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REPORT OF THE MEETING OF THE OIE ANIMAL PRODUCTION FOOD SAFETY WORKING GROUP

Paris, 20–22 November 2012

The OIE Working Group on Animal Production Food Safety (the Working Group) held its twelfth meeting at the OIE Headquarters from 20 to 22 November 2012.

The members of the Working Group and other participants are listed at [Annex I](#). The adopted agenda is provided at [Annex II](#).

Dr Alejandro Thiermann (President of the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Standards Commission, Code Commission), on behalf of Dr Bernard Vallat (OIE Director General) welcomed the members of the Working Group to this meeting. He noted that the Working Group membership had changed slightly since the 2011 meeting with the departure of Mr Alan Randell and Mr Michael Scannell and the arrival of a new member, Dr Koen Van Dyck. He reminded the Working Group that their main objective should be to serve as a permanent advisory body to the OIE in terms of direction and approach for standards on animal production food safety. This Working Group has already been instrumental in facilitating the collaboration and complementarity of the work of the OIE and the Codex. He noted that the approach being taken by the OIE and the Codex on the work on trichinellosis demonstrated the way to work together on this and future standard setting work relevant to both organisations. Dr Thiermann requested that the Working Group examine the relevant documents and provide guidance as to the approach to take when developing future standards on the control of *Salmonella* spp. in food-producing animals other than poultry.

Dr Vallat met with the Working Group for a discussion later on the meeting. Dr Vallat welcomed members and thanked them for their support in this important area of work. He stated that the OIE appreciates the work of the Group that is critical to the OIE achieving its objective of reducing risks to human health due to hazards arising from animal products.

Collaboration between the OIE and the Codex Alimentarius Commission

Dr Vallat welcomed the creation of the Codex electronic Working Group (eWG) on Codex/ OIE Cooperation which will provide another opportunity to strengthen cooperation between the OIE and Codex. Dr Vallat acknowledged that the development of common standards was not feasible and that work to systematically cross reference each other's standards will be more achievable. Dr Vallat welcomed inputs from the Working Group on this topic. Dr Vallat supported the initiative to continue to invite chairs or relevant experts of a Codex Working Group to OIE *ad hoc* Groups, when relevant, and considered this an important means of ensuring alignment of relevant standard development work between the two organisations.

Collaboration at the national level

Regarding the importance of collaboration at the national level, Dr Vallat noted that at a meeting of the FAO/OIE/WHO Tripartite Strategy meeting, one of the recommendations was to request that OIE focal points for animal production food safety participate in INFOSAN activities and vice-versa. Dr Vallat informed the Working Group that OIE Delegates had been informed of this recommendation and asked to consider this request, which he saw as a good step to improve coordination at the national level.

Future standard setting for animal production food safety

Dr Vallat welcomed the Working Group's recommendation that the OIE should only consider standard development on *Salmonella* in food-producing animals other than poultry, if Codex initiates new work on this topic so as to ensure a whole of food chain approach. Dr Vallat reiterated his support of the Working Group's proposal that the OIE should continue to consider developing guidance for relevant foodborne pathogens that do not cause clinical disease in animals but can be controlled at the on-farm level. He noted that this area of work can be a challenge for the OIE as it is necessary to distinguish trade risks and management of public health risks associated with such pathogens.

Antimicrobial resistance

Dr Vallat highlighted the growing debate surrounding the issue of antibiotic resistance and that the OIE is committed to working closely with Codex on standard setting work on this topic. He informed the Working Group that the OIE would host a Global Conference on the Responsible and Prudent Use of Antimicrobial Agents for Animals in Paris (France) on 13–15 March 2013. He noted the challenges arising from the imbalance of approaches being taken in developed and developing countries to regulate the use of antimicrobials. Dr Vallat emphasised the importance of providing resources to developing countries to develop and implement appropriate legislation, as well as veterinary education and capacity building of veterinary services, to prevent the development of antimicrobial resistance.

One Health

Dr Vallat informed the Working Group that the OIE is currently developing a PVS One Health Tool as part of the OIE PVS Pathway. The aim of such a mission is to review a country's Veterinary Service activities that specifically focus on collaboration and coordination with public health and other relevant partners, where the achievement of public health outcomes is a major objective. To date, a pilot evaluation has been made in three countries. Fourteen of the 46 critical competencies of the OIE PVS Tool have been determined to have the most direct link, through the collaborative efforts of the Veterinary Service, to public health outcomes. The OIE is also in discussion with WHO to develop a common approach to good governance that will ensure no duplication or gaps between the PVS One Health Tool and the WHO International Health Regulations. Dr Vallat noted that within the OIE mandate public health includes all zoonotic public health risks not just animal production food safety.

1. Update on CAC / FAO / WHO activities

1.1. CAC

Dr Annamaria Bruno provided an update on the work of CAC. Detailed information is provided in [Annex III](#).

1.2. FAO

Dr Katinka de Balogh provided an update on the work of FAO. Detailed information is provided in [Annex IV](#).

1.3. WHO

Dr Elizabeth Mumford, representing the WHO Department of Food Safety and Zoonoses, joined the meeting for this agenda item and provided an update on the work of WHO. Detailed information is provided in [Annex V](#).

The Working Group encouraged the Director General of the OIE to continue to support communication and collaboration between the Secretariats of OIE and Codex, and the relevant units at the FAO and WHO, to ensure close co-ordination of the relevant work of these organisations.

2. Cooperation between OIE and CAC: a CCGP electronic Working Group on Codex/OIE Cooperation

Dr Gillian Mylrea (Deputy Head, OIE International Trade Department) reported that at the 27th Session of the Codex Committee on General Principles (CCGP), held in Paris in April 2012, the CCGP decided to establish an electronic working group (eWG), to be hosted by Canada, with the following mandate:

‘Reaffirming the commitment to collaboration in the development of standards of mutual interest, respecting the mandates and procedures of Codex Alimentarius and OIE, including a commitment to an open, transparent and inclusive process, the working group will:

- propose guidance to better take into account relevant work that has been undertaken or is in progress by each organization; and
- identify means to consistently reference each other’s standards and guidance, as appropriate.’

Dr Mylrea informed the Working Group that the OIE will participate in this eWG and that the OIE has offered logistic support for a physical working group, with the same mandate, prior to the next session of the CCGP (April 2014).

The OIE International Trade Department is preparing a paper for submission to the eWG and had requested that the Working Group provide general guidance on this topic.

The Working Group noted that the regular participation in each other’s standard setting work has helped to improve the coverage by official standards of the whole food production continuum and to avoid gaps, duplications and potential contradictions in the standards and guidelines of the two organisations. This is particularly evident in the recent work by both organisations on *Salmonella* in poultry and the current work on *Trichinella*, where a whole food chain approach has been taken.

Dr Mylrea informed the Working Group that the recent meeting of the OIE *ad hoc* Group on Zoonotic Parasites included the two Co-chairs of the Codex Working Group on Guidelines for Control of Specific Zoonotic Parasites in Meat, who had been invited in response to a request that the OIE work in closer collaboration with the Codex on the development of this standard.

The Working Group recommended that such participation be considered as a model for future collaboration.

The Working Group made the following recommendations to the OIE for consideration by the eWG:

a) Cross-referencing standards of the OIE and CAC

The Working Group recognised that different approaches have been taken in the past regarding cross-referencing and they recommended that the eWG review existing OIE and Codex texts to ensure a consistent approach and to then consider some general guidance as to how to address this issue in the future. The Working Group acknowledged that the approach needed to maintain some flexibility depending on the specific standards under development and the expected users. The Working Group recommended that definitions also be aligned as much as possible.

b) Continued collaboration between OIE and Codex in the development of standards

In order to ensure the continuation of collaboration between the OIE and Codex, the OIE should:

- i) continue the work of the Working Group;
- ii) continue the exchange of information between OIE and CAC Secretariats;
- iii) continue to attend relevant Codex Committees and provide updates on relevant OIE activities;

- iv) invite the Chairperson from the relevant Codex Working Group to OIE *ad hoc* groups, when addressing subject matter common to OIE and Codex.

c) Planning work for standard development

The Working Group noted that the OIE and the CAC have different mechanisms for planning standard development. Informally, the two organisations become aware of each other's work plans on standard development relevant to both organisations; however, there is no procedure to align these.

The Working Group noted that work plans and new activities are discussed by this Working Group each year when they meet. They recommended that special emphasis be put on this point at future meetings and to include it as a standard agenda item.

d) Coordination at the national level

The Working Group re-emphasised the importance of collaboration between OIE and Codex at the national level between OIE Delegates and focal points, and Codex contact points, in order to better co-ordinate the standard setting activities of the two organisations. Coordination at the regional and sub-regional level is also encouraged.

3. Zoonotic parasites

3.1. Chapters on Infection with *Trichinella* spp.

Dr Mylrea informed the Working Group that an expert *ad hoc* Group on Zoonotic Parasites, which included participation from the WHO, FAO and Codex, had updated the current OIE *Terrestrial Animal Health Code (Terrestrial Code)* Chapter 8.13. on Trichinellosis with the objective of recommending control measures at the on-farm level to help prevent foodborne illness in humans.

The draft chapter provides recommendations for on-farm prevention of *Trichinella* infection in domestic pigs (*Sus scrofa domesticus*), and safe trade of meat and meat products derived from suids and equids. It provides for establishing a 'negligible risk compartment' in pigs kept under controlled management conditions on the basis of the clear and objective means of establishing this status. The articles dealing with international trade of meat and meat products of suids and equids include a cross reference to the relevant Codex Guidelines.

The draft chapter has undergone two rounds of consultation with OIE Members. The latest revision undertaken by the *ad hoc* Group, in July 2012, considered the comments of OIE Member Countries from the second round of consultation. This meeting also included the two Co-chairs of the Codex Working Group on Guidelines for Control of Specific Zoonotic Parasites in Meat, who had been invited in response to a request that the OIE work in closer collaboration with the Codex on the development of this standard. The participation of the Co-chairs provided a good opportunity for the OIE and Codex to work closely together on the development of respective standards on *Trichinella* and ensure alignment of risk-based recommendations while avoiding duplication of effort, overlap and gaps. The revised draft chapter was reviewed by the Code Commission at their September 2012 meeting and has been circulated to OIE Members as part of the Code Commission's September 2012 report.

The Working Group supported the proposed draft chapters.

Dr Steve Hathaway informed the Working Group of the discussion held at the 44th Session of the Codex Committee on Food Hygiene (CCFH), in November 2012, on the development of the Proposed Draft Guidelines for Control of Specific Zoonotic Parasites in Meat and the proposal for an alternative pathway to achieving a negligible risk compartment for Infection with *Trichinella* spp. to that described in the revised OIE draft Chapter 8.13. This pathway would rely less on on-going verification of farms but would provide for on-going monitoring of a representative sample of slaughter pigs to confirm the status of the compartment.

The Working Group recommended that the OIE National Delegates make appropriate contacts with Delegates to CCFH, on their review and comments on the OIE draft Chapter 8.13. The Working Group noted that external support can enhance such co-ordination in this and other relevant areas in many developing countries.

3.2. Chapters on *E. granulosus*, and *E. multilocularis*

Dr Mylrea informed the Working Group that an expert *ad hoc* Group on Zoonotic Parasites, which included participation from the WHO, FAO and Codex, had updated the current OIE *Terrestrial Code* Chapter 8.4. on Echinococcosis/hydatidosis and had proposed to develop two separate chapters, on *E. granulosus*, and *E. multilocularis*. The draft chapter was reviewed by the Code Commission at their September 2012 meeting and has been circulated to OIE Members as part of the Code Commission's September 2012 report.

The Working Group supported the proposed draft chapters.

4. OIE work on antimicrobial resistance in terrestrial animals

Dr François Diaz (OIE Scientific and Technical Department) joined the meeting for this agenda item and provided an update on current OIE activities relevant to the issue of antimicrobial resistance (AMR).

Dr Diaz informed the Working Group that the revised *Terrestrial Code* Chapters 6.7. and 6.8. had been adopted at the General Session in May 2012 and a revised Guideline on Laboratory Methodologies for bacterial antimicrobial susceptibility testing had been added to the latest edition of the *Terrestrial Manual*.

Dr Diaz provided an update on the work done by the *ad hoc* Group on Antimicrobial Resistance. He reported that, since the last meeting of the Working Group, the *ad hoc* Group met two times, from 12 to 14 December 2011 and from 2 to 4 July 2012 at the OIE Headquarters. At the December 2011 meeting, the Group reviewed and updated the *Terrestrial Code* Chapter 6.10. Risk assessment for antimicrobial resistance arising from the use of antimicrobial agents in animals. It also started to address the OIE Member Country comments received on the previously updated version of the *Terrestrial Code* Chapter 6.9. Responsible and prudent use of antimicrobial agents in veterinary medicine. At the July 2012 meeting, the Group considered the Member Countries' comments on Chapter 6.9. The Group also started to update the List of Antimicrobials of Veterinary Importance. Finally it proposed the inclusion of new concepts in the Glossary of the *Terrestrial Code*. The next meeting of this Group will take place in January 2013. The main objectives of this meeting will be to address Member Countries' comments and finalise the updating of Chapter 6.10. and complete the work on the List.

Dr Diaz informed the Working Group that the OIE was still working in collaboration with WHO and FAO on the topic of AMR, which was a priority in the OIE/FAO/WHO Tripartite Strategy. In addition, the Scientific and Technical Department of the OIE has nearly completed a second cycle of training for OIE National Focal Points for Veterinary Products with an emphasis on the VICH (International Cooperation on Harmonisation of Technical Requirements for Registration of Veterinary Medicinal Products) and AMR.

Dr Diaz also informed the Working Group that the OIE would organise a Global Conference on the Responsible and Prudent Use of Antimicrobials for Animals, 'International Solidarity to Fight against Antimicrobial Resistance', in Paris (France) from 13 to 15 March 2013 (http://www.oie.int/eng/A_AMR2013/introduction.htm). In the framework of this conference, the OIE had sent out a questionnaire to OIE Member Countries on monitoring of the quantities of antimicrobial agents used in animals. The results of the survey would be analysed and presented at this OIE Conference.

Dr Diaz presented the new dedicated place for AMR on the OIE website (<http://www.oie.int/en/our-scientific-expertise/veterinaryproducts/antimicrobials/>). Finally he drew to the Working Group's attention the recently published Volume 31(1) of the OIE *Scientific and Technical Review* on 'Antimicrobial resistance in animal and public health'.

Regarding the draft Chapter 6.10. Risk Analysis for Antimicrobial Resistance Arising from the Use of Antimicrobial Agents in Animals, currently under review, the Working Group noted that Article 6.10.2. on the analysis of risks to human health uses the OIE risk analysis framework rather than the Codex framework. The Working Group recommended that the *ad hoc* Group, who will meet in January 2013 to review the draft chapter, take into account if possible the 'Guidelines for Risk Analysis of Foodborne Antimicrobial Resistance' (CAC/GL 77-2011), and include a specific reference to this text in the draft chapter.

5. OIE work on antimicrobial resistance in aquatic animals

Dr Mylrea updated the Working Group on activities related to antimicrobial resistance in aquatic animals. She informed the Group that the *Aquatic Animal Health Code (Aquatic Code)* Chapter 6.4. Monitoring of the quantities and usage patterns of antimicrobial agents used in aquatic animals and Chapter 6.5. Development and harmonisation of national antimicrobial resistance surveillance and monitoring had been adopted in May 2012. She informed the Working Group that the *ad hoc* Group on Responsible Use of Antimicrobials in Aquatic Animals are developing a chapter on risk analysis for antimicrobial resistance in aquaculture to be included in Section 6 of the *Aquatic Code*.

The Working Group noted this work and that the *Codex Guidelines for Risk Analysis of Foodborne Antimicrobial Resistance (CAC/GL 77- 2011)*, also covered both terrestrial and aquatic animals.

6. OIE work on veterinary education

Dr Mylrea updated the Working Group regarding the OIE's work on veterinary education, with particular reference to the 'OIE recommendations on the Competencies of graduating veterinarians ('Day 1 graduates') to assure National Veterinary Services of quality'. She noted that this document is available on the OIE internet site at:

http://www.oie.int/fileadmin/Home/eng/Support_to_OIE_Members/Vet_Edu_AHG/DAY_1/DAYONE-B-ang-vC.pdf

Dr Mylrea also informed the Working Group that the *ad hoc* Group on Veterinary Education met in July 2012 to develop a draft Model Core Curriculum, which provides for graduates to possess the Day 1 competencies recommended by the OIE.

The Working Group supported the OIE work in the area of veterinary education and agreed that the draft Model Core Curriculum document covered the essential core curriculum relevant to the training of a veterinarian, including food safety and food hygiene.

7. OIE PVS Tools: for the Evaluation of Veterinary Services and Aquatic Animal Health Services

Dr Mylrea updated the Working Group on recent revisions to the *PVS Tool* (2013 edition). She noted that the critical competency (CC) on food safety (II-8) had been amended to add a third point to this CC to address the standards of food producing premises, as follows:

'II-8 C. Regulation, authorisation and inspection of establishments for the production, processing and distribution of food of animal origin. The authority and capability of the VS to establish and enforce sanitary standards for establishments that produce, process and distribute food of animal origin.'

The Working Group noted that the text for this CC could be improved by including reference to a risk based approach to ensure those pathogens not detected at *ante-mortem* and *post-mortem* inspection are addressed, as many foodborne pathogens are not detected at the macroscopic level, e.g. STEC, *Salmonella*, *Campylobacter*.

The Working Group recommended that for any future revisions of the PVS Tool, a member of the Working Group or a relevant expert in animal production food safety, be included in the *ad hoc* Group or be given the opportunity to provide input on relevant CCs.

8. Future standard setting for animal production food safety

8.1. Literature review on the control of *Salmonella* spp. in food-producing animals other than poultry

At the 2010 meeting, the Working Group discussed the need for and feasibility of developing OIE advice on the control of *Salmonella* spp. in food-producing animals other than poultry (i.e. pigs, cattle, small ruminants) with the purpose of reducing foodborne illness. In this regard the Working Group requested that the OIE undertake a review of the scientific literature on these pathogens with an emphasis on the feasibility of applying measures at the production level (farm-level) to reduce the incidence. Dr Rob Davies (OIE Reference Laboratory for Salmonellosis, United Kingdom) and Dr Antonia Ricci (OIE Reference Laboratory for Salmonellosis, Italy) were invited to undertake this review.

At their 2011 meeting, the Working Group reviewed the draft prepared for that meeting and requested that the authors expand the section on the feasibility of applying measures at the production level (farm-level) to reduce the incidence of *Salmonella* spp. in intensive pigs, to assess likely public health outcomes of applying such measures, and to provide more information on the prevalence of foodborne salmonellosis in humans from food-producing animals other than poultry.

At this meeting, the Working Group reviewed the updated literature review. The Working Group was impressed with the revised paper and requested the Trade Department to thank the authors for all their work in developing the document. The Working Group also supported the suggestion that OIE have the paper peer reviewed and then published on the OIE website in English, Spanish and French. The Working Group assumed that the peer review would ensure that the literature review took into account the global situation.

When the paper is ready for publication, the Trade Department will send a copy to the FAO, WHO and Codex bringing the paper to their attention.

After much discussion on next steps OIE may take on this subject, it was agreed that given the need for a whole food chain approach to *Salmonella* risk management in food-producing animals other than poultry, and the diversity of global animal production systems; unilateral advancement of this work in OIE alone is unlikely to significantly improve salmonella risk management animals other than poultry.

Rather, the Working Group agreed that should Codex initiate new work on *Salmonella* spp. in food-producing animals other than poultry, then the Working Group would encourage OIE participation to ensure a whole of food chain approach.

8.2. Literature review on the control of verotoxigenic *Escherichia coli* (VTEC) in food-producing animals

At the 2010 meeting, the Working Group discussed the need for and feasibility of developing OIE advice on the control of verotoxigenic *Escherichia coli* (VTEC/STEC) in food-producing animals with the purpose of reducing foodborne illness. In this regard the Working Group requested that a review of the scientific literature be undertaken on this pathogen. Dr John Morris Fairbrother, OIE Reference Laboratory for *Escherichia coli* (Canada), was invited to undertake this review.

At their 2011 meeting the Working Group reviewed the abridged version provided for that meeting and requested that the authors provide more emphasis on the availability and efficacy of applying measures at the production level (farm-level) to reduce the incidence of verotoxigenic *Escherichia coli* (VTEC) in livestock, and to assess the likely public health outcomes of applying such measures.

Unfortunately, the authors were unable to finalise the review in time for consideration by the Working Group at this meeting. The Working Group looked forward to receiving the amended literature review in the near future.

Given that prevention and control of contamination of meat and other animal products with pathogens of enteric origin has emerged as a priority in food safety, the Working Group agreed that the OIE and Codex should maintain an active dialogue through this Working Group concerning potential standard development in this area e.g. Salmonella, STECs.

9. Report of the *ad hoc* Group on Notification of Animal Diseases and Pathogenic Agents

Dr Mylrea informed the Working Group that an expert *ad hoc* Group on Notification of Animal Diseases and Pathogenic Agents had met in July 2012 to review the OIE list of diseases for terrestrial animals against the revised criteria for listing. She noted that the *ad hoc* Group had proposed to delist porcine cysticercosis (*Taenia solium*). However, the Code Commission considered this to be a major neglected zoonosis and had invited Member Countries to provide their comments on this proposal.

Dr de Balogh noted that FAO considers porcine cysticercosis to be a significant public health concern particularly in developing countries. Dr Bruno also noted that the report of the FAO/WHO Expert Meeting on Foodborne Parasites–Multicriteria based ranking for risk management, ranked *Taenia solium* (pork) as the foodborne parasite of most importance with respect to public health, from a list of 24 parasites.

The Working Group recommended that given the public health significance of this disease, this proposal should be carefully reassessed. The Working Group recommended that, should the disease be delisted, a guidance document should be developed for Members to assist them in controlling this disease at the on-farm level.

10. Transmission of chemical contaminants through feed

The Working Group noted that Codex has developed a number of texts relevant to chemical contaminants in animal feed (e.g. dioxins, aflatoxins). It should be noted that these texts address the food safety aspects linked to animal feed, and not animal health concerns.

The Working Group noted that Codex also has some on-going work on this topic, including the Codex Task Force on Animal Feeding who are developing ‘Guidelines on application of risk assessment for feed’ and ‘Guidance for use by governments in prioritizing the national feed hazards’, and the Codex Committee on Contaminants in Food (CCCF) is developing Code of Practice for Weed Control to Prevent and Reduce Pyrrolizidine Alkaloid Contamination in Food and Feed. In addition the CCCF is developing a discussion paper on management practices to reduce exposure of animals to pyrrolizidine alkaloids (PAs); to reduce exposure of food-producing animals to PA-containing plants; and to reduce presence of PAs in commodities.

Given that Codex has already undertaken significant work on this topic and that the current *Terrestrial Code* and the *Aquatic Code* include chapters on hazards in animal feed, the Working Group recommended that the OIE not undertake any further work on this topic (chemical non biological contaminants) at this time but continue to contribute actively to the Codex work programme.

11. Work programme for 2013

The Working Group noted that a continuing theme arising from discussions of all agenda items was the need for a whole of food chain risk-based approach to the management of zoonotic hazards in food. The Working Group re-affirmed that collaboration between the OIE and Codex is essential to reflect this principle in international standards.

The on-going developments with regard to the ‘One-Health’ approach and the discussions on enhancing collaboration between animal health, public health and environmental health systems at the international, regional and national levels provides new opportunities to enhance this whole food chain approach.

The Working Group amended the work programme for 2013 which is presented at [Annex VI](#).

12. Next meeting

To be confirmed.

.../Annexes

MEETING OF THE OIE ANIMAL PRODUCTION FOOD SAFETY WORKING GROUP
Paris, 20–22 November 2012

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MEETING OF THE OIE ANIMAL PRODUCTION FOOD SAFETY WORKING GROUP
Paris, 20–22 November 2012

Adopted agenda

Welcome from the OIE Director General

Adoption of the agenda

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ACTIVITIES OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION CODEX SESSIONS SINCE THE LAST MEETING OF THE OIE APFSWG (15-17 NOVEMBER 2011)

In the period 1 November 2011 - 15 October 2012, 17 sessions of the Code Alimentarius Commission and its subsidiary bodies have been held. Among these sessions, those relevant to the work of the APFSWG, are: the 35th Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC), Rome, Italy, 2-7 July 2012; the 43rd Session of the Committee on Food Hygiene (CCFH), Miami, United States of America, 5-9 December 2011; the 6th Session of the ad hoc International Task Force on Animal Feeding (TFAF), Berne, Switzerland 20-24 February 2012; the 6th Session of the Committee on Contaminants in Foods (CCCF), Maastricht, the Netherlands, 26-30 March 2012; the 27th Session of the Committee on General Principles (CCGP), Paris, France 2-6 April 2012; the 20th Session of the Codex Committee on Residues of Veterinary Drugs in Foods (CCRVDF), San Juan, Puerto Rico, 7-11 May 2012; 21-25 March 2011; and the 32nd Session of the Committee on Fish and Fishery Products (CCFFP), Bali, Indonesia, 1-5 October 2012.

In addition, in the reporting period have been held the sessions of the FAO/WHO Coordinating Committees for the North America and the South-West Pacific (CCNASWP), Madang, Papua New Guinea, 19-22 September 2012; and for Europe (CCEURO), Batumi, Georgia, 25-28 September 2012.

In particular, the APFSWG may wish to note the following:

The 35th CAC, among others, adopted 18 new or revised Codex standards or related texts and many new or revised provisions for additives and MRLs for pesticides and veterinary drugs (see **Appendix I**), and approved a number of new work proposals (see **Appendix II**). Among the new and revised standards adopted by the CAC, the following are particularly relevant to the APFSWG: MRLs for ractopamine (cattle and pig tissues); for narasin (cattle tissues); for amoxicillin (cattle, sheep and pig tissues and cattle and sheep milk); and for monensin (cattle liver). The sampling Plans for Residue Control for Aquatic Animal Products and Derived Edible Products of Aquatic Origin (C, Annex B of CAC/GL 71-2009); and the Guidelines on the Application of General Principles of Food Hygiene to the Control of Viruses in Food.

The 35th CAC also adopted a number of maximum residue limits (MRLs) for pesticides in products of animal origin and in animal feed. All these texts are available on the Codex website: www.codexalimentarius.org, including the update database for MRLs of veterinary drugs: <http://www.codexalimentarius.org/standards/veterinary-drugs-mrls/en/> and the reports of the above sessions are available on the FAO ftp server at: ftp://ftp.fao.org/codex/reports/reports_2012 (for sessions up to the 35th CAC) and ftp://ftp.fao.org/codex/reports/reports_2013 (for sessions held after the 35th CAC).

The 35th CAC adopted the revision of the Risk Analysis Principles and Procedures Applied by the Codex Committee on Food Hygiene and the Risk Analysis Principles Applied by the Codex Committee on Contaminants in Foods and the revision of the definition of “contaminant”. The revision of these texts aims at addressing their applicability to animal feed as it may impact on human health. The 35th CAC also adopted the revision of the Risk Analysis Principles Applied by the CCRVDF and of the Risk Assessment Policy for Residues of Veterinary Drugs in Foods.

Among the new work approved by the 35th CAC, the following are particularly relevant to the APFSWG: Code of Practice for Weed Control to Prevent and Reduce Pyrrolizidine Alkaloid Contamination in Food and Feed (to be developed by the CCCF); and Risk Management Recommendations for Residues of Veterinary Drugs for which no ADI and/or MRLs has been recommended by JECFA due to Specific Human Health Concerns (to be developed by the CCRVDF). In addition the 35th CAC has approved the priority list of veterinary drugs for evaluation or re-evaluation by JECFA, which includes: apramycin; derquantel; emamectin benzoate; gentian violet; lasalocid; monepantel; phenylpyrazole; and zylpaterol hydrochloride. The 35th CAC considered the MRLs for bovine somatotropins (bSTs) and agreed to request JECFA to re-evaluate bSTs and that the full report of JECFA evaluation would be considered by the CCRVDF.

The 35th CAC also considered the implementation of the Strategic Plan 2008-2013 of the Codex Alimentarius Commission and the draft Strategic Plan 2014-2018, and agreed on the process to be followed for its completion for adoption by the 36th Session of the Commission.

With regard to the sessions of the other committees/task force, the following is an updated on matters particular relevant to the APFSWG:

Annex III (contd)

The **43rd CCFH** continued work on the Revision of the Principles for the Establishment and Application of Microbiological Criteria for Foods and the Guidelines for Control of Specific Zoonotic Parasites in Meat: *Trichinella spiralis* and *Cysticercus bovis*. With regard to the latter, the CCFH noted that collaboration with OIE was necessary to ensure that OIE and Codex cover, in an integrated way, the risk reduction measures along the food chain (i.e. pre- and post-harvest). The Committee noted that mechanisms were in place to allow coordination of OIE and Codex work, such as participation of OIE in the meetings of the Committee and in electronic / physical working groups and that the Codex Secretariat, FAO and WHO had been invited by OIE to participate in the ad hoc Expert Group on zoonotic parasites. The Committee also noted that coordination of provision of inputs to Codex and OIE work at national level was necessary to ensure an integrated approach to this work.

The **6th TFAF** (the first meeting of the new Task Force on Animal Feeding) made substantial progress on the development of the Guidelines on Application of Risk Assessment for Feed, which were forwarded to the 35th CAC for adoption as a draft. The TFAF agreed to revise the scope of its second document to focus on the criteria for prioritization of hazards in feed and guidance for governments on how to use these criteria and to request an electronic working group to prepare a revised document for circulation for comments and consideration at its next session. It is expected that the TFAF will complete its work at its next session to be held in Berne (Switzerland) from 4 to 8 February 2013.

At the **27th CCGP** the Observer from OIE withdrew the proposal for the development of joint standards, to improve harmonization of standards on common topics, such as traceability, antimicrobial resistance, salmonellosis and certification in view of the concerns expressed by Codex Members about the approach, in the light of differences between the standard-setting procedures of the two Organisations. The CCGP recognized the importance of the collaboration between Codex and OIE and agreed to establish an electronic working group, chaired by Canada, with the following mandate:

“Reaffirming the commitment to collaboration in the development of standards of mutual interest, respecting the mandates and procedures of Codex Alimentarius and OIE, including a commitment to an open, transparent and inclusive process, the working group will propose guidance to better take into account relevant work that has been undertaken or is in progress by each organization and identify means to consistently reference each other’s standards and guidance, as appropriate.”

The CCGP further agreed that a physical working group, with the same mandate, would be held prior to the next session of the CCGP and the Committee welcomed the kind offer of OIE to provide logistical support to the meeting. The 28th Session of the CCGP is tentatively scheduled in the spring of 2014 in Paris.

The **20th CCRVDF** forwarded for adoption to the Commission several Maximum Residues Limits (MRLs) for Veterinary Drugs: narasin (in cattle tissues) amoxicillin in several tissues; monensin (in cattle’s liver); and the Proposed draft Sampling Plans for Residue Control for Aquatic Animal Products and Derived Edible Products of Aquatic Origin (Table C, Annex B of CAC/GL 71-2009). It finalized the revision of the Risk Analysis Principles applied by the CCRVDF and the Risk Assessment Policy for Residues of Veterinary Drugs in Foods. It proceeded with work on Proposed draft Guidelines on Performance Characteristics for Multi-residues Methods (Appendix to CAC/GL 71-2009), established a Priority List of Veterinary Drugs Requiring Evaluation or Re-evaluation by JECFA and proposed new work on Risk Management Recommendations for Residues of Veterinary Drugs for which no ADI and/or MRLs has been recommended by JECFA due to Specific Human Health Concerns.

The **32nd CCFPP** forwarded for adoption to the Commission several standards for fish and fish products, including the Standard for Smoked Fish, Smoke-Flavoured Fish and Smoke-Dried Fish and for Fresh/Live and Frozen Abalone (*Haliotis* spp). The Committee also finalised work on the Confirmatory Methods for Marine Biotoxins in the Standard for Live and Raw Bivalve Molluscs and proposed new work on a Code of Practice for Fish Sauce.

The **44th CCFH** forwarded for adoption to the Commission the revision of the Principles for the Establishment and Application of Microbiological Criteria for Foods and agreed to continue work on the Guidelines for Control of Specific Zoonotic Parasites in Meat: *Trichinella* spp. and *Cysticercus bovis* and to consider a discussion paper on occurrence and control of parasites in foods at its next session. With regard to the work on *Trichinella* spp. the Committee noted the need for Members to coordinate their position at country-level with national delegates to OIE to further elaborate the guidelines and highlighted the importance to continue strengthening the collaboration with OIE without overlapping with each other’s responsibilities. It further noted that strengthened collaboration with OIE would ensure consistency of Codex and OIE texts and allow countries to implement consistently control measures along the entire food chain.

Forthcoming CODEX Meetings (relevant to the OIE APFSWG)

The 7th TFAF, Berne, Switzerland, 4 to 8 February 2013. The provisional agenda is available at: http://www.codexalimentarius.org/download/report/792/af07_01e.pdf

The 20th CCFICS will be held in Chiang Mai (Thailand) from 18 to 22 February 2013. The Committee will continue its work on the elaboration of the Principles and Guidelines for National Food Control Systems. The Committee will also consider discussion papers addressing: the burden of multiple questionnaires directed at exporting countries; monitoring regulatory performance of national food control systems and the need for further guidance on food safety emergencies.

The 36th CAC will be held in Rome, Italy, from 1 to 5 July 2013. The provisional agenda will be posted on the Codex website: www.codexalimentarius.org/meetings-report.

The 21st CCRVDF will be held in the United States of America from 26 to 30 August 2013.

The provisional agendas of the 20th CCFICS, 36th CAC and 21st CCRVDF will be posted, as soon as available, on the Codex website: www.codexalimentarius.org/meetings-report.

Appendix I

**LISTS OF STANDARDS AND RELATED TEXTS ADOPTED BY THE THIRTY-FIFTH
SESSION OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION**

Part 1 – Standards and Related Texts Adopted at Step 8

Standards and Related Texts	Reference	Status
Food additive provisions of the <i>General Standard for Food Additives</i> (GSFA),	REP12/FA Appendix VI	adopted with amendments
Revision of the <i>Standard for Food Grade Salt</i> (CODEX STAN 150-1985)	REP12/FA Appendix XI	adopted
Maximum Level for Melamine in Liquid Infant Formula (ready to consume)	REP12/CF Appendix V	adopted
Maximum Residue Limits for Pesticides	REP12/PR Appendix II	adopted
Revision to the Codex Classification of Food and Animal Feed (fruit commodity groups)	REP12/PR Appendix VIII	adopted
Principles and Guidance for the Selection of Representative Commodities for the Extrapolation of Maximum Residue Limits for Pesticides to Commodity Groups (including Table 1: Examples of the selection of representative commodities - fruit commodity groups)	REP12/PR Appendix XI	adopted
MRLs for narasin (cattle tissues)	REP12/RVDF Appendix III	adopted
MRLs for ractopamine (cattle and pig tissues: muscle, liver, kidney and fat)	ALINORM 08/31/31 Appendix II	adopted
Revision of the <i>Guidelines on Nutrition Labelling</i> (CAC/GL 2-1985) concerning a new definition of “nutrient reference values”	REP12/FL Appendix IV	adopted
Amendment to the <i>Guidelines for the Production, Processing, Labelling and Marketing of Organically Produced Foods</i> (CAC/GL 32-1999): use of ethylene for ripening of fruit	REP12/FL Appendix VI	adopted

Part 2 – Standards and Related Texts Adopted at Step 5/8 (with omission of Step 6 and 7)

Standards and Related Texts	Reference	Status
Guidelines on the Application of General Principles of Food Hygiene to the Control of Viruses in Food	REP12/FH Appendix III	adopted with amendments
Annex on Melons to the <i>Code of Hygienic Practice for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables</i> (CAC/RCP 53-2003)	REP12/FH Appendix IV	adopted
Food additive provisions of the <i>General Standard for Food Additives</i> (GSFA)	REP12/FA Appendix VI	adopted with amendments
Amendments to the <i>International numbering system</i> (INS) for food additives	REP12/FA Appendix XII	adopted with amendments
<i>Specifications for the identity and purity of food additives</i> arising from the 74th JECFA meeting	REP12/FA Appendix XIII (Part 1)	adopted
Maximum Level for Total Aflatoxins in Dried Figs, including Sampling Plan	REP12/CF Appendix VI	adopted
Maximum Residue Limits for Pesticides	REP12/PR Appendix III	adopted
MRLs for amoxicillin (cattle, sheep and pig tissues and cattle and sheep milk) and monensin (cattle liver)	REP12/RVDF Appendix IV	adopted
Sampling Plans for Residue Control for Aquatic Animal Products and Derived Edible Products of Aquatic Origin (C, Annex B of CAC/GL 71-2009)	REP12/RVDF Appendix VIII	adopted

Annex III (contd)

Appendix I (contd)

Revision of the <i>Guidelines for Use of Nutrition and Health Claims</i> (CAC/GL 23-1997) concerning a new definition for “non-addition claim”, conditions for free of salt claims, amendments to the section on comparative claims and conditions for non-addition of sugars claims	REP12/FL Appendix II	adopted
Revision of the <i>Guidelines on Nutrition Labelling</i> (CAC/GL 2-1985) concerning provisions for mandatory nutrition labelling	REP12/FL Appendix V	adopted

Part 3 – Standards and Related Texts Adopted at Step 5 of the Accelerated Procedure

Standards and Related Texts	Reference	Status
Amendment to the <i>Guidelines for the Production, Processing, Labelling and Marketing of Organically Produced Foods</i> (CAC/GL 32-1999) concerning inclusion of new substances	REP12/FL Appendix VII	adopted

Part 4 – Other Standards and Related Texts Submitted for Adoption

Standards and Related Texts	Reference	Status
Amendment to the <i>Principles and Guidelines for the Conduct of Microbiological Risk Assessment</i>	REP12/FH Appendix II	adopted with amendments
Methods of Analysis in Codex Standards at different steps, including methods of analysis for food grade salt	REP12/MAS Appendix II	adopted with amendments
Revision of the names and descriptors of food categories 16.0 and 12.6.1 of the GSFA	REP12/FA Appendix X	adopted
Revision of the Code of Practice for Source Directed Measures to Reduce Contamination of Food with Chemicals	REP12/CF Appendix III	adopted with amendments
Regional standard for Fermented Soybean Paste (CODEX STAN 298R-2009) - provision for monopotassium tartrate (INS 336(i))	REP11/ASIA para. 10	adopted

Appendix II

**LIST OF DRAFT STANDARDS AND RELATED TEXTS APPROVED AS NEW WORK
BY THE THIRTY-FIFTH SESSION OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION**

Responsible Body	Standard and Related Texts	Reference	Job Code
CCFH	Revision of the <i>Code of Hygienic Practice for Spices and Dried Aromatic Plants</i>	REP12/FH Appendix VII	N01-2012
CCFH	Annex on berries to the <i>Code of Hygienic Practice for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables</i> (CAC/RCP 53-2003)	REP12/FH Appendix VIII	N02-2012
CCCF	Code of Practice for Weed Control to Prevent and Reduce Pyrrolizidine Alkaloid Contamination in Food and Feed	REP12/CF Appendix VII	N03-2012
CCCF	Revision of the Maximum Levels for Lead in Fruit Juices, Milks and Secondary Milk Products, Infant Formula, Canned Fruits and Vegetables, Fruits and Cereal Grains (except buckwheat, cañihua and quinoa) in the <i>General Standard for Contaminants and Toxins in Food and Feed</i>	REP12/CF Appendix VIII	N04-2012
CCCF	Annex for Prevention and Reduction of Aflatoxins and Ochratoxin A in Sorghum to the <i>Code of Practice for the Prevention and Reduction of Mycotoxin Contamination in Cereals</i> (CAC/RCP 51-2003)	REP12/CF Appendix IX	N05-2012
CCCF	Code of Practice for the Prevention and Reduction of Ochratoxin A contamination in Cocoa	REP12/CF Appendix X	N06-2012
CCCF	Code of Practice to Reduce the Presence of Hydrocyanic Acid in Cassava and Cassava Products	REP12/CF para. 165	N07-2012
CCCF	Maximum Levels for hydrocyanic acid in cassava and cassava products	REP12/CF para. 165	N08-2012
CCCF	Levels for Radionuclides in Food	REP12/CF para. 169	N09-2012
CCPR	Priority List for the Establishment of MRLs for Pesticides	REP12/PR Appendix XIII	ongoing
CCRVDF	Priority List of Veterinary Drugs Requiring Evaluation or Re-evaluation by JECFA	REP12/RDVF Appendix IX Part A and B	ongoing
CCRVDF	Risk Management Recommendations for Residues of Veterinary Drugs for which no ADI and/or MRLs has been recommended by JECFA due to Specific Human Health Concerns	REP12/RDVF Appendix X	N10-2012
CCNEA	Regional Standard for Date Paste	REP11/NEA para. 92 CX/CAC 12/35/9-Add.1 Rev. 1	N11-2012

ACTIVITIES OF THE FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS

Many of the activities conducted by the Animal Health Service (AGAH) of FAO related to Veterinary Public Health were closely linked to further developing different aspects of the One Health approach. This approach that initially was developed to address emerging zoonotic and other high impact diseases is gradually shifting to also encompass endemic (zoonotic) diseases and, in recent times, its value for addressing food safety issues has been recognized. FAO as part of the FAO/OIE/WHO Tripartite has also been addressing the ecosystems component of the One Health concept in addition to the animal health domain. The Animal Health Service together with the section in FAO dealing with food safety and quality have cooperated in various aspects linked to animal production food safety. Over 2012 many of the activities that had been initiated during 2011 have been further developed or brought to completion.

Antimicrobial resistance

FAO is supporting national capacities for integrated foodborne pathogen (*Salmonella spp.*, *E. coli*, *Campylobacter spp.* & *Enterococcus spp.*) and AMR surveillance in a number of countries. These have mostly been done in collaboration with the WHO. Recently a project in Kenya was completed, which generated data on foodborne pathogen and AMR prevalence in the beef, pork and poultry value chains. New projects are being initiated in Cambodia, Vietnam (aquaculture) and India with possibility of another project in Nigeria. These projects mirror the approach taken in the completed project in Kenya and the expected outcomes are the establishment of inter-agency task forces on AMR to implement policy priorities, establishment of national surveillance programmes on priority foodborne pathogens and AMR, antimicrobials usage monitoring programmes; as well as the implementation of national policies and best practices by meat value chain operators/actors to address emerging issues.

Guidance for value chain operators on appropriate use of veterinary inputs in animal production. This is being developed to address veterinary residues in products of animal origin and the risks of AMR development arising from inappropriate usage of antimicrobial agents in animal production. The material will be disseminated directly to small holder livestock keepers, especially in countries where activities mentioned before are being undertaken. FAO has also commissioned under a letter of agreement, an innovative approach, targeting rural and peri-urban small holder livestock keepers, which uses established TV programmes and SMS through mobile phones, to dissemination of good practice guidance to promote prudent and responsible usage of veterinary inputs in animal production.

Guidance on risk based official veterinary control of meat hygiene/safety for developing country is being developed and implemented. This is intended to provide national competent authorities with risk based decision making tools to ensure more risk based approach to meat inspection and hygiene, which addresses priority zoonotic and foodborne diseases and supports the achievement of national food safety objectives. Draft guidance will be pilot tested in at least 3 countries in 2013 and will be finalized thereafter for dissemination to other countries. FAO is supporting the strengthening of official veterinary controls in abattoirs as there is a need to improve the content and utility of existing guidance to address contemporary meat hygiene and food safety concerns, development of appropriate guidance on risk analysis and risk based approaches to inspection and hygiene, development of guidance and tools for animal and zoonotic disease surveillance and reporting in animal slaughter establishments; and development of laboratory capacities for detection and diagnosis of priority foodborne pathogens and zoonotic diseases. FAO VPH unit has developed appropriate activities to address issues in the next biennium.

FAO veterinary public health (VPH) continuing professional development (CPD) project - includes a food safety stream with more than 10 modules/lessons under the stream. The CPD initiative is aimed at developing and enhancing the professional competences of veterinarians and veterinary para professionals working in VPH and food safety and is being piloted in Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi and Uganda. Training materials have been developed by national institutions (vet faculties) and will be peer reviewed by partner institutions in developing and developed countries, with a view to finalization and implementation of CPD courses by the end of 2013;

The Animal Production Service of FAO has prepared a ‘Quality Assurance Manual for Microbiology in Animal Feed Analysis Laboratories’. The manual will be available for distribution during early 2013. It describes procedures for detection and isolation of microbiological agents which may be found in animal feeds. The Quality Management System is also described in this manual, which is based on ISO/IEC 17025:2005 principles and EA-04/10 ‘Accreditation for Microbiological Laboratories’ and is intended to help laboratory personnel maintain the standards expected while providing a consistent, reliable, efficient and professional service with the level of quality required and expected by the laboratory’s customers.

An International Workshop on the Use of Antimicrobials in Livestock Production and Antimicrobial Resistance in the Asia–Pacific Region was held in Negombo, Sri Lanka, on 22–23 October 2012 by FAO in conjunction with the 36th Session of the Animal Production and Health Commission for Asia (APHCA)..

The epidemiology and impact of antimicrobial resistance (AMR) and the links between antimicrobial use (AMU) in livestock and AMR in humans were discussed and APHCA delegates presented short country reports on AMU and AMR in their respective countries. Greater attention to AMU and AMR needs to be paid by animal health authorities in the Asia–Pacific region as there is a wide variation in the awareness of and capacity to manage the risks from AMR across APHCA member countries. There is a need for establishing National Task Forces on Antimicrobials that are multidisciplinary and cross-sectoral to provide a forum to lead policy development and support action on AMU and AMR; improve awareness at different levels (including farmers and farmer organizations; veterinarians, paraveterinarians, veterinary faculty staff members; policy-makers; consumers and civil society) and develop, review and improve practical legislation and regulatory frameworks. Furthermore, the monitoring and surveillance of AMU and AMR needs to be undertaken and data collected on AMU (e.g. types and of volume of antimicrobials used, purpose of use). Alternatives to AMU, particularly improved infection control, good husbandry practices, and farm biosecurity are further key issues that need to be further explored. In conclusion, AMU is not just a technical issue and required consideration of social, economic, environmental, ethical and policy factors. Delegates at the meeting recognized the need for support from WHO for countries to take action to reduce risks from AMR, and that both FAO and OIE produce useful guidance including a range of standards and guidelines for good practice. Delegates agreed for APHCA to facilitate obtaining external funding to support undertaking some longer-term actions in a number of APHCA member countries.

ACTIVITIES OF THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION

Global Foodborne Infections Network (GFN)

GFN Strategic objective have been modified as the following:

To support Member States' capacity to strengthen national and regional integrated surveillance, investigation, prevention and control of foodborne and other enteric infections by:

- i. promoting the benefits of integrated surveillance through the engagement of decision-makers;
- ii. fostering multi-sectoral partnerships relevant to regional and country goals and needs;
- iii. supporting Member States to generate data to drive evidence-based decision making to reduce the incidence of foodborne diseases.

At its Annual September 2012 Meeting in Lyon, France, the GFN Steering Committee took on the challenge of outlining its' accountability roadmap and planning its' future Performance Measurement Framework. Related meeting outcomes included: the development of GFN performance measurement group and organizational templates; the re-alignment of GFN goals and; support for the development of GFN training needs and governance criteria. Performance measurement framework meeting outcomes included: the need for a GFN governance document; the identification of three GFN core activity areas in training, mentoring and communications; the development and monitoring of a yearly operational planning document to align yearly GFN activities with GFN's final performance measurement framework and; a GFN budget that outlines total funding by partner as well as yearly GFN costs.

OIE and WHO are exploring how to work together more closely on capacity building activities and efforts are being made to participate in each other's activities as a first step with an option to improve joint activities on laboratory, epidemiology and AMR capacity building in countries.

Expert Consultation on the Global View of Campylobacteriosis

A WHO Expert Consultation on the Global View of Campylobacteriosis was organized in collaboration with FAO and OIE hosted by the WHO Collaborating Centre for Reference and Research on Campylobacter, Utrecht University, Netherlands on 9-11 July 2012. The objectives were 1) to review the progress made since the previous two consultations, note successful approaches and lessons learned and identify challenges in controlling Campylobacter from farm to table and reducing the human health burden and attributable health consequences; 2) to consider cross-cutting areas, such food and waterborne campylobacteriosis and antimicrobial resistance, and take into account the context of both developed and developing countries; 3) to provide options for the WHO, FAO and OIE for developing ways forward to reduce Campylobacter in the food chain and the burden of foodborne campylobacteriosis. The meeting was organized under the following thematic areas: 1) burden of disease and health impact; 2) surveillance, antimicrobial resistance; 3) source attribution; 4) impact of control measures.

The consultation report will be published shortly and will present discussions, future steps and options for lowering the burden of foodborne and waterborne campylobacteriosis and associated antimicrobial resistance.

* * *

Antimicrobial Resistance: Critically Important Antimicrobials for Human Health and WHO Advisory Group on Integrated Surveillance of Antimicrobial Resistance (AGISAR)

The World Health Organization (WHO) has developed and applied criteria to rank antimicrobials according to their relative importance in human medicine. Clinicians, regulatory agencies, policy-makers and other stakeholders can use this ranking when developing risk management strategies for the use of antimicrobials in food production animals. The use of the list will help preserve the effectiveness of currently available antimicrobials. The list was developed in Canberra in 2005 and has been subsequently re-examined and updated during WHO expert meetings in Denmark in 2007 (1st revision) and in 2009 (2nd revision), and lastly in Oslo, Norway in 2011 (3rd revision). The WHO list is available at: www.who.int/foodborne_disease/resistance/cia/en

The WHO Advisory Group on Integrated Surveillance of Antimicrobial Resistance (WHO-AGISAR, http://www.who.int/foodborne_disease/resistance/agisar/en/index.html) was established in December 2008 to support WHO's effort to minimize the public health impact of antimicrobial resistance associated with the use of antimicrobials in food animals. In particular, the Advisory Group will assist WHO on matters related to the integrated surveillance of antimicrobial resistance and the containment of food-related antimicrobial resistance. One of the main objectives of WHO-AGISAR is to promote harmonization of methods as well as data and experience sharing in the area of foodborne antimicrobial resistance at global level.

The WHO Advisory Group on Integrated Surveillance of Antimicrobial Resistance comprises over 30 internationally-renowned experts in a broad range of disciplines relevant to antimicrobial resistance, appointed following a web-published call for advisers, as well as representatives from FAO, OIE, EFSA and ECDC. WHO-AGISAR holds regular telephone conferences and annual face-to-face meetings. WHO-AGISAR 4th annual meeting took place in June 2012 in Aix-en-Provence, France and was attended by OIE staff and experts.

WHO-AGISAR contribute to enhancing the capacity of Member States, particularly developing countries, through training courses (using the GFN training platform), focused research projects and country sentinel studies.

* * *

NB: At the joint High Level Meeting to Address Health Risks at the Human-animal-ecosystems Interface (November, 2011; http://www.who.int/influenza/human_animal_interface/HLTm_human_animal_ecosystems_nov_2011.pdf), AMR was highlighted as an “entry point” for many of the discussions (along with rabies and zoonotic influenza). These health issues were selected as there is already existing experience and best practices on how to address them cross-sectorally which could be used to develop approaches for other health issues at the interface, and also because they were deemed as important in and of themselves for ongoing tripartite focus.

* * *

Joint FAO/WHO Expert Meetings on Microbiological Risk Assessment (JEMRA)

The 42nd Session of the Codex Committee on Food Hygiene (CCFH) held in December 2010 requested FAO and WHO to review the current status of knowledge of parasites in food to better assess the global problem associated with these, the commodities involved and the related public health and socio-economic/trade issues to identify parasite/commodity groups of greatest concern. In order to address this request FAO and WHO initiated a series of activities this culminated in an expert meeting on 3-7 September 2012. Preceding the meeting, relevant data were identified and collated through a formal “call for data”, a literature review and written reports prepared by experts representing different regions. A list of 95 potential foodborne parasites was initially identified for consideration. Through a stepwise documented process this was reduced to a list of 24 parasites for ranking. Experts further identified specific vehicles of transmission for each of the 24 parasites. The parasites were ranked using a multicriteria-based approach, which used 9 criteria and 7 criteria weights (three criteria for disease severity were combined into one criterion) reflecting the relative importance of each criterion to the overall score. The overall score for each parasite was calculated by normalized parasite criteria scores multiplied by fractional weights and summed. The meeting also concluded that since criteria weights were calculated separately from the individual parasite scoring, alternative weighting schemes reflecting the judgments of risk

managers could be used to generate alternate ranking, using the scoring of the parasites undertaken by the expert meeting. Furthermore, the meeting highlighted some considerations for risk management including knowledge on foodborne attribution and possible approaches for the control of some of these foodborne parasites. Reference is also made to existing risk management texts as appropriate. The preliminary report is available at <http://www.fao.org/food/food-safety-quality/a-z-index/foodborne-parasites/en/> and <http://www.who.int/foodsafety/micro/jemra/meetings/sep12/en/index.html>. In addition, according to requests from the 43rd Session of the CCFH held in December 2011, FAO and WHO have been conducting peer-review of risk profiles for *Trichinella* spp. and *Cysticercus bovis* by selected experts in the area of parasitology, and preparing for development of risk-based examples for them to illustrate the level of consumer protection likely to be achieved with different post-harvest risk management options, depending on the availability of data and information.

More details on the recent JEMRA activities can be found at ftp://ftp.fao.org/codex/meetings/CCFH/CCFH44/fh44_04e.pdf.

* * *

The Foodborne Disease Burden Epidemiology Reference Group (FERG)

From 7 to 10 November 2011, WHO hosted the strategic planning meeting of the Foodborne Disease Burden Epidemiology Reference Group (FERG) in Durres, Albania, combined with a kick-off event of the FERG pilot foodborne disease burden studies. The objectives of the strategic planning meeting were in view of the increased complexity of the WHO Initiative to Estimate the Global Burden of Foodborne Diseases as well as the changed environment in which the Initiative is operating, to:

- update the Initiative's strategic framework, its milestones and timelines;
- redefine the technical scope of the Initiative, including the selection of priority areas for foodborne disease burden estimation;
- identify key activities and resource needs for implementation; and
- update FERG processes, roles and responsibilities.

Following the strategic planning meeting, a new FERG Computational Task Force was established in March 2012 to advise and assist WHO and its Member States to convert results of (a) the global epidemiological reviews for mortality, morbidity and disability in each of the major foodborne diseases and (b) epidemiological data resulting from the FERG country studies into DALYs. This task force met in October 2012 for the first time to revise the task force's work plan and appraise the progress of the six Task Force subgroups made so far.

In 2012, the FERG pilot foodborne disease burden studies in Albania, Japan, Thailand and Uganda took up speed and, with the technical support of the FERG Country Studies Task Force, progressed well according to the national contexts. A needs assessment for food safety situation analysis and knowledge translation is, moreover, currently being undertaken by the FERG to develop targeted capacity building modules for the four pilot countries.

Works commenced by FERG in the areas of aflatoxicosis, peanut allergies, human trichinellosis and foodborne trematodiasis were furthermore published in the peer-reviewed literature (articles available on our website at http://www.who.int/foodsafety/foodborne_disease/ferg/en/index7.html).

It is foreseen for the FERG to have finalized its work by the end of 2013, with the aim to officially present the FERG's results at an event in early 2014.

For more information please contact foodsafety@who.int.

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Promoting health by decreasing microbial contamination

WHO has extended the Five Keys to Safer Food concept to cover additional groups across the farm to table continuum to promote safe food handling practices. The manual Five keys to growing safer fruits and vegetables: promoting health by decreasing microbial contamination is designed to support food safety education of rural workers who grow fresh fruits and vegetables for themselves, their families and for sale in local markets. The manual describes key practices and raises awareness of the links between the health of humans, animals and the environment and how failures in good hygienic practices in one sector can affect the others.

The final edition of the manual (pilot tested in Belize, Guatemala y El Salvador) is available in English, French and Spanish at http://www.who.int/foodsafety/consumer/5keys_growing_safer/en/index.html

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The International Food Safety Authorities Network (INFOSAN)

INFOSAN is a joint FAO/WHO initiative which includes the participation of 178 Member States. The aim of the network is to promote the rapid exchange of information during food safety related events, share information on important food safety related issues of global interest, promote partnership and collaboration between countries, and help countries strengthen their capacity to manage food safety emergencies. To accomplish this, INFOSAN works with a number of partners at the international and regional level. INFOSAN receives information from its members and monitors for food safety related events of potential international concern to alert to its network members. During the past year, the INFOSAN Secretariat has been involved in the coordination of information between network members during dozens of food safety events with potential international implications.

Following the first global meeting of INFOSAN in 2010, a number of the resulting recommendations to enhance communication and collaboration among members have since been implemented. One such recommendation was to improve the web-based information-sharing mechanism. Since the meeting, the INFOSAN Community Website was developed and launched in 2012, and provides a platform for exchanging routine and emergency food safety information between INFOSAN Members. Another strong recommendation coming from the global meeting was to develop regionally based strategies to strengthen INFOSAN participation. We have since worked with our colleagues from WHO-WPRO and INFOSAN members in Asia to develop a regional strategy to enhance participation in INFOSAN among Asian countries. While INFOSAN is indeed a global network, addressing specific regional needs can help to strengthen the network overall.

We have also been focusing this year on expanding our membership and asking member countries to nominate additional Focal Points from the various national authorities with a stake in food safety. In relation to this task, the INFOSAN Secretariat has extended INFOSAN membership to include OIE National Focal points for Food Safety in order to further strengthen cross-sectoral coordination and cooperation at national and global levels.

Several tools to provide guidance in dealing with food safety emergencies have been or are being developed, which will help Member States in the strengthening of their national systems, the most recent of which is about establishing or improving national food recall systems. These documents are published on our website.

For more information, please visit: http://www.who.int/foodsafety/fs_management/infosan/en/index.html

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WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2013

The Working Group agreed that its work programme for 2013 would include:

1. Horizontal issues

- a) Antimicrobial resistance.
- b) The *ad hoc* Group on Vaccines in Relation to New and Emerging Technologies – animals and animal products derived from biotechnological interventions – review texts for potential food safety implications of biotechnology vaccines when this work is undertaken. Follow any developments in nanotechnology relevant to the work of the Working Group.
- c) Animal production food safety in veterinary education.
- d) Animal production food safety in veterinary legislation.
- e) Food safety issues arising from the on-going work on zoonoses at the human animal ecosystem interface ('One Health').
- f) Evaluating performance of competent authorities including Veterinary Services.

2. Disease-specific issues

- a) *Terrestrial Code* chapter on brucellosis.
- b) *Terrestrial Code* chapter on *Trichinella* infection and linkages to on-going Codex work.
- c) *Terrestrial Code* chapter on porcine cysticercosis.
- d) *Terrestrial Code* chapter on echinococcosis/hydatidosis.
- e) Potential standard development on *Salmonella* in intensive pig production ensuring a whole food chain approach and linkages to any Codex work.
- f) Follow up of literature review on verotoxigenic *Escherichia coli* (VTEC/STEC)
- g) Generic aspects of food safety control systems associated with contamination with enteric pathogens and linkages to Codex work.
- h) Generic aspects of food safety control systems associated with parasites and linkages to Codex work.

3. Relationship between OIE and Codex

- a) Encourage enhanced OIE input into Codex texts and vice versa.
- b) Encourage continued close collaboration between the Codex Secretariat and the OIE Headquarters.
- c) Identification of areas where closer collaboration between OIE and Codex on the development of standards could be desirable.
- d) Follow up on the work of the Codex Committee on General Principles (CCGP) electronic Working Group on Codex/OIE Cooperation.

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