

INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION OF COUNTRY ANIMAL DISEASE FREEDOM

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L'Accord sur les mesures sanitaires et phytosanitaires de l'Organisation mondiale du commerce stipule que les pays doivent établir leurs mesures zoosanitaires, pour assurer la protection de la santé et la vie des personnes et animaux, sur la base des normes, directives et recommandations de l'OIE. De ce fait, le Code zoosanitaire international de l'OIE et le Manuel des normes pour les tests de diagnostic et les vaccins doivent être pris en considération lors de tout échange international d'animaux ou de ses produits dérivés. Afin de faciliter la reconnaissance de pays, de zones ou de régions indemnes d'une maladie, l'OIE a pris deux initiatives. La première porte sur la mise au point de lignes directrices pour les systèmes de surveillance épidémiologique de la peste bovine et de la péripneumonie contagieuse bovine. La seconde est l'établissement d'une liste de pays et de zones reconnus indemnes de fièvre aphteuse au niveau international.

Because of their role as animal disease prevention and trade harmonising texts for the Sanitary and Phytosanitary Agreement (SPS) of the World Trade Organisation, the internationally agreed and periodically updated OIE *International Animal Health Code* and *Manual of Standards for Diagnostic Tests and Vaccines*, and their counterparts for aquatic animals, are increasingly well known.

The trade liberalisation intended by the SPS may complicate importation by countries to date comfortably aware of their partners' disease situation and programmes. To avoid lengthy information exchange, interpretations and negotiations with new potential exporters, the ideal would be international recognition of country status regarding freedom from certain diseases important to trade. International recognition requires applying objective and verifiable criteria, which the *Code* and *Manual* increasingly include not only for individual diseases but for subjects such as zoning and regionalisation, surveillance and monitoring, sampling methods, test validation, etc.

To further facilitate international recognition of country disease free status the OIE has undertaken two initiatives. One is the establishment of recommended standards for epidemiological surveillance systems for rinderpest and contagious bovine pleuropneumonia. Time bound criteria for claiming provisional disease freedom, freedom from disease and from infection are defined. Those standards for rinderpest have become known as the 'OIE pathway' and several countries have used them to declare provisional freedom for the whole or part of their territories in preparation for future international recognition.

The second initiative is the establishment of a list of countries and zones internationally recognised as foot and mouth disease (FMD) free according to the relevant chapters in the *Code*. Countries provide information and documentation to the satisfaction of the FMD and Other Epizootics Commission before the Commission proposes to the OIE International Committee that a country or zone be listed. Approximately fifty countries or zones have received this recognition since 1995.

The benefits of a global approach to animal health information and trade criteria have long been recognised. Application of these criteria to international recognition of freedom from certain diseases important for trade should further contribute to trade liberalisation.

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