

goats and their products. The United States will consider its position on this new standard after it reviews a draft.

## 2. Animal Welfare

Various chapters on animal welfare, including transportation, humane slaughter, and housing, will be drafted by ad hoc groups and presented to the International Committee for comment.

## The Process

These chapters are drafted (or revised) by either the Commission or by ad hoc groups composed of technical experts nominated by the Director General of the OIE by virtue of their subject-area expertise. Once a new chapter is drafted or an existing one revised, the chapter is distributed to member countries for review and comment. The OIE attempts to provide proposed chapters by early September to allow member countries sufficient time for comment. Comments are due by mid-November of the same year. The draft standard is revised by the OIE Code Commission on the basis of relevant scientific comments received from member countries.

The United States (*i.e.*, USDA/APHIS) intends to review and, where appropriate, comment on all draft chapters and revisions once it receives them from the OIE. USDA/APHIS intends to distribute these drafts to the U.S. livestock and aquaculture industries, veterinary experts in various U.S. academic institutions, and other interested persons for review and comment. Additional information regarding these draft standards may be obtained by contacting Dr. Michael David (see **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT** above).

Generally, if a country has concerns with a particular draft standard, and supports those concerns with sound technical information, the pertinent OIE Code Commission will revise that standard accordingly and present the revised draft for adoption at the General Session in May. In the event that a country's concerns regarding a draft standard are not taken into account, that country may refuse to support the standard when it comes up for adoption at the General Session. However, each member country is obligated to review, comment, and make decisions regarding the adoption of standards strictly on their scientific merits.

## Other OIE Topics

Every year at the General Session, two technical items are presented. For the May 2004 General Session, the following technical items will be presented:

1. Emerging and reemerging viral diseases and ways to predict, prevent, and control outbreaks (with particular reference to hemorrhagic fevers, avian influenza, and rabies).

2. Animal identification and traceability.

The information in this notice includes all the information available to us on OIE standards currently under development or consideration. Information on OIE standards is available on the Internet at <http://www.oie.int>. Further, a formal agenda for the next General Session will be available to member countries in February 2004, and copies will be available to the public once the agenda is published. For the most current information on meeting times, working groups, and/or meeting agendas, including information on official U.S. participation in OIE activities, and U.S. positions on standards being considered, contact Dr. Michael David (see **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT** above). Those wishing to provide comments on any areas of work under the OIE may do so at any time by responding to this notice (see **ADDRESSES** above) or by providing comments through Dr. Michael David.

## IPPC Standard-Setting Activities

The IPPC is a multilateral convention adopted in 1952 for the purpose of securing common and effective action to prevent the spread and introduction of pests of plants and plant products and to promote appropriate measures for their control. Under the IPPC, the understanding of plant protection has been, and continues to be, broad, encompassing the protection of both cultivated and noncultivated plants from direct or indirect injury by plant pests. Activities addressed by the IPPC include the development and establishment of international plant health standards, the harmonization of phytosanitary activities through emerging standards, the facilitation of the exchange of official and scientific information among countries, and the furnishing of technical assistance to developing countries that are signatories to the IPPC.

The IPPC is placed under the authority of the FAO, and the members of the Secretariat of the IPPC are appointed by the FAO. The IPPC is implemented by national plant protection organizations in cooperation with regional plant protection organizations, the Interim Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (ICPM), and the Secretariat of the IPPC. The United States plays a major role in all standard-setting activities under the IPPC and has

representation on FAO's highest governing body, the FAO Conference.

The United States became a contracting party to the IPPC in 1972 and has been actively involved in furthering the work of the IPPC ever since. The IPPC was amended in 1979, and the amended version entered into force in 1991 after two-thirds of the contracting countries accepted the amendment. More recently, in 1997, contracting parties completed negotiations on further amendments that were approved by the FAO Conference and submitted to the parties for acceptance. This 1997 amendment updated phytosanitary concepts and formalized the standard-setting structure within the IPPC. The 1997 amended version of the IPPC will enter into force once two-thirds of the current contracting parties notify the Director General of FAO of their acceptance of the amendment. At this date, 44 of the required 80 member countries have deposited their official letters of acceptance. The U.S. Senate gave its advice and consent to acceptance of the newly revised IPPC on October 18, 2000. The President submitted the official letter of acceptance to the FAO Director General on October 4, 2001.

The IPPC has been, and continues to be, administered at the national level by plant quarantine officials whose primary objective is to safeguard plant resources from injurious pests. In the United States, the national plant protection organization is APHIS' Plant Protection and Quarantine (PPQ) program. The steps for developing a standard under the revised IPPC are described below.

### Step 1

Proposals for a new international standard for phytosanitary measures (ISPM) or for the review or revision of an existing ISPM are submitted to the Secretariat of the IPPC in the form of a discussion paper accompanied by a topic or draft standard. Drafts can be submitted by individual countries, but are more commonly submitted by regional plant protection organizations (RPPOs). Alternately, the Secretariat can propose a new standard or amendments to existing standards.

### Step 2

A summary of proposals is submitted by the Secretariat to the ICPM. The ICPM identifies the topics and priorities for standard setting from among the proposals submitted to the Secretariat and others that may be raised by the ICPM.