

18th Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for Africa
N'Djamena, Chad, 22 – 26 February 2009

Recommendation Technical Item 1

Challenges faced by African products of animal origin in accessing world markets

CONSIDERING THAT:

1. Major trade sensitive animal diseases and zoonoses are endemic in almost all countries in Africa and thereby remaining a major impediment to food security and regional and global trade in animals and animal products;
2. Risk factors for the spread and persistence of animal diseases such as transboundary and transhumance migratory practices and the role of wildlife acting as reservoirs of some of the major animal diseases, are inherent and unique to the African continent and create a permanent impediment to totally eradicate many diseases from the Continent;
3. Many countries in Africa are experiencing severe infrastructural and resource limitations to effectively control animal diseases and are in need of a strong political commitment to establish good veterinary governance to move towards the national and regional control of animal diseases;
4. The OIE was mandated by the World Trade Organization (WTO) to publish standards to avoid the introduction of pathogens via international trade in animals and animal products, while at the same time preventing countries from applying unjustified sanitary barriers;
5. The standards developed by the OIE and contained in the OIE *Codes* and *Manuals* relate to both generic issues such as ethics in international trade and the quality of national Veterinary Services, and recommendations on specific OIE listed diseases to mitigate the risk of spreading transboundary animal diseases during export of live animals and products;
6. The OIE standards are science-based and are developed by leading scientific experts and adopted and updated annually through a transparent and democratic decision-making process by all OIE Members;
7. The OIE is actively promoting the application of trade facilitating measures such as zoning, compartmentalisation and trade in safe commodities to assist countries even where certain important animal diseases continue to exist or have become endemic, to still gain market access through the application of appropriate OIE standards;
8. Importing countries require sanitary guarantees for both animal health and human health safety when considering the import of animals and animal products;
9. Commercial standards, established by private companies without direct involvement of governments, are increasingly coming into play in international trade, and are of great concern for a majority of OIE Members;
10. The OIE has developed a document on *The role of Veterinary Services in food safety*, the purpose of which is to provide guidance to OIE Members to the role and responsibilities of Veterinary Services in food safety, to assist them in meeting food safety objectives laid down in national legislation and the requirements of importing countries.

THE OIE REGIONAL COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

RECOMMENDS THAT:

1. The OIE continue to develop and update standards to enable importing countries to base their import conditions on OIE standards to minimise the need for additional risk analysis activities before authorising imports;
2. The OIE continue to facilitate research to provide scientific justification for the further development and application of the concept of safe commodities for trade for appropriate animal and aquatic diseases complementary to the existing standards in the OIE Terrestrial and Aquatic Animal Health Codes;
3. Members be encouraged not to base their import and export requirements solely on the systematic inactivation of pathogens in products and disregarding disease surveillance and other activities inherent to the delivery of good veterinary governance for the prevention and control of animal diseases;
4. Members continue their efforts to incorporate food safety aspects that are linked to OIE standards and that the OIE simultaneously continue to pursue its coordination initiatives with Codex and the incorporation, into the Terrestrial and Aquatic Code, of appropriate issues related to the safety of food of animal origin for international trade;
5. Countries in Africa be encouraged to develop and apply the concepts of zoning and compartmentalisation as a trade facilitating measure for animals and animal products from zones and compartments complying with OIE guidelines and recommendations on management and bio-security practices under the authority of the Veterinary Services;
6. The OIE continue to encourage developing and in-transition countries to strengthen their Veterinary Services through the PVS evaluation, PVS Gap analysis and PVS follow up to add credibility to their trade negotiations and integrity to veterinary certificates accompanying consignments of animals and animal products intended for trade; The OIE will provide its permanent support to countries in collaboration with global partners such as FAO, regional partners such as AU-IBAR and RECs and donors representatives such as World Bank, European Commission and bilateral donors.
7. Members be encouraged to actively support the activities and initiatives of OIE/FAO/AU-IBAR Regional Animal Health Centres to facilitate synergies and to avoid gaps to animal disease prevention and control policies in Africa.
8. Members are encouraged to fully participate in OIE standard setting activities as well as SPS Committee meetings and to acquire the scientific support for contributing to the standard setting decision-making processes.
9. The OIE, FAO and AU-IBAR continue to negotiate with African Governments and donors to support animal health activities to enable Members to move towards compliance with OIE standards.
10. Members are encouraged to continue meeting their obligations on surveillance and reporting even for those diseases that are endemic and to share this information with other Members in their respective Regions.