The OIE is working actively in the development and refinement of animal welfare standards and it has come to our attention that there is a need for clarity in defining the terminology used. After the discussion that started at the 75th General Session of the International Committee (2007) on the correct translation of the term ‘animal welfare’, the Terrestrial Animal Health Standards Commission developed a definition of ‘animal welfare’ in cooperation with the OIE Working Group on Animal Welfare in September 2007. The Terrestrial Animal Health Standards Commission, after receiving and reviewing comments from OIE Members, proposed an expanded definition for ‘animal welfare’ in consultation with the Working Group. In the light of further comments from the OIE Regional Commissions, the Administrative Commission proposed an amended version of the definition, for submission to the International Committee at the 76th General Session in May 2008. The definition adopted by the International Committee for inclusion in the Terrestrial Animal Health Code is as follows:

Animal welfare

‘means how an animal is coping with the conditions in which it lives. An animal is in a good state of welfare if (as indicated by scientific evidence) it is healthy, comfortable, well nourished, safe, able to express innate behaviour, and if it is not suffering from unpleasant states such as pain, fear, and distress. Good animal welfare requires disease prevention and veterinary treatment, appropriate shelter, management, nutrition, humane handling and humane slaughter/killing. Animal welfare refers to the state of the animal; the treatment that an animal receives is covered by other terms such as animal care, animal husbandry, and humane treatment.’

This text will be found in Chapter 1.1.1. and (as an introductory paragraph) in Appendix 3.7.1. of the next Terrestrial Animal Health Code.