Fact sheets

World information on animal diseases

One of the primary objectives of the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) is to ensure the transparency of global animal health situation by providing animal diseases information worldwide. OIE Members have a legal obligation to report their animal disease situation – including on zoonoses - in the most timely and transparent manner. In order to help Members fulfil this duty, the OIE developed the World Animal Health Information System (WAHIS). This unique extensive database is a milestone in OIE efforts to improve the transparency, efficiency and speed with which global animal health information is disseminated throughout the world.

WAHIS AND WAHID

The 178 OIE Member Countries and Territories use the World Animal Health Information System (WAHIS) web application to fulfil their obligation of providing information through official reports on any relevant animal disease, including zoonoses detected within their territories. In addition, an alert mechanism, the OIE Early Warning System, is used to notify the international community of reports received.

In 2012 OIE launched an updated version of WAHIS with considerable improvements. The major change of this new version is the integration of a new section for wildlife disease notification. WAHIS allows Members to complement compulsory information on OIE-listed diseases of domestic and wild species, but also to notify, on a voluntary basis specific wildlife diseases that are not officially OIE-listed.

TRANSPARENCY

Since April 2006, all emergency notifications and animal health reports of all Members and even non-members of the OIE can be found in the online database World Animal Health Information Database Interface (WAHID). It also offers all available data on animal diseases, including zoonoses, through multiple visualization possibilities: per country, region, week, month and year. In addition, the OIE releases the annual World Animal Health report in two volumes that compile all data received by the OIE from its Members and non-members during the previous year. This publication is one of kind. WAHIS and WAHID contain information on both terrestrial and aquatic animal diseases.

WHY REPORT ANIMAL DISEASE OUTBREAKS?

In a global world and time of exponential growth in travel and trade, pathogens permanently cross borders, continents and oceans.

By notifying the OIE of epidemiological events, a country demonstrates transparency and helps to promote animal health and public health worldwide, thereby gaining the trust of its trade partners and of the international community.

The OIE national Delegate is usually the chief veterinary officer of the country. He is appointed by his/her government to represent his/her country to the OIE. He appoints a national “Focal Point” responsible for animal disease notification to the OIE Headquarters in Paris who constitutes the national source of reference for the OIE Early Warning System and its system of monitoring and knowledge of animal diseases:

- Member Countries are obligated to report in real time exceptional epidemiological events and to provide six-monthly regular information on the presence or absence of 116 OIE-listed diseases in their territories;
- information on veterinary services personnel, animal populations figures, laboratory capabilities, etc. is provided in the annual reports;
- the OIE adopts a pro-active approach in tracking and verifying unofficial information and rumours on disease outbreaks from different sources and seek when deemed relevant confirmation from countries;
- public health is also protected since a majority of human diseases (about 60%) originate in animals and an important number of OIE-listed diseases are of zoonotic nature.

Legal responsibility of OIE Members

Since 1924 OIE organic statutes give Members legal obligation to report OIE listed diseases. The OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code and Aquatic Animal Health Code (chapters 1.1) state that OIE Members “shall make available to other Members, through the OIE, whatever information is necessary to minimise the spread of important animal diseases and to assist in achieving better worldwide control of these diseases.”

Withholding facts on the incidence of relevant diseases by the OIE - for whatever reasons - would constitute a violation of Member Countries obligations under the Organic Statutes. The ratification of membership of the OIE gives Members obligations to provide information to the OIE that are internationally legally binding obligations.

Read the Global Legal Basis for Notification of Animal Diseases:
**Emergency Official Notification: What Makes an Event Worth Reporting?**

An epidemiological event is an outbreak as well as the presence of a pathogen identified without the presence of clinical signs, including:

- first occurrence of a listed disease, infection or infestation in a country, a zone or a compartment;
- re-occurrence of a listed disease, infection or infestation in a country, a zone or a compartment following a report declared the outbreak ended;
- first occurrence of a new strain of a pathogen of a listed disease, infection or infestation in a country, a zone or a compartment;
- a sudden and unexpected increase in the distribution, incidence, morbidity or mortality of a listed disease, infection or infestation prevalent within a country, a zone or a compartment;
- an emerging disease with significant morbidity or mortality, or zoonotic potential;
- evidence of change in the epidemiology of a listed disease, infection or infestation (including host range, pathogenicity, strain) in particular if there is a zoonotic impact.

**Disease Intelligence**

An OIE team is entirely dedicated to treating and validating animal disease notifications and reports but also, to the active tracking of epidemiological events and rumours found in the media, on the Internet or any other non-official sources. Unofficial information is evaluated and when deemed relevant, is verified by the OIE with the concerned veterinary authority with a request to officially confirm or deny the validity of such information. Only official information is released by the OIE.

The OIE shares this intelligence work and verification results with its partners, the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and World Health Organisation (WHO), on the joint FAO/OIE/WHO Global Early Warning and Response System (GLEWS) platform.

**Top Diseases* Notified as Exceptional Events in 2012**

For more information

**WAHID**
www.oie.int/wahid

**GLEWS**

For detailed guidance on notification and animal disease reporting:


**Terrestrial Animal Health Code, Notification of Diseases and Epidemiological Information**
www.oie.int/index.php?id=169&L=0&htmlfile=chapitre_1.1.1.htm

**Aquatic Animal Health Code, Notification of Diseases and Epidemiological Information**
www.oie.int/index.php?id=171&L=0&htmlfile=chapitre_1.1.1.htm