

Surprise Postponement for Key Vote



In the past three issues of this magazine, I have been reporting on the revision process for chapters on Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy, a topic that has been under consideration by the Terrestrial Animal Health Standards Commission of the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE).

TAHSC has been working on necessary improvements of these chapters, which are included in the Terrestrial Animal Health Code. This code is a type of “manual with wide governmental acceptance,” in which the minimum national actions are recommended to recognize the health status of a country against the most diverse animal diseases. In addition, it provides recommendations for the international trade of products and by-products of animal origin, including meals and fats of animal origin recognized by the World Trade Organization.

The World Renderers Organization has been debating with OIE about the need for adjustments to the proposed BSE text, submitting five technical opinions to the OIE TAHSC since September 2019. In particular, the version presented in September 2021, if implemented, would have the potential to interrupt much of the world trade in beef tallow and fat with unjustifiable rules (read the April and June editions of this column for more details).

For this reason, a virtual meeting took place in January between WRO and TAHSC to clearly explain to OIE the risks created by the proposed text. In February, the final text to be voted on was presented. Although the text includes important adjustments, WRO still understands there are significant improvements to be implemented, which is why WRO members again emphasized to TAHSC “critical points” to the stability of the international trade of meals and animal fats.

Despite this, the text was settled to be voted on at the 89th General Session of the OIE, held in May – a meeting that I had the opportunity to attend as a representative of WRO. The vote on the proposed TAHSC amendments was scheduled for May 24, and the meeting began that way – until it was time to vote on Chapters 11.4 and 1.8 concerning BSE.

To everyone’s surprise, or at least to the vast majority of those present, the president of TAHSC, Dr. Etienne Bonbon, announced the commission decided to remove Chapters 11.4

and 1.8 (referring to BSE) from the voting agenda, postponing it until the 2023 OIE’s General Session. This is an unusual situation for a global general session.

The floor was not even open to OIE members to express themselves on the proposed BSE chapters, nor the decision to postpone the vote itself. Instead, members were instructed to do so through official channels by sending a technical scientific presentation with suggestions for adjustments to the BSE chapters by July 15.

As a result, WRO gained at least two more opportunities to speak with the TAHSC (in September and next February), suggesting new and important adjustments to the chapters that should be kept under consultation at least until the OIE General Session in May 2023.

In other words, WRO’s scientific work advocating for improvements to OIE recommendations for the mitigation of BSE risk, as well as the international trade of meals and fats of animal origin, will continue throughout 2023. WRO would like to express our gratitude to all members that addressed their local veterinary authorities with the WRO “call to action.” We are sure members’ local efforts were crucial for this achievement.

OIE is now WOA

The acronym OIE has been used since its foundation, under the name “Office International des Epizooties.” In 2003, its nomenclature was changed to “World Organization for Animal Health,” but it was chosen to keep its original acronym “OIE.” At the OIE general session, after a heated discussion, a relatively tight majority approved changing the acronym to WOA (World Organization for Animal Health) in English, ending 99 years of the acronym OIE. Therefore, from this article on, WOA will be used to refer to the World Organization for Animal Health.

WRO Presentation to Global Alliance of Petfood Associations

WRO was invited to give a presentation at a Global Alliance of Petfood Associations technical meeting regarding the sustainability of rendered products for the petfood industry and the availability of our products in the coming years.

The presentation took place virtually on June 20, with 34 GAPFA members present for the chat. Afterwards, the U.S. Pet Food Institute invited WRO to repeat the presentation for its organization. The virtual presentation is booked for Aug. 17. **R**

