

**AD HOC GROUP ON THE REVISION OF  
CHAPTERS ON EQUINE ENCEPHALITIDES OF THE *TERRESTRIAL CODE***

**TERMS OF REFERENCE**

**Paris, 18- 20 June 2024**

**Purpose**

The purpose of the *ad hoc* Group on the Revision of chapters on equine encephalitides of the *Terrestrial Code*.

**Background**

The *Terrestrial Animal Health Standards Commission* (the Code Commission) considered requests from Members to review Chapters 8.10. Japanese encephalitis (JEE) and 12.11. Venezuelan Equine Encephalomyelitis (VEE), which were raised during the 89th General Session in May 2022, and several considerations presented by the Secretariat, including the impact on trade for the movement of horses from infected countries, the discrepancies observed between the chapters of the *Terrestrial Code* and *Terrestrial Manual*, as well as the opinion of the International Horse Sports Confederation (IHSC) and discussions of the Scientific Commission at its September 2015 meeting.

The Code Commission noted that Chapter 8.10. was first adopted in 1992, and the most recent update was adopted in 2000, but the corresponding *Terrestrial Manual* Chapter 3.1.10. was updated in 2021. It also agreed that the current Chapter 8.10. was partly obsolete, given the latest information in Chapter 3.1.10 of the *Terrestrial Manual*.

The Code Commission also noted that the revisions of Chapter 12.4. Equine encephalomyelitis (Eastern and Western) (EEE and WEE) (no update since its first adoption in 1968) and Chapter 12.11. Venezuelan equine encephalomyelitis (the most recent update adopted in 1998) was included in its work programme in February 2020, but that work had not yet been initiated.

Considering the epidemiological similarities across these three diseases, the Code Commission agreed to approach the revisions of these three disease-specific chapters together to ensure a consistent logic is applied to all three chapters. It also agreed that Chapter 8.21. West Nile fever (WNF) should also be considered, even if updated more recently.

While acknowledging that a major revision of these chapters will be needed, the Code Commission requested the Secretariat, in consultation with subject matter experts and the Scientific Commission for Animal Diseases (the Scientific Commission), to first undertake a scientific assessment of the susceptible animals, their epidemiological role and their relevance for surveillance and disease prevention and control, to further discuss the approach for the different chapters and then identify the next steps and priorities.

Following this request, an assessment of these diseases against the criteria for the inclusion of diseases, infections and infestations in the WOAHA list of notifiable terrestrial animal diseases in accordance with Chapter 1.2. of the *Terrestrial Code*, was conducted by subject matter experts, and considered by the Scientific Commission at its meeting of September 2023. (Annex).

At the February 2024 meeting, the Code Commission agreed to revise *Terrestrial Code* chapters on equine encephalitides and considered the Terms of Reference for an *ad hoc* Group and requested to report back at its September 2024 meeting.

**Considerations**

When developing this work, the *ad hoc* Group should consider:

1. the assessment of the diseases against the listing criteria in the Scientific Commission's September 2023

- meeting report, together with its attached expert reports;
2. the general structure and content of the *Terrestrial Code*, in particular chapters in Section 8 of the current edition, including the consideration that all the chapters of five equine encephalitides should be covered in separate chapters, and the guidance provided in the Framework for Terrestrial Code standards (disease-specific chapters), including the animal host species to be targeted for each disease;
  3. the names of diseases containing specific country names, taking into account the relevant World Health Organization (WHO) guideline (Best Practices for the Naming of New Human Infectious Diseases).
  4. the use of Glossary definitions in the *Terrestrial Code*;
  5. the WOAHSpecialist Commissions' opinions on the scope of the revised chapters;
  6. the current Chapters 3.1.10. (JEE) and 3.6.5. (EE) of the *Manual of Diagnostic Tests and Vaccines for Terrestrial Animals*;
  7. the World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary measures (especially Article 8 and Annex C), the WTO Agreement on Trade Facilitation, the Codex Alimentarius Principles for Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification (CAC/GL 20-1995) Guidelines for the Design, Operation, Assessment and Accreditation of Food Import and Export Certification Systems (CAC/GL 26-1997) (to be provided in the Working Documents);
  8. all working documents provided by the WOAHSecretariat.

## Expectations

*Ad hoc* Group members should:

- be familiar with the structure of the *Terrestrial Code* and the use of Glossary definitions and the Framework for Terrestrial Code standards;
- have read and considered Chapters 8.10., 12.4. and 12.11. of the *Terrestrial Code*;
- have read all working documents provided by the WOAHSecretariat;
- contribute to discussions, and;
- contribute to drafting text for the revised chapters and the report.

*Ad hoc* Group members should:

- sign the WOAHSUndertaking on Confidentiality;
- complete the WOAHSDeclaration of Interest form, and;
- read and acknowledge the WOAHSpersonal data management policy.

## Deliverables

1. a report presenting the proposed approach for the revised chapters, including the rationale for decisions and proposed texts, and supporting references when relevant. This should include an assessment of the susceptible animals, their epidemiological role and their relevance for surveillance and disease prevention and control.
2. the revised draft updated chapters for JE, EEE and WEE, followed by VEE.
3. any recommendations to review Chapter 8.21. on West Nile Fever, based on the updated equine encephalitides Chapters.
4. any points that require guidance from the Code Commission for the next steps in the development of the revised draft chapters.

## Reporting / timeline

The work of this *ad hoc* Group will likely require several meetings, and may meet virtually or in person according to the needs. After a meeting, the Group should finalise the relevant deliverables within 5 weeks after the completion of the meeting.