The Manual of Diagnostic Tests and Vaccines for Terrestrial Animals (Terrestrial Manual) aims to prevent and control animal diseases, including zoonoses, to contribute to the improvement of animal health services worldwide and to allow safe international trade in animals and animal products. The principal target readership is laboratories carrying out veterinary diagnostic tests and surveillance, along with vaccine manufacturers and users, and regulatory authorities in Member Countries. The main objective is to provide internationally agreed diagnostic laboratory methods and requirements for the production and control of relevant vaccines and other biological products.

This ambitious task has required the cooperation of highly renowned animal health specialists from many OIE Member Countries. The OIE, the World Organisation for Animal Health, received the mandate from its Member Countries to undertake this task on a global level. The main activities of the organisation, which was established in 1924, and in 2016 comprised 180 Member Countries, are as follows:

1. To ensure transparency in the global animal disease and zoonosis situation.
2. To collect, analyse and disseminate scientific veterinary information on animal disease control methods.
3. To provide expertise and encourage international solidarity in the control of animal diseases.
4. Within its mandate under the WTO (World Trade Organization) Agreement on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS Agreement), to safeguard world trade by publishing health standards for international trade in animals and animal products.
5. To improve the legal framework and resources of national Veterinary Services.
6. To provide a better guarantee of the safety of food of animal origin and to promote animal welfare through a science-based approach.

The Terrestrial Manual, covering infectious and parasitic diseases of mammals, birds and bees, was first published in 1989. Each successive edition has extended and updated the information provided. This seventh edition includes over 65 updated and 15 new chapters. This edition has a slightly different structure from former editions: Part 1 contains ten introductory chapters that set general standards for the management of veterinary diagnostic laboratories and vaccine production facilities; Part 2 comprises specific recommendations and includes eight new chapters of recommendations for validation of diagnostic tests and three new chapters of recommendations for the manufacture of vaccines; Part 3 comprises chapters on OIE listed diseases and other diseases of importance; and Part 4 is the list of OIE Reference Centres at the time of publication (the list of OIE Reference Centres is updated by the World Assembly of Delegates (of OIE Member Countries) each year; the revised list is available on the OIE Web site).

As a companion volume to the Terrestrial Animal Health Code, the Terrestrial Manual sets laboratory standards for all OIE listed diseases as well as several other diseases of global importance. It describes the diagnostic tests available, including those that are suitable for certifying individual animals prior to movement. The Terrestrial Manual has become widely adopted as a key reference book for veterinary laboratories around the world. Aquatic animal diseases are included in a separate Aquatic Manual.

The task of commissioning chapters and compiling the Terrestrial Manual was assigned to the OIE Biological Standards Commission by the World Assembly of national Delegates. Manuscripts were requested from specialists (the OIE designated experts at OIE Reference Laboratories when relevant) in each of the diseases or the other topics covered. Occasionally, an ad hoc Group of experts was convened tasked with updating or developing a chapter. After initial scrutiny by the Consultant Technical Editor, the chapters were approved by the Biological Standards Commission for circulation to all OIE Member Countries for review and comment. The Commission, elected every 3 years by the Assembly, assisted by the Consultant Technical Editor, took the resulting comments into consideration, often referring back to the contributors for further help, before finalising the chapters and approving them for circulation a second time to all OIE Member Countries. The final texts were then presented for adoption by the Assembly at the General Session held in May each year.
A procedure for the official recognition of commercialised diagnostic tests, under the authority of the Assembly, was finalised in September 2004. Data are submitted using a validation template that was developed by the Biological Standards Commission. Submissions are evaluated by appointed experts, who advise the Biological Standards Commission before the final opinion of the OIE World Assembly is sought. All information on the submission of applications can be found on the OIE Web site.

The Terrestrial Manual continues to expand and to extend its range of topics covered. It is our sincere hope that it will grow in usefulness to veterinary diagnosticians and vaccine manufacturers in all the OIE Member Countries. A new paper edition of the Terrestrial Manual is published every 4 years. It is important to note that annual updates to the Terrestrial Manual will be published on the OIE website once approved by the World Assembly, so readers are advised to check there for the latest information. This new version of the Terrestrial Manual is published in English and Spanish.

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