

Supporting International Trade

Veterinary Services (VS) facilitates the domestic and international marketability of U.S. animals and animal products through its National Center for Import and Export (NCIE). NCIE is at the forefront of APHIS' efforts to safeguard the health of our Nation's agricultural resources through its Import and Export teams and its Sanitary International Standards Team.

The growing interest in agricultural trade in the global market has expanded VS' role to include ensuring that new trade opportunities are created while continuing to safeguard the Nation's animal health.

Under the World Trade Organization's (WTO) Sanitary and Phytosanitary Agreement, countries are required to base their sanitary import measures on science-based principles and guidelines. The WTO recognizes the Office International des Epizooties (OIE) as the international forum for setting animal health standards, reporting global animal events and disease status, and presenting guidelines and recommendations on sanitary measures relating to animal health. As a result of various trade agreements, there is a greater potential for countries to use diseases as artificial barriers to trade by trying to apply import health requirements to protect their own industries and thus limit trade in animals and/or animal products.

OIE and International Standards

The OIE also known in English as the World Organization for Animal Health was established in Paris, France, in 1924 with the signing of an international agreement by 28 countries. As of 2004, the organization had 166 member nations, each of which is represented by a delegate who, in most cases, is the chief veterinary officer of the country. OIE's mission is to prevent the spread of animal diseases. It works to achieve this mission through three primary functions: 1) collecting and disseminating information on the distribution and occurrence of animal diseases, 2) coordinating research on contagious animal diseases, and 3) developing international standards for the safe movement of animals and animal products in international trade.

Three major program areas within VS interact directly with OIE. They are: 1) NCIE's Sanitary International Standard Team, 2) the Center for the Diagnosis of Animal Diseases and Vaccine Evaluation for the Americas, and 3) the Centers for Epidemiology and Animal Health (CEAH).

NCIE's Sanitary International Standards Team

NCIE's Sanitary International Standards Team guides the development of sound international health standards for the safe trade in animals and animal products by coordinating consensus-based comments on proposed modifications to chapters of the OIE *International Animal Health Code*. Other specific functions of the unit are as follows:

- Maintains a data base of disease and subject matter experts to review specific Code chapters.
- Monitors and evaluates reports and scientific data produced by the OIE.
- Compiles information for the *World Animal Health* (Volume 1 and 2), reports the annual tabular and narrative disease reports on the world animal health status of member countries, and submits monthly disease reports.
- Coordinates the import/export efforts to address the international movement of livestock, biological products, and animal products, and provides recommendations on the health conditions regarding the movement of animals and animal products.
- Conducts meetings with appropriate staff members, pertinent industry groups, and subject matter experts to review and develop positions for the safe movement of animal and animal products.
- Prepares agendas, briefs, and trade issue analyses for the delegates attending the Quadrilateral Animal Health Committee Meeting (Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United States), the North American Animal Health Committee Meeting (Canada, Mexico, and the United States), and the OIE annual meeting.
- Recommends changes to effectively address trade issues and align USDA standards and policies with international standards.
- Represents the Deputy Administrator and the Department of Agriculture at meetings with international officials as well as with livestock and poultry industry representatives.

Contact point for the Sanitary International Standards Team:

National Center for Import and Export
Sanitary International Standards Team
USDA, APHIS
4700 River Rd Unit 33
Riverdale, MD 20737
United States
Telephone: (301) 734-5324
Fax: (301) 734-8818
E-mail: usa.oie@aphis.usda.gov

Centers for Epidemiology and Animal Health: An OIE Collaborating Center

As an OIE collaborating center, CEAH shares its risk analysis and disease surveillance expertise with member countries. It provides them with technical assistance and expert advice on disease surveillance and control, and risk analysis.

As a collaborating center, CEAH fulfills the following objectives:

- Reviews, evaluates, and adapts methodologies and approaches to enhance animal disease surveillance systems and the risk analysis process.
- Promotes a harmonized approach to disease surveillance and risk analysis. Provides technical assistance to OIE member countries as needed.
- Improves the quality of animal disease surveillance and risk analysis by establishing a critical mass of trained individuals in OIE member countries.
- Networks with other OIE collaborating centers to coordinate activities.

Contact point for the CEAH:
Centers for Epidemiology and Animal Health
USDA, APHIS
2150 Centre Avenue, Building B
Fort Collins, CO 80526
United States
Telephone: (970) 494-7214
Fax: (970) 472-2668
E-mail: ceah@aphis.usda.gov

Center for the Diagnosis of Animal Diseases and Vaccine Evaluation for the Americas: An OIE Collaborating Center

The Center for the Diagnosis of Animal Diseases and Vaccine Evaluation for the Americas is made up of three components—the National Veterinary Services Laboratories (NVSL), the Center for Veterinary Biologics (CVB), and the Institute for International Cooperation in Animal Biologics (IICAB).

National Veterinary Services Laboratories (NVSL): NVSL is comprised of a number of full service laboratory with expertise in diagnostic tests for significant animal diseases found in the Americas and is committed to share and coordinate these procedures with other countries in the Americas.

NVSL supports the OIE in the following manner:

- Provides diagnostic assistance, such as agent isolation and characterization.
- Supplies reference reagents to other laboratories, which can be used to standardize testing or for routine diagnosis.
- Evaluates diagnostic reagents used by other countries and exchanges sera to standardize and harmonize testing.
- Provides training in the diagnostic tests that it performs.
- Consults on a wide range of techniques.
- Conducts developmental projects to improve diagnostic techniques for diseases of significance in the Americas.

CVB is the sole confirmatory and investigatory testing laboratory involved in regulation of commercial veterinary biologics (vaccines and diagnostic kits) in the United States. CVB supports OIE in the following manner:

- Develops, distributes, and uses worldwide standard protocols for biologics evaluation and trains scientists from throughout the world on these protocols.
- Validates and provides standard reagents to biologics manufacturers and regulatory laboratories worldwide.
- Conducts developmental projects to improve biological techniques for diseases of significance in the Americas.
- Reviews, develops, compares, and harmonizes testing protocols in collaboration with industry and other Government laboratories.
- Hosts scientific meetings in the area of veterinary biologics.

IICAB, based at Iowa State University, concentrates its efforts on educational endeavors and facilitating international communication and harmonization related to the availability, safety, and efficacy of veterinary biologics). The IICAB concentrates on the following activities:

- Offers training on scientific principles behind vaccine safety and efficacy.
- Works with other international organizations to harmonize regulations regarding veterinary biologics in the Americas.
- Assists developing countries to obtain veterinary biologics for specific unmet needs and in their efforts to manufacture, import, and regulate veterinary biologics and diagnostics.

- Organizes scientific meetings and serves as an international resource for information on the use of veterinary biologics.

Contact points for the Center for the Diagnosis of Animal Diseases and Vaccine Evaluation for the Americas:

- National Veterinary Services Laboratories
USDA, APHIS
P.O. Box 844
Ames, Iowa 50010
United States
Telephone: (515) 663–7266
Fax: (515) 663–7397
E-mail: NVSL_Concerns@aphis.usda.gov
- Center for Veterinary Biologics
USDA, APHIS
P.O. Box
Ames, Iowa 50010
United States
Telephone: (515) 663–7331
Fax: (515) 663–7673
E-mail: cvb@aphis.usda.gov
- Institute for International Cooperation in Animal Biologics
College of Veterinary Medicine
Iowa State University
Ames, Iowa 50010
United States
Telephone: (515) 294–1850
Fax: (515) 294–8259
E-mail: iicab@iastate.edu

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