

for Codex. Codex was created in 1962 by two United Nations organizations, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Health Organization. It is the major international organization for encouraging international trade in food and protecting the health and economic interests of consumers.

APHIS is responsible for publishing an annual notice of OIE, IPPC, and NAPPO activities related to international standards for plant and animal health and representing the United States with respect to these standards.

Following are descriptions of the OIE, IPPC, and NAPPO organizations and the standard-setting agenda for each of these organizations. We have described the agenda that each of these organizations will address at their annual general sessions, including standards that may be presented for adoption or consideration, as well as other initiatives that may be underway at the OIE, IPPC, and NAPPO.

The agendas for these meetings are subject to change, and the draft standards identified in this notice may not be sufficiently developed and ready for adoption as indicated. Also, while it is the intent of the United States to support adoption of international standards and to participate actively and fully in their development, it should be recognized that the U.S. position on a specific draft standard will depend on the acceptability of the final draft. Given the dynamic and interactive nature of the standard-setting process, we encourage any persons who are interested in the most current details about a specific draft standard or the U.S. position on a particular standard-setting issue, or in providing comments on a specific standard that may be under development, to contact APHIS. Contact information is provided at the beginning of this notice under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**.

OIE Standard-Setting Activities

The OIE was established in Paris, France, in 1924 with the signing of an international agreement by 28 countries. It is currently composed of 164 member nations, each of which is represented by a delegate who, in most cases, is the chief veterinary officer of that country. The WTO has recognized the OIE as the international forum for setting animal health standards, reporting global animal disease events, and presenting guidelines and recommendations on sanitary measures relating to animal health.

The OIE facilitates intergovernmental cooperation to prevent the spread of

contagious diseases in animals by sharing scientific research among its members. The major functions of the OIE are to collect and disseminate information on the distribution and occurrence of animal diseases and to ensure that science-based standards govern international trade in animals and animal products. The OIE aims to achieve this through the development and revision of international standards for diagnostic tests, vaccines, and the safe international trade of animals and animal products.

The OIE provides annual reports on the global distribution of animal diseases, recognizes the free status of member countries for certain diseases, categorizes animal diseases with respect to their international significance, publishes bulletins on global disease status, and provides animal disease control guidelines to member countries.

Various OIE commissions and working groups undertake the development and preparation of draft standards, which are then circulated to member countries for consultation (review and comment). Draft standards are revised accordingly and then presented to the OIE General Session, which meets annually every May, for review and adoption. Adoption, as a general rule, is based on consensus of the OIE membership.

The next OIE General Session is scheduled for May 23–28, 2004, in Paris, France. The Deputy Administrator for APHIS' Veterinary Services is the official U.S. delegate to the OIE. The Deputy Administrator intends to participate in the proceedings and will discuss or comment on APHIS' position on any standard up for adoption. Information about current and past OIE draft Code chapters may be found on the Internet at <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/vs/ncie/oie/> or by contacting Dr. Michael David (see **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT** above).

Code Commission Name Changes

The name of the International Animal Health Code Commission has been changed to the Terrestrial Animal Health Standards Commission. However, it will continue to be referred to as the "Code Commission."

The name of the Fish Diseases Commission has been changed to the Aquatic Animal Health Standards Commission, and will be referred to as the Aquatic Animals Commission. The Aquatic Animals Commission will continue to develop and revise chapters that address issues such as the health certification, diagnosis and surveillance of animal species.

OIE Code Chapters Up for Adoption

Existing Code chapters that may be revised and new chapters that may be drafted in preparation for the next General Session in 2004 include the following:

1. Avian Influenza

This chapter was recently redrafted to include the H5 and H7 low pathogenic strains. Although many countries supported the chapter, significant changes still need to be made before the new chapter can be adopted.

2. Bluetongue

This is a vector-borne disease that primarily affects sheep. Draft surveillance guidelines for bluetongue will be drafted by an ad hoc group and presented to the delegates for comment.

3. Maedi-visna

This is a disease of sheep and goats. This would represent a new OIE Code chapter. The chapter will provide recommendations for the trade of sheep and goats and their products as it pertains to Maedi-visna. A draft chapter may be presented for comment.

4. Diseases of Bees

An ad hoc group was convened in June 2003 to address the many comments and to draft a revised chapter to be submitted for adoption in 2004.

5. Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE)

This chapter is continuously being updated as new and additional information becomes available. For the next General Session, the International Committee agreed to open up the chapter for review with the intent of considering changing the categories under which countries are placed with respect to BSE.

6. Animal Welfare

At least two ad hoc groups will be convened before the end of 2003 to draft chapters establishing international standards for the transportation of livestock.

Code Commission Future Work Program

During the next few years, the OIE Code Commission is expected to address the following issues or establish ad hoc groups of experts to update and/or develop standards for the following issues:

1. BSE in Small Ruminants

This would be a new OIE Code chapter intended to provide guidance for export certification of sheep and