

codex alimentarius commission



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
ORGANIZATION
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

WORLD
HEALTH
ORGANIZATION



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Agenda Item 2 (b)

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JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

AD-HOC INTERGOVERNMENTAL CODEX TASK FORCE ON ANIMAL FEEDING

Fourth Session

Copenhagen, Denmark, 25 - 28 March 2003

Report on FAO, WHO and OIE activities

FAO

1. FAO (Animal Production and Health Division) continues to provide extensive information on animal feeds and feeding through its Animal Feed Resources Information System (AFRIS)¹ on the Internet, and associated publications and documents. In particular, it also continues to provide official information from international and national organizations on feed utilization and safety, contaminants, anti-microbial resistance, BSE and transboundary zoonotic diseases, etc. through its Food and Feed Safety Gateway². This is being further developed as the Veterinary Public Health website as a focal point for information for veterinarians and public health professionals.
2. The Report and Proceedings of the Expert Consultation and Workshop on Alternative Protein Sources for the Animal Feed Industry held in Bangkok, 29 April-3 May 2002³, with support from the International Feed Industry Federation, are in course of publication. The proceedings are available on-line at the web-site.
3. FAO organized jointly with OIE and the WB, an International Workshop on Food Safety Issues in connection with the 27th World Veterinary Congress. The workshop, held in Tunis from 25 to 28 September 2002, covered also topics such as safety of animal feed and lessons learnt from the BSE crisis, antimicrobial resistance and use of antimicrobials as growth promoters.
4. FAO is developing guidelines for Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) along the food-chain in the context of Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development (SARD). There has been a joint initiative with EMBRAPA, Brazil, to define GAPs for a number of animal production systems within selected agro-ecosystems which will be published shortly.
5. FAO continues to work with countries world-wide through its Technical Cooperation Programmes (TCP) and General Cooperation Programmes (GCP). It provides comprehensive technical assistance to improve feed safety and particularly to address risk management for such issues as BSE, feed-borne infections, and feed contamination. FAO also continues assisting with the development of the feed industry, feed information and utilization of locally available feed resources. Projects are being implemented for capacity building for surveillance and prevention of BSE and other zoonotic diseases. They include elements of risk analysis, surveillance and diagnosis, as well as training in the feed and meat industries.

¹ <http://www.fao.org/ag/AGA/AGAP/FRG/afris/default.htm>

² <http://www.fao.org/livestock/AGAP/FRG/Feedsafety/feedsafety.htm>

³ <http://www.fao.org/livestock/workshop/feed/faoec2002.htm>

6. FAO is revising its 1995 publication entitled Worldwide Regulations for Mycotoxin in Food and Feed. The revised publication will cover the mycotoxin regulations in over 120 countries and will be published in May 2003.

WHO

WHO activities in relation to animal feeding, antimicrobial usage and antimicrobial resistance

WHO international review panel for evaluation of the termination of the use of antimicrobial growth promoters in Denmark (November, 2002, Fouloum, Denmark)

7. In the context of the “WHO Global principles for Containment of Antimicrobial resistance in Animals intended to Food” which provide a framework of recommendations to reduce the overuse and misuse of antimicrobials in food animals for the protection of human health, there was a voluntary ban of use of antibiotics as growth promoters in Denmark in 1999.

8. On 6-7 November 2002, an international invitational symposium “Beyond Antimicrobial Growth Promoters” was held at the Danish Institute of Agricultural Sciences. A total of 140 participants from 12 different countries participated in the symposium, which had 32 scientific presentations in 6 scientific sessions on effects of the termination of antimicrobial growth promoter use on bacterial resistance to antimicrobials, animal welfare and productivity, animal health and the use of antimicrobials in food animals for therapy and prophylaxis, food prices and the competitiveness of agricultural industries and the environment.

9. In conjunction with the symposium, the World Health Organization (WHO) organized an independent expert review of the Danish experiences.

10. The potential consequences to human health, animal health, animal , animal production, national economy and environmental impact resulting from Denmark’s program for cessation of the use of antimicrobial growth promoters in food animal production, particularly swine and broiler chicken, was reviewed by the WHO independent, multidisciplinary, international expert committee, and results of that review will be published.

11. The outcome is intended to develop, in the relation to the Global Principles and where appropriate, recommendations for further improvement of national implementation strategies for the containment of antimicrobial resistance, implementation of the Global Principles, and to support other countries in their endeavors to establish programmes towards prudent use of antimicrobials in food animals.

OIE

12. During the past year, the more important OIE activities, relevant to the subject matter of this Task Force, are the ones related to the Working Groups on Animal Production Food Safety and on Animal Welfare. These two new subject areas for the OIE were identified as priorities in the 2001-2005 OIE Strategic Plan. OIE Member Countries strongly stated during the last General Session that the OIE was well positioned to provide international leadership on animal welfare and that the OIE needed to strengthen its standard-setting activities in animal production food safety in order to support and complement the work of the Codex. At the 70th General Session in May 2002, the International Committee unanimously adopted resolutions defining the role of the OIE in these two new areas.

13. The OIE’s goal in animal production food safety is to reduce food-borne risks to human health due to hazards arising from animals at the farm level. These hazards includes pathogens which do not always cause clinical signs in animals, and which may need to be added to the OIE list of notifiable diseases. The OIE recognises that this goal can only be achieved in close collaboration with Codex, as well as the WHO and the FAO. To this end, the OIE has already moved to strengthen formal and informal relationships with such international organizations and with relevant expert groups. The Working Group on animal production food safety saw one of its main roles as assisting the OIE, at the working level, to establish and/or strengthen both formal and informal relationships with such international agencies and experts.

14. The Working Group particularly recognised that OIE needed to work closely with the CAC, and that such cooperation was essential to minimise duplication, avoid gaps and ensure the most effective utilisation of available expertise. This cooperation may comprise technical input into the development or revision of standards of the other organisation or, when appropriate, the joint development of standards and related texts through expert Ad hoc Groups and Joint Task Forces, utilising procedures for the OIE, developed by this Working Group, and agreed by the two organisations.

15. The Working Group recognized that the OIE was entering into new formal agreements with the WHO and FAO, and believed that a specific agreement should be entered into with the Codex to formalise the above working relationship. Such an agreement would lay out the criteria for determining whether joint standards should be developed, or mutual recognition given to relevant standards adopted by either of the two organisations. The OIE is interested in a similar collaboration with this Task Force on Feed Safety.

16. The Working Group, which includes in its membership the Chairman and the Secretary of the Codex, also reflects a broad geographic base and will give special consideration to the needs of developing countries. The Working Group has drawn up a detailed work programme for the OIE on the development of recommendations on animal production food safety covering pre-slaughter issues and those prior to the first transformation of the animal products, with the primary focus being on food safety measures applicable at the farm level. The Working Group will also review existing International Animal Health Code chapters dealing with food safety and zoonoses, and will recommend necessary changes in standards and additional work in accordance with the overall work programme.

17. In coordinating this activity, the Working Group will ensure that stakeholders' consultation and transparency needs are met, that multidisciplinary teams are used appropriately, and that Veterinary Administrations and the OIE adopt a generic framework for managing risks and hazard exposure modelling throughout the food chain.

18. On animal welfare, the International Committee recognised that, as animal welfare was a complex, multi-faceted public policy issue which included scientific, ethical, economic and political dimensions, the OIE needed to develop a detailed vision and strategy incorporating and balancing these dimensions. The International Committee decided that the OIE would give priority to the welfare of animals used in agriculture and aquaculture and that, within that group, the topics of transportation, humane slaughter and killing for disease control be addressed first, followed by housing and management. Other topics, such as research animals and wildlife, would be addressed as resources permitted.

19. The Director General has also formed a permanent Working Group to coordinate and manage these animal welfare activities. At its first meeting in October, the Working Group saw as its primary task the development of policies and guiding principles to provide a sound foundation from which to elaborate draft recommendations and standards in its area of work. The Working Group then developed a detailed work programme for the first year, including how specific topics would be addressed through Ad hoc Groups utilising expertise inside and outside government.

20. Although participation by non-governmental organisations in OIE standard-setting activities is not the norm, the OIE is aware of the importance of involvement by a broad range of stakeholders in discussions on this complex topic. It is keen to make use of all available expertise and resources, including those from academia, the research community, non-governmental and other relevant organisations, to ensure the best outcomes, and has commenced discussions with various non-governmental organisations. The OIE, however, recognises that the organisations providing advice must represent a broad international view as standards, guidelines and recommendations developed by the OIE must be relevant to all its Member Countries. The OIE will report again on the progress made in these two new areas at its General Session in May 2003.