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Self-declaration by Egypt as country historically free from infection with *Burkholderia mallei* (glanders).

Declaration sent to the OIE on 9 November 2020 by Dr. Abdelhakim Ali, OIE Delegate for Egypt, and Chairman of General Organization for Veterinary Services, Ministry of Agriculture and Land Reclamation.

1. Introduction

The objective of this self-declaration is to claim free status as country historically free from infection with *Burkholderia mallei* (glanders) in accordance with the provisions of Article 1.4.6. of Chapter 1.4. and Chapter 12.10. of the *Terrestrial Animal Health Code (Terrestrial Code)* as of 9 November 2020 and share the favourable glanders situation in Egypt between OIE Members. Glanders is a contagious and fatal disease of horses, donkeys, and mules, caused by infection with the bacterium *Burkholderia mallei*. The pathogen causes nodules and ulcerations in the upper respiratory tract and lungs. A skin form also occurs, known as ‘farcy’. The pathogenic agent is likely to produce identifiable clinical or pathological signs in susceptible animals. This is the first time that Egypt is self-declaring freedom from glanders. The self-declaration covers the entire country.

2. History and situation of Glanders in Egypt:

Egypt occupies the north-eastern corner of African continent. It lies between latitude 22 - 32 degree North and longitude 24 – 37-degree East. The land stretches from north to south 1,073 km approximately and maximum width from east to west 1226 km. The total area of Egypt is 1,002,000 km². It is bounded in the north by the Mediterranean Sea, in the south by Sudan, in the east by the Red Sea, in the west by Libya. (**Annex 2**).

According to the current epidemiological situation of Glanders in Egypt, the disease is considered exotic and is on the list of mandatory notifiable diseases in the whole country ([Ministerial decree 2303](#) and [Agricultural Law NO. 53/1966](#)). There is no evidence of presence of disease in Egypt since 1928. The infection is not known to be established in wildlife within the country. Due to the geographical characteristics of the country, there are no wild equids in Egypt (a predominant desertic area covering 96.5% of the territory, while the rest of the land is used for agricultural purposes). Captive wild equids are only present in zoos and under complete supervision of veterinary authority.



Equids in Egypt are of high economic importance, particularly the breeding of Arabian horses used for keeping pure hereditary characters, that are considered as part of the High Health High Performance (HHP) horse subpopulation of Egypt. The Arabian horses have a good international reputation, so they are exported to countries of the entire world. Competition and racing horses are also considered as HHP and participate in international competition events within and outside the country. Working equids also play an important role in tourism and as a mean of transportation of humans and goods in villages and countryside.

3. Surveillance and early detection systems for Equidae in the country

Glanders is a compulsory notifiable disease in Egypt as established in the [Agricultural Law NO. 53/1966](#). Animal owners or keepers, and workers on animal health must immediately notify any suspicion of disease or death in their Equidae to the General Organization for Veterinary Services (GOVS). The GOVS receives notifications from all veterinary services directorates' offices and stakeholders and is responsible for responding to those notifications.

Equids residing in the country are subject to epidemiological surveillance, based on Egyptian Agricultural Law No. 53/1966 and its executive regulations and decrees. In regard to national epidemiological surveillance system for glanders, passive surveillance is implemented as the disease was last reported in 1928¹. In addition to passive surveillance, an active targeted surveillance program has been implemented since 2013 up to now. The active surveillance programme started in 2013 to ensure maintenance of freedom from the most relevant equids' diseases, according to the Ministerial decree 2303/ 2011. For 5 consecutive years, more than 900 samples per year were collected and tested with negative results to glanders. Based on this outcome, since 2018 an active surveillance programme that targets high-risk areas (mostly areas with high Equids population density) has been implemented with a decreased number of samples (410).

All livestock/ equids' owners and animal health workers must immediately notify any evidence or suspicion of the presence of notifiable exotic and endemic diseases, including glanders, so that in the event of confirmation of an outbreak, the Egyptian veterinary services can proceed deploying the relevant actions to control, eliminate the outbreak and eradicate the disease.

The disease or its causative pathogenic agent have not been recorded for at least the past 25 years and for at least 10 years:

- a) No vaccination against the disease has been carried out.
- b) The infection with Glanders is a notifiable disease.
- c) An early warning system has been in place for all relevant species.
- d) Measures to prevent the introduction of the infection have been in place in particular, the importations or movements of commodities into the country have been carried out in accordance with the relevant chapters of the *Terrestrial Code*.

Veterinary service implements both passive and active surveillance to ensure freedom status from Glanders as main tools for screening of the disease in compliance with chapter 1.4.3. of the *Terrestrial Code* and [Ministerial decree No. 2303/ 2011](#) article (5). In addition, epidemiological surveillance and control of movement is based on [Agricultural Law No. 53/1966](#) article (127) and the [Ministerial decree No. 2303/2011](#).

3.1 Passive surveillance.

As the disease has not been reported for decades, the passive surveillance is the main system for early detection and early warning in particular for an exotic disease like glanders, that has never been reported in Egypt. It is based on the fact that all stakeholders must immediately notify any suspicion of disease to (GOVS) according to the [case definition](#) of the disease through:

- Community-based animal health and outreach teams (CAHO team), i.e. groups of trained veterinarians on participatory disease surveillance assigned for detection of diseases. CAHO teams

¹ http://web.oie.int/hs2/sit_pays_mald_pl.asp?c_pays=56&c_mald=67



carry out surveillance activities in case of suspicion of endemic notifiable diseases or exotic diseases, based on the following criteria:

- a) Routine work in high-density animal population villages (considering each village as an epidemiological unit)
- b) Selection of high-risk areas for enhanced surveillance based on health records and epidemiological investigations performed in previous visits and on rumours of any health issue in a specific area, village, sub-village or farm.
- c) When communications are received from animal keepers who observed clinical signs or suspect the existence of a notifiable disease.

To facilitate the notification of diseases and prompt response from the GOVS, the following items have been implemented:

- Hotline: GOVS established a hotline (19561) for receiving any disease notifications.
- (GOVS) The local Veterinary Authorities that receives a notification alerts by email or fax the Veterinary Authorities at National level to implement a rapid response including the deployment of a rapid response team to carry out epidemiological investigations and data entry in the database.
- Transboundary animal disease information system (TAD info) in epidemiological units which receive all epidemiological data.
- [Monthly reports](#) are sent from all governorates indicating the health status of the equids.
- Continuous training for veterinarians is carried out in all governorates targeting early detection and disease reporting.

3.2 Active surveillance

GOVS carries out active targeted surveillance periodically to some diseases of equids including Glanders to ensure the freedom state in the country and in accordance with Ministerial decree No .2303/ 2011. All the tested samples that collected over the past 3 years were negative.

In active surveillance for glanders, the laboratory analysis performed in Egypt is in compliance with Chapter 3.5.11. of the OIE *Manual of Diagnostic Tests and Vaccines for Terrestrial Animals (Terrestrial Manual)*. Serum samples are collected under aseptic condition and must be stored at -20°C. CFT test is performed by the national lab "Animal Health Research Institute".

Table 1 Number of samples collected over the past three years per Governorate.

Governorates	Total number of farms	Total number of farms sampled	HHP samples	Working equids samples
Cairo	9	4	30	45
Giza	100	8	15	60
Qaliobyia	11	5	15	0
Monofiya	10	5	15	60
Minya	0	0	0	150
Alexandria	17	3	5	15
	147	25	80	330

Three surveillance programs were carried out during the period from 2018 to 2020. The samples were collected according to methodology in compliance to Article 1.4.4 of the OIE *Terrestrial Code* and following a sampling plan which was set out by central Epi-unit to ensure freedom of Glanders. Glanders is one of the main diseases of concern to the Competent Authority. Therefore, a targeted active surveillance with a sample size of 410 horses was designed in clusters of an average 5 animals per site (farms or areas with high density of equids) per year from areas with high Equids population density (in El Menya – Giza "the Pyramids area (Mansouriah – Nazlet El Seman – Sakkara)" - Cairo "Heliopolis (Race track and the Egyptian Agriculture Authority)" - Qualiobyia, Menoufia and Alexandria), as shown in Table 1 above.



Table 2 Results of the tests performed over the past three years (2018-2020)

Year	No. of samples	Results
2018	410	Negative
2019	410	
2020	410	

Areas were selected following a proportional distribution of villages and farms according to total number of villages and farms in the governorate.

In addition, the HHP equids which had been travelled to the European Union for exportation or participation in the international events were sampled and examined for (glanders) by AHRI and retested for confirmation in the Central Veterinary Research Laboratory – Dubai, the OIE Reference Laboratory for Glanders and all showed negative results² for Glanders. A total of 21 and 13 horses were exported in 2019 and 2020, respectively.

3.3 Laboratory Capacity:

The Animal Health Research Institute (AHRI) is the authorised laboratory and (accredited according to ISO 17025 for diagnosis of equine diseases) to test any samples for equine disease throughout a dedicated diagnostic unit for this purpose. Samples are tested for Glanders according to the chapter 3.5.11. of the OIE Manual of Diagnostic Tests and Vaccines for Terrestrial Animals.

4. Animal health measures for equine exportation and importation:

4.1 Regulations for exportations:

A delegation consisting of veterinarians from preventive medicine, quarantine department, animal health research institute and approved quarantine inspect horses which will be exported and check [biosecurity measures](#) in their holding and fill the specific animal health template.

- A license is granted for a holding with livestock or poultry, provided that all biosecurity measures (mandatory) according to [Ministerial decree No. 773/ 2017](#) are implemented, including preventive distances that are determined and approved by the General Authority for Veterinary Services.
- In the pre-export inspection in the farm, horses must be clinically healthy, and samples are taken from it are tested negative for glanders disease.
- These horses are transferred to the approved Quarantine sites (veterinary military hospital) and remain under quarantine for 40 days in case of temporary exportation and 90 days for permanent exportation. During this period, other samples are collected and sent to the OIE Reference Laboratory for Glanders in Dubai to be retested again.
- Certificates issued from (GOVS).
- All measures of exportation based on [Ministerial decree No. 888 /2016](#)³.
- Egyptian Equids are exported to European Union countries and many Arabian countries.

4.2 Regulation for importation of equids

According to Ministerial decree No. 2303/2011 as well as the OIE Terrestrial Code, equids must be imported from Glanders free countries, imported equids must be accompanied by a veterinary health certificate from the veterinary authority of the country of origin and submitted by the Embassy of Egypt.

² [Test results of the exported horses tested](#)

³ [Ministerial decree No. 888 /2016](#)



- The veterinary certificate attests that:
 - 1) Equids are free from diseases (Equine infectious anaemia - Dourine – Glanders - African horse sickness - Equine viral arthritis).
 - 2) Equids were kept since birth or for the last six months before shipment in a country free from contagious and infectious equine diseases, including glanders.
 - 3) Equids showed no clinical signs of any disease on the day of shipment.
 - 4) All vaccination and tests applied to the equids have been recorded in the certificate.
- Equids should be quarantined in the country of origin for one month before shipment.
- A descriptive certificate and a clear photo of the equid from all directions have to be attached to the health certificate.
- Equids arrive directly from the country of origin to Egypt without stopping in any other harbour.
- Upon arrival, equids must be quarantined under the full supervision of the Egyptian veterinary services for 10 days.
- In case of the emergence of any clinical and pathological signs on the horses during the period of quarantine, samples should be collected by the veterinarian of the competent authority and sent to the approved laboratories for diagnosis. The final destination of the imported horse should be registered for future follow up by the Veterinary Authority.

Table 3 Equine importation to Egypt during 2019 and 2020

Country of origin	Glanders situation according to OIE WAHIS “Animal Health Situation”	No. of imported horses in 2019	No. of imported horses in 2020
Belgium	Disease is absent	298	160
Germany	Disease is absent (Last occurrence in 2015)		
Argentina	Disease has never been reported		
Bulgaria	Disease is absent (Last occurrence in 1954)		
Kuwait	The horses from Kuwait were imported in April 2019, before the reoccurrence of the diseases in that country reported in July 2019. All imported horses tested negative prior to shipment ⁴ .		
The United Arab Emirates	Disease has never been reported		
Bahrain	Disease is absent (Last occurrence in 2011)	3	2
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia	Disease is absent		
Total		301	162

4.3 Improving public awareness:

Promoting notification

GOVS has a program to promote timely notification of suspected cases of Glanders, which is conducted by distributing information material at points of contact such as farmers’ associations and unions, veterinary clinics and paramedical, agricultural colleges and universities, animal health laboratories, etc. Its purpose is to encourage timely reporting of high-impact diseases such as Glanders. Likewise, talks and training courses are given to official veterinarians, private veterinarians, farmers, veterinary medicine students, and so that

⁴ [Health-certificate and Lab-results of the importation from Kuwait](#)



the participants acquire the tools to recognize diseases and plagues such as Glanders, placing the emphasis on its prevention and timely notification to GOVS.

Table 4 Training courses on Equine diseases, including Dourine carried out between 2016 and 2020

Name of courses	2016		2017		2018		2019		2020	
	Number of courses	Number of Trainees	Number of courses	Number of Trainees	Number of courses	Number of Trainees	Number of courses	Number of Trainees	Number of courses	Number of Trainees
Equine disease & Biosecurity of farms	2	30	3	50	5	80	4	45	1	20
Sampling and diagnose of Equine disease	4	60	6	90	10	150	8	120	3	60
Training on Epidemiology, Investigation and Rapid Response	10	70	8	90	12	100	10	90	7	50
Total	16	160	17	230	27	330	22	255	11	130

5. Conclusions

Considering that:

- Glanders is a mandatory notifiable disease throughout the national territory, supported by Egyptian legislation.
- Glanders last occurrence was in 1928; therefore, it complies for historical freedom in accordance with Article 1.4.6 of chapter 1.4. Of the OIE *Terrestrial Code*.
- Notification system and epidemiological information on Glanders and Egypt's Veterinary services are in accordance with Chapters. 1.1. and 3.1., of the OIE *Terrestrial Code*, respectively.
- The epidemiological surveillance and national diagnosis systems have the capacity to detect the suspicion of disease in a timely manner through compulsory notification and the application of animal health measures.
- Egyptian veterinary services apply the necessary measures for imported animals into the country to ensure that these animals do not present a significant risk of introducing glanders.

The OIE Delegate for Egypt declares that the country fulfils the requirements for a country historically free from infection with *Burkholderia mallei* glanders as of 9 November 2020 in accordance with article 1.4.6. of Chapter 1.4. and Chapter 12.10 of the *Terrestrial Code* (edition 2019) and consistent with the information provided in WAHIS.



Annex 1

I, the undersigned, Abdelhakim Ali

Delegate of Egypt, Chairman of General Organization for Veterinary Services,
to the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE), takes responsibility for the self- declaration of freedom
from Glanders (disease)

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Drawn up on 5/11/2020

Signature of the Delegate:



Annex 2 – Administrative map of Egypt



July 2011. Adapted from Map No. 3795 Rev. 2 UNITED NATIONS

January 2004. Every effort has been exercised to ensure the accuracy of this map; however, there might be some inconsistencies as administrative

Department of Peacekeeping Operations
Cartographic Section



Annex 3, Egyptian Working Equids and HHP census:

Serial	Governorate	Equine	Mules	Donkeys	Total Equids
1	Cairo	2289	113	575	2977
2	Alexandria	2289	1137	4196	7622
3	Port Said	25	26	251	302
4	Suez	176	85	1204	1465
5	Demiatte	2345	160	4438	6943
6	Dakahlia	12506	1545	27940	41991
7	Sharkia	5288	3182	42392	50862
8	Qualiobia	3372	1495	14980	19847
9	Kafr Elsheikh	10668	1175	19307	31150
10	Gharbia	6887	4654	49056	60597
11	Menofia	5997	4245	66433	76675
12	Behera	4616	1570	21009	27195
13	Ismailia	218	216	1655	2089
14	Giza	8113	3063	27044	38220
15	Baniswif	2976	1140	65792	69908
16	Fayoum	1989	2703	16333	21025
17	Menia	2886	1577	19414	23877
18	Assuit	4563	2439	53296	60298
19	Sohag	4623	421	39010	44054
20	Qena	6502	411	14080	20993
21	Aswan	1326	301	17150	18777
22	Red Sea	59	7	37	103
23	New Vally	753	24	12523	13300
24	Matrouh	1492	640	9145	11277
25	North Saini	150	200	1851	2201
26	South Saini	208	0	202	410
27	Loxur	1365	216	3892	5473
Total		93681	32745	533205	659631



Annex 4, Veterinary services in Egypt:

GOVS has committed to achieve compliance with OIE standards to evaluate and upgrade its capacity to ensure that it is capable to manage and respond to any disease outbreaks in Equids by identifying the capabilities needed the critical interventions to react and prevent new cases. In compliance to chapters 3.1 and 3.2 of the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code, OIE had conducted an evaluation of Egypt Veterinary Services during 2007 followed by supplementary mission in 2009 after GOVS request. The objective of the evaluation was to provide the VS a framework for establishing priorities, strategic initiatives and action plans which will ultimately strengthen the VS infrastructure by evaluation of the four components which comprise the basic structure of the OIE-PVS Tool and which are viewed as the components of credible VS. The PVS mission has followed by PVS gap analysis mission in 2010. According to the recommendations that have been elaborated from the PVS and gap analysis official reports and to ensure the quality of veterinary services in compliance with to chapter 3.1 of the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code, a future road map had been developed and concrete actions have been identified and summarized to sustain and elaborate the organizational set up including revising all regulations, improve the animal health situation by intensifying the efforts to control major diseases and intensify the training by improving the training facility to realize these goals. In addition, a new veterinary bill had been developed tacking into consideration mechanisms to update national legislation to reflect emerging issues related to issues of veterinary concern (emerging and reemerging diseases, animal transport, animal health and welfare with clear reference to control of animal movements, animal disease control and reporting systems, epidemiological surveillance and communication of epidemiological information). The bill now at final stage for adoption by the Egyptian Parliament. GOVS had drawn up and implement the policy and strategy of the most important animal diseases including Equine diseases. The governmental resource mobilization has been directed to ensure availability of human and financial resources which are required for strict and precise implementation of all stages of its strategies. In compliance to chapter 3.1 of the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code, and by 2014, GOVS has succeeded in developing national epidemio-surveillance network and early warning system involving development and management of the 1st epidemiological data networking in Egypt connecting central, governorate and district levels supporting rapid notification of animal disease suspicions and outbreaks. The notification procedure to the OIE (immediate notification, six monthly and annual reporting) has been improved.