

codex alimentarius commission

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
ORGANIZATION
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

WORLD HEALTH
ORGANIZATION

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Agenda Item 3

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JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

AD-HOC INTERGOVERNMENTAL CODEX TASK FORCE ON ANIMAL FEEDING

First Session

Copenhagen, Denmark, 13-15 June 2000

MATTERS OF INTERESTS FROM FAO, WHO AND OIE

BACKGROUND

1. This document is an information paper which summarizes matters of interests from FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations), WHO (World Health Organization) and OIE (Office International des Epizooties) with regard to the issues and interests on animal feeding and food safety.
2. With the aim of ensuring the safety and quality of foods of animal origin, the Task Force should develop guidelines or standards as appropriate on Good Animal Feeding practices to complete and extend the work already done by relevant Codex Committees on the Draft Code of Practice for Good Animal Feeding while taking full account of and collaborating with, as appropriate, work carried out by relevant Codex Committees, and other relevant international bodies, including FAO, WHO and OIE as identified by the 23rd Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission in the Terms of Reference. (ALINORM 99/37, Appendix VI). This document provides such activities of FAO, WHO and OIE to the Task Force for information.

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS (FAO)

3. FAO provides technical advice and publishes material on animal feeding and related aspects of veterinary public health by professional staff of the Animal Production and Health Division (AGA). Animal feed safety is now one of the priority areas in AGA programme. AGA has a substantial information system on animal feed resources available on the World Wide Web, CD-Rom and in printed publications. There are detailed scientific and practical details of over 700 feedstuffs, with data sheets, full text articles and reviews. They form the Animal Feed Resources Information System (AFRIS) which is available at <http://www.fao.org/WAICENT/FAOINFO/AGRICULT/AGA/AGAP/FRG/FRG1.htm>.
4. There is increasing emphasis on feed safety in the current biennium and several reports are already commissioned on this subject (May 2000), including the use of wastes and by-products, and a new staff member is being appointed in AGA with terms of reference relating to animal feed safety.
5. An FAO monograph on Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) was produced in English and Arabic in 1993¹ and updated in 1998². Given the problems that have arisen with animal feed contamination in several countries, FAO seeks to provide guidelines and systems of feed management which will ensure the

¹ Kimberlin, R.H., 1993. Bovine spongiform encephalopathy (Arabic, English). FAO Animal Production and Health Paper (FAO), no. 109 / Rome (Italy), FAO, 1993, 75 p.

² Wilesmith, J.W., 1998. Manual on bovine spongiform encephalopathy, FAO Animal Health Manual (FAO), no. 2 / Rome (Italy), FAO, 56 p.

safety of raw materials and compound feeds entering the food chain through animal production, feeding standards for livestock, and to implement these through information and training. FAO member countries wish to ensure good feed management and avoid disease and contamination that could be hazardous to human health and meet international standards for import and export.

6 On feed irradiation, there is a Code of Good Irradiation Practice for the Control of Pathogenic Microorganisms in Poultry Feed issued in 1995 by the International Consultative Group on Food Irradiation (ICGFI), Joint FAO/IAEA Division of Nuclear Techniques in Food and Agriculture, International Atomic Energy Agency, Vienna.

7 Three outputs from the current (2000-2001) AGA Programme of Work and Budget are relevant :

- *Preparation of a livestock information CD-Rom and Web page containing FAO and external publications on feed resources and livestock production systems*
- *Guidelines on feeds, feeding systems and feed safety, including intensive and semi-commercial pigs and poultry in developing countries.*
- *Enhanced knowledge of feeding systems for ruminant livestock based on high value forages and other high quality feeds including byproducts.*

8 Food safety as affected by animal feedstuffs will be discussed at the Twenty-second FAO Regional Conference for Europe, Porto, Portugal, 24 –28 July 2000. A discussion paper has been prepared and will be available from the FAO website.

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (WHO)

WHO'S WORK IN RELATION TO ANIMAL FEEDING

Consultation on Global Principles for the Containment of Antimicrobial Resistance due to Antimicrobial Use in Livestock

9 The Consultation will be held in Geneva on 5-9 June 2000 with the participation of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Office International des Epizooties (OIE).

10 As part of the development of the Global Strategy for the Containment and Surveillance of Antimicrobial Resistance, WHO Recommendations on the Prudent Use of Antimicrobials in Food-producing Animals will be developed. The WHO Recommendations will address the quality of production, licensing, distribution, sales and use of antimicrobials in livestock.

11 In addition to veterinary, medical and academic participants, various international organizations and institutions, which have both interests and important activities in the area of non-human use of antimicrobials have been invited to participate. This broad spectrum of participation will ensure the widest possible acceptance of the WHO Recommendation as well as long-term partnerships through their future implementation.

12 In preparation of the consultation a WHO meeting of experts to draft the WHO recommendations, was held on 13-15 January 2000, in Geneva. The draft recommendations are currently being discussed through a moderated Electronic Discussion Group (EDG) during the period 15 April to 15 May 2000. The EDG will be moderated by WHO. Submission to the discussion group can be made by e-mailing to <http://www.who.int/emc/diseases/zoo/edg/home.html>. The EDG is open to all parties involved in the use of antimicrobials and the containment of antimicrobial resistance.

Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies (TSE)

13 WHO has initiated a number of meetings about the implication of TSE on human health. Most recently, the Consultation on Public Health and Animal Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies – Epidemiology, Risk and Research Requirements was held, with the participation of the OIE, on 1-3 December 1999 in Geneva. The Consultation analysed the current knowledge of various types of TSE and its implication on human health. The report of the Consultation is available from the following website: <http://www.who.int/emc/diseases/bse/index.html>.

Food Safety Issues Associated With Products From Aquaculture

14 A Joint FAO/NACA/WHO Study Group in July 1997 considered food safety issues associated with farmed finfish and crustaceans. The principal conclusion was that an integrated approach — involving close collaboration between the aquaculture, agriculture, food safety, health and education sectors — is needed to identify and control hazards associated with products from aquaculture. Food safety assurance should be included in fish farm management and form an integral part of the farm-to-table food safety continuum. Chemical and biological hazards that should be taken into account in public health policies concerning products from aquaculture were also discussed. Guidance for fish farmers to identify hazards and develop appropriate hazard-control strategies was also discussed. The report of the consultation (WHO Technical Report Series 883) is available from the following website: <http://www.who.int/fsf/new.htm>

Dioxin Contamination

15 WHO held an expert consultation on assessment of the health risk of dioxins: re-evaluation of the Tolerable Daily Intake (TDI) in May 1998 in Geneva. The consultation evaluated the tolerable daily dose of dioxins to which a human can be exposed without harm. In light of new epidemiological data concerning the effects of dioxins at low levels of exposure and based on animal studies, the TDI was reduced from 10 picograms/kilogram body weight to a range of 1 to 4 picograms/kilogram body weight. The executive summary of the consultation is available from the following website: <http://www.who.int/pcs>

Feed Irradiation

16 The Joint FAO/IAEA/WHO Study Group on High Dose Irradiation was convened in Geneva, 15 - 20 September 1997. In their report (Technical Report Series 890, WHO, 1999), the experts concluded that food irradiated to any dose appropriate to achieve the intended technological objective is both safe to consume and nutritionally adequate. This conclusion is based in part on animal feedings studies in a broad cross-section of species, including rats, mice, dogs, quails, hamsters, chickens, pigs and monkeys, fed a variety of laboratory diets and food components. Consequently, it may be assumed that the Study Group conclusion would also apply to irradiated animal feed. In this regard, irradiation of animal feed has been used to assure the safety and quality of animal feed in some research laboratories and may be considered a potentially important control measure for certain microbial agents in the feed of food-producing animals. The report is available from the following website: <http://www.who.int/fsf/new.htm>

OFFICE INTERNATIONAL DES EPIZOOTIES (OIE)

17 The issues and interests of the OIE as related to animal feeding and food safety are complementary to those of the FAO and WHO. The primary emphasis of the OIE is on infectious diseases; consequently the main area of interest to the OIE regarding animal feeds are infectious diseases that can be transmitted through feed. The OIE has developed standards to prevent infectious agents being included in animal feed. The following are some specific examples of diseases for which the OIE *International Animal Health Code* (the *Code*) has established standards for animal feed:

- Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy: The *Code* specifies which animal products should not be used as animal feed.
- Foot and Mouth Disease: The *Code* outlines how straw and forage that comes from countries with foot and mouth should be treated.
- Swine Vesicular Disease and peste des petits ruminants (PPR): The *Code* outlines the requirement for importation from infected countries of meat and flour from blood, meat, defatted bones, hooves and claws (from pigs).
- Rinderpest: The *Code* outlines requirements for importation of blood and meat-meals (from domestic or wild ruminants and swine) from infected countries.

18 The OIE has an Ad hoc Group on Antimicrobial Resistance; however, this Group does not address antimicrobial resistance due to antimicrobials in feed. This area is being considered to be the responsibility of FAO and WHO.

19 The OIE Administrative Commission has recently prepared a new Strategic Plan for the activities of the OIE in the period 2001-2005. This plan states that OIE involvement in feedstuffs could be counterproductive to the overall performance of the organisation. It recommends that the OIE should not proceed in this area at this time, but rather should monitor and re-evaluate the appropriateness of involvement during the next five years. However, the Strategic Plan emphasises that the OIE should work closely with FAO and WHO and should negotiate a better defined and co-operative role with the Codex Alimentarius to address the issue of food safety. Based on these recommendations, the OIE will continue to pursue a complementary role with FAO and WHO, but at this time will limit activities in the area of animal feeds to those dealing with transmission of infectious diseases.