withdrawn by the International Committee of the OIE, the AC recommends the following:

- i) The two OIE/FAO World Reference Laboratories for rinderpest and PPR i.e. CIRAD, Montpellier-France and IAH-Pirbright-UK, which were delegated the responsibility of technical supervision of the studies, enhance

their relevant support and technical direction in the conduct of the experimental studies to ensure the reliability of the results obtained.

- ii) Funds be allocated for recruitment of an independent external expert who will be responsible to providing the necessary supervision and audit in the experimental studies on PPR vaccine efficacy in cattle to be carried out by KARI.
- iii) Technical supervisory missions be conducted by the two Reference Laboratories in close collaboration with FAO/GREP and the FAO/IAEA Joint Division in Vienna under the overall coordination and responsibility of IAH Pirbright, to ensure compliance with the protocols and thereby assure the quality of results obtained from the studies. The Reference Laboratories, FAO/GREP and the FAO/IAEA Joint Division should determine the modalities of how this will be carried out. The overall aim of the missions will be to ensure rapid progress in the studies and assist to remove any bottlenecks that might impede progress.

In view of the internal problems at KARI, the AC recommends that all remaining funds allocated to that project be channeled through the PCU and subsequently diverted to Muguga. In the meantime, the Director of AU/IBAR is urged to use his good office to take up the matter with the responsible Minister(s). A document on the position of IAH Pirbright on this matter will be submitted to the AC and annexed to the final document.

The AC also notes the suggestion of OIE Ad hoc Group of experts on rinderpest responsible for reviewing the Chapter and Appendix of the OIE *Terrestrial Code*, that Muguga consider giving priority to the innocuity tests of PPR vaccines in cattle, results of which may become available early in the course of the experiments. In this respect, the AC recommends that the OIE be made aware as soon as available or by the end of December 2005, of all results regarding innocuity tests for use by the Ad hoc Group.

7. Cost Benefit Analysis and Sustainability of epidemio-surveillance programmes

The AC notes that for any national animal disease surveillance programme to function effectively and in line with national and international obligations, it must be adequately funded. However, convincing national Governments in African countries that are responsible for the overall sustainability of the PACE Programme to provide additional funds, has hitherto not been an easy task. The presentation by PACE on cost benefit analysis on epidemio-surveillance systems in some selected African countries and previous studies on economic significance of outbreaks of major transboundary animal diseases, are critical steps in providing the relevant data and information to enable science-based decision for countries to invest in livestock agriculture. The AC therefore recommends the following:

- i) A consolidated but concise report on Cost Benefit Analysis of animal disease surveillance and control be presented to the AU Ministers of Agriculture Meeting in Kigali-Rwanda in November 2005 to further sensitise them on the necessity to support livestock Agriculture, as an

essential entry point to rural poverty alleviation and improvement in the living conditions of the rural poor.

- ii) Future studies on cost benefit analysis by AU-IBAR/PACE include more countries and sub-regions and take into consideration, social benefits accruing from improved animal production and animal disease control and their implications in enhancing market access, improving public health, encouraging tourism and presenting livestock production as a viable economic venture. It is also recommended that a clear distinction be made between fixed costs and marginal costs of epidemiological surveillance networks.

8. PANVAC

The AC notes that AU-IBAR is responsible for providing operational funds for the activities of PANVAC up to December 2005. The AC draws attention to the AU on the critical financial situation of PANVAC. The technical responsibilities of PANVAC will be crucial within the context of the increasing demands in the control of emerging transboundary animal diseases that require the standardization and quality assurance of vaccines and training of personnel. This activity is expected to increase significantly in case vaccines against avian influenza are applied in Africa.

The AC therefore recommends that funds be secured by AU/IBAR for both recurrent and operational expenses of PANVAC that will strengthen its technical mandate as the only institution in Africa set up to carry out vaccine quality assurance and continuing education of laboratory personnel in quality assurance and adherence to Good Laboratory and Manufacturing practices. Securing funds for PANVAC's operation will guarantee the useful work of PANVAC beyond December 2005. The AC recommends that PACE sensitise all regional and national coordinators and vaccine producers to use more of the competencies of PANVAC

9. Laboratory Network

The AC notes with satisfaction the revitalisation of the laboratory network in Africa. It endorses the conclusions and recommendations of the last laboratory network meeting held in Entebbe, Uganda in September 2005 in particular the recommendations made on quality assurances and on sampling procedures, taking into account that the quality of samples submitted to laboratories are of high importance to obtain reliable results. The AC thus recommends that laboratories organise workshops at the national level to inform/train field staff in sampling procedures and submission of samples to diagnostic laboratories.

10. Epidemiological investigations on wildlife

Given the importance of wildlife surveillance in rinderpest and emerging diseases including zoonoses such as AI, the AC recommends that AU/IBAR give consideration

to external supports that may eventually be needed by countries or sub-regional units to address these needs.

11. Avian Influenza (AI)

The AC notes that in view of the rapidly evolving situation with AI panzootic and the AU-IBAR's commitment to the principles of the FAO/OIE GF-TADS, a meeting was convened by AU-IBAR in September 2005. The purpose of the meeting was to review the worldwide avian flu situation and its implications for Africa and the need to put in place, emergency preparedness plans and strategies to control the disease should it occur. The meeting recommended that IBAR prepare as a matter of urgency surveillance and preparedness plans. FAO informed the meeting of the decision by the Director General of FAO to implement three regional Technical Cooperation Projects in Africa with the principal objectives of i) investigating the potential role of wildlife in the epidemiology of AI in Africa ii) reinforcement of the capacities of diagnostic laboratories through the establishment of networks and iii) the design of AI control strategies and the preparation of contingency. With this in mind, the AC recommends that AU-IBAR work within the FAO/OIE GF-TADS and Alive mechanisms, to seek national and international financial support from donors such as in the emergency preparedness plans and disease recognition and control of emerging zoonoses, especially avian influenza. Collaboration with international partners such as the FAO, OIE, the World Bank and the WHO should be sought in these international efforts. The AC recognizes that outbreaks of AI in Africa will cause additional socio-economic burdens, affect peoples' livelihoods, cause disruptions in trade of poultry and poultry products and could affect tourism and could represent a potential threat to public health. PACE should play a key role in the implementation of this project by reallocating existing resources including the emergency fund available at the OIE and in contingency funds at national and regional levels from existing work plans/programme estimates. (See also Recommendation 1).

12. Contribution of the EU/EC

The AC notes the continued commitment of the EU and the EC Delegation in Nairobi to the PACE Programme and hopes that this will be sustained in view of the rapidly changing animal health situation in the world and Africa in particular.

13. Financial situation

The AC notes the report of the Financial Controller and encourages the administrative and Financial Unit (AFU) at PCU to finalise the recruitment of the Financial and Administrative Officer as well as the Accountant as soon as possible. It also stresses that emphasis be laid on closure and decommitment of the old workplans/programme estimate concerning the national components of PACE in particular those 5 countries, which are required to finalise this process prior to start of year 2 of the extension with effect from 01 November 2005.

The AC also recommends the monitoring of the disbursement pattern/financial situation of the funds allocation to the national components (programme estimates)

with the view to distribute any balances to epidemio-surveillance activities in support of national countries wherever warranted.

14. Evaluation of country programmes

The AC notes with interest the presentations made on evaluations of 7 countries and recommend increasing the number of evaluations to be presented at the next meeting.

15. N'djamena seminar

The AC notes the importance of the seminar to be organised in N'djamena in 2006 on the questionnaires to be used on the compliance of Veterinary Services on the International standards on quality. This seminar will outline the role of farmers in the surveillance of animal diseases. These recommendations will be taken on board by AU/IBAR. The AC recommends that the organisers invite representatives of Chief Veterinary Officers from different African regions to attend the seminar.

16. Technical and financial assessments

The AC considers that the conclusions and recommendations of the final PACE assessment will be of great value in the design of future animal health policies and projects in Africa.

17. Twelfth AC Meeting

The twelfth AC Meeting will be held from 26 to 28 April 2006 in Bamako, Mali.