



**RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE
SIXTH STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING OF CaribVET
HELD ON 28-29 MARCH, 2011, SAINT FRANCOIS, GUADELOUPE**

The recommendations and agreements of the Sixth Steering Committee Meeting of CaribVET held on 28-29 March, 2011 after discussing the programme items presented, including the work executed during the course of the year by its working groups.

1. CHARTER OF CARIBVET

THE MEETING:

- (i) **Requested** Members (Bahamas, OIE, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia and St. Maartens) who had not yet signed the Charter to sign during the course of the Meeting; and
- (ii) **Noted** the updated Charter (March 2011) and recognised the need for annual updates particularly relating to the working group membership.

2. OIE COOPERATION AGREEMENT

THE MEETING:

- (i) **Noted** that the CARICOM Secretariat supports, in principle, the cooperation agreement between the OIE and CaribVET since it will provide animal health support to all the member countries of CaribVET;
- (ii) **Welcomed** the proposal of the OIE to endorse the Charter and to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with CaribVET;
- (iii) **Also noted** the proposal of the OIE (Regional Commission for the Americas) to enter into a technical agreement with the CARICOM Secretariat and CaribVET; and
- (iv) **Further noted** that the CARICOM Secretariat, CaribVET, and OIE will discuss the “legal framework” for a technical cooperation agreement as proposed by the OIE. The outcomes of this meeting will be made known to the Steering Committee members as soon as possible. The proposed agreements/MOU would be circulated to the CVOs.

3. CARIBBEAN AGRICULTURAL HEALTH AND FOOD SAFETY AGENCY (CAHFSA)

THE MEETING:

- (i) **Noted** that the headquarters of CAHFSA is located in Suriname and that the legal agreement establishing CAHFSA has entered into force having been signed by 7 Members in March 2010. The remaining countries are expected to sign by July 2011;
- (ii) **Also noted** that equipment and supplies are currently being procured for the Headquarters; and
- (iii) **Further noted** that the mobilization of resources for the recruitment of staff is being pursued vigorously and operationalisation is expected to be completed in 2011.

4. SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES AND INITIATIVES

THE MEETING:

- (i) **Expressed** its deep appreciation for the contribution of Interreg IV Caraibe, CIRAD and USDA-APHIS-IS, and FSP funding;
- (ii) **Noted** the real need for finding new initiatives to support the activities of CaribVET and the meeting of the Steering Committee cognisant that the current sources of funding will dwindle significantly in the near future;
- (iii) **Strongly supported** the need for face to face meetings for the Steering Committee but considered that some technical working group meetings could be conducted by electronic means;
- (iv) **Recognized** the need for strong advocacy at the national level for the support of participation in the activities of CaribVET;
- (v) **Recommended:**
 - (a) The conduct of cost-benefit analysis of the CaribVET network (including risk of non-action: using AI, TBT as examples);
 - (b) The preparation of a simple brief (showing cost of participation /benefit of participation) which could be used by Committee Members as they try to secure an allocation of funds in the national budget for their participation in the activities of CaribVET;
 - (c) The Steering Committee should explore other possible sources for assistance and suggested approaches to IICA, FAO, PAHO, USAID, US Department of Defence, Homeland Security, JICA (Japan), DFID, IFAD, EDF, CIDA, Government of Taiwan, Chinese Agriculture Mission and the US embassies;

- (d) The widening and expansion of the invitation list to the CaribVET Steering Committee Meetings and activities;
- (e) The preparation of “30 seconds cards” to be used in resource mobilization pursuits, dialogue and initiatives;
- (f) The celebration of World Veterinary Year (Vet 2011) includes an organization of national meetings, which can be used as a means of promoting awareness of the CaribVET network;
 - (a) Recommended that this can be initiated by pilot events perhaps in Grenada, Trinidad and Tobago and Dominican Republic including an open day at the veterinary faculties;
 - (b) Veterinary associations and private sector need to be associated with the events and that the theme could be around a disease or issue which is of current importance (social, economic, health) to the particular country; and
 - (c) Develop the elements of a good communication package.
- (vi) **Agreed** that the OIE and CaribVET bulletins and press releases should be used to regularly update Ministries of Agriculture and other relevant government agencies of veterinary activities and issues, and should be used by the said Ministries and agencies to assist in creating awareness in the national media and other forum;
- (vii) **Also agreed** to the suggestion of the OIE to highlight the role of the veterinary services in safeguarding the health of animals and humans in the context of the cost of the veterinary services in terms of inspection of food imports (totalling 3 Billion dollars in the case of CARICOM);
- (viii) **Considered** the development of a slogan for CaribVET; and
- (ix) **Further agreed** to the proposed Press Release and to disseminate it nationally.

5. **EPIDEMIOLOGY WORKING GROUP**

5.1 **Surveillance Network Assessment Tool (SNAT)**

THE MEETING:

- (i) **Noted** the comments of the OIE that:
 - (a) The SNAT was duplicating elements of the OIE PVS; and
 - (b) Where the SNAT contains elements of surveillance additional to the current OIE PVS, representation could be made to the OIE for its incorporation in a revised PVS; and

- (c) OIE funded OIE member and non-member countries for the conduct of the OIE PVS, Gap Analysis and Legislation review.
- (ii) **Noted** that Barbados, Dominican Republic, and Haiti have already used both the SNAT and the OIE PVS tools and have commended the usefulness of the SNAT and supported its continuous use by CaribVET members. These countries also posited that the SNAT and the OIE PVS were complementary.
- (iii) **Welcomed** the offer by the USDA/APHIS to support the conduct of IICA PVS for the VEP member countries notwithstanding their support for the use of the SNAT.
- (iv) **Noted** the OIE's disappointment with the offer by the USDA to use the IICA PVS for countries desirous of its use..
- (v) **Noted** the offer by the FAO to strengthen the link between the Influenza H1N1 TCP and the CaribVET WGs on epidemiology and classical swine fever diseases.

5.2 **SOCIAL NETWORK ANALYSIS**

The Meeting:

- (i) **Agreed** that the social network analysis was a very useful tool for assessing risks associated with the spread of animal diseases and the allocation of human and financial resources; and
- (ii) **Recommended** its use for CSF and AI spread assessment in Dominican Republic and for Notifiable AI related to fighting cock movement in the Caribbean.

5.3 **FMD RISK ANALYSIS**

THE MEETING

- (i) **Noted** the FMD risk analysis conducted by the Epidemiology Working Group and acknowledged the conclusion of negligible risk subject to verification of the assumptions made during the analysis.

5.4 **TERRITORIAL-BASED RISK ASSESSMENT**

THE MEETING:

- (i) **Noted** the application of the territorial-based risk assessment tool in Belize based on the Cuban model;
- (ii) **Commended** the Epidemiology Working Group and Belize on their work in carrying out the translation, adaptation and implementation of the tool; and

- (iii) **Agreed** to the use of the territorial-based risk assessment tool in the AI working group with regards to wild bird surveillance related to HPAI.

6. EPIDEMIOLOGY TRAINING IN THE CARIBBEAN AND VEP PROJECT

6.1 Long-term Training needs in Epidemiology in the Caribbean

THE MEETING:

- (i) **Supported** the recommendation of the Epidemiology Working Group for basic epidemiology training, the use of Cochran scholarships, and to engage in more focused individual or smaller group type training (similar to that offered to the VEP).

6.2 Training of Professionals and Paraprofessionals

THE MEETING:

- (i) **Agreed** to the UWI/SVM proposal to the development of Curricula based on specific needs as identified and proposed by the Epidemiology Working Group.
 - (a) Agreed that the Epidemiology Working Group will advise the UWI/SMV on the needs within one month; and
 - (b) Noted that the draft proposal (curricula) will be circulated to the Steering Committee for further review.
- (ii) **Welcomed** the offer of the UWI/SVM to design a Master degree in epidemiology and a diploma in epidemiology;
- (iii) **Noted** the acceptance of the UWI to work in close collaboration with the Epidemiology Working Group and especially with international experts and teachers/professors in epidemiology (Cristobal Zepeda, Mo Salman and Javier Guitián);
- (iv) **Also noted** that Cuba informed of the availability of post graduate training in epidemiology at Cuban Universities; and
- (v) **Further noted** that USDA-FAS provide opportunities for short term training in three specific programmes (Cochran, Borleug, and scientific exchange).

6.3 VEP PROJECT

THE MEETING:

- (i) **Noted** that USDA funding for the VEP project ceases in 2011. As of September 2011 the management of the project will be implemented by IICA until all remaining funds are spent;
- (ii) **Also noted** that no new source of funds has been identified to date;
- (iii) **Recommended** that the experience of the Epidemiology Working Group project of the VEP be used as case studies in future training; and
- (iv) **Also recommended** the use of tools developed within the VEP project (Monthly action report, performance indicators) by national veterinary services.

7. LABORATORY AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

THE MEETING:

- (i) **Noted** that Haiti, Cuba and Dominican Republic, in conjunction with the Hanover laboratory, have participated in the interlab assays during the period 2005-2010 for CSF.
 - (a) That OIE will contact the Hanover Laboratory to encourage the participation of other laboratories (besides those of Cuba, Haiti and the Dominican Republic) in the inter-laboratory assays.
- (ii) **Agreed** to the reinforcement of the links between laboratories of CaribVET and OIE Reference Laboratories (to provide information for the national laboratories).
- (iii) **Also noted** that the deadline for accreditation of laboratories used for the certification of fish products and meat and meat products exported to the EU has past and countries must move swiftly to attain accreditation since exportation of these products will be negatively impacted.
- (iv) **Also agreed** that the CaribVET Laboratory, Quality Assurance and Diagnosis working group will assist countries in the attainment of accreditation before 2012.
- (v) **Further agreed** that the Work plan for the Laboratory, quality assurance and Diagnosis working group incorporates activities related to the recommendations of the CARICOM Laboratory Assessment Study.
- (vi) **Further noted** the presentation by the FAO on the TCP/RLA3306

- (a) The project manager for HINI TCP would work with the Epidemiology working group to outline specific epidemiology training.
- (b) Work with the Swine Disease working group to establish programmes to be executed under the project.
- (c) This project would be in conjunction with the UWI-SVM.

Jamaica requested that Members share sources of training opportunities.

8. SWINE DISEASES WORKING GROUP

THE MEETING:

- (i) **Requested** Members to submit before 3 May 2011, comments on the risk of spreading ASF and CSF and noted that there are OIE guidelines for a country to be recognized or to self-declare as CSF free or free of other OIE listed diseases.
- (ii) **Noted** the lack of responses on the questionnaire from countries.
 - (a) Bahamas, USVI and Puerto Rico indicated their willingness to be involved and to use the tool “framework for risk analysis”.
- (iii) **Also noted** the status of Teschen disease in Haiti and the urgent need to address the nutrition and husbandry situation in Haiti.

9. UPDATE ON THE CARIBVET NEWSLETTER AND BULLETIN

THE MEETING was advised on the following:

- (i) The need for Members to re-subscribe to the website;
- (ii) Members can now subscribe to the Bulletin from the website;
- (iii) Bulletins should be sent to Veterinarians, professionals in the same field, and policy makers;
- (iv) There is a link for the UWI on the website, apart from that provided through the ‘West Indian Veterinary Journal link; and
- (v) Members indicated their willingness to assist in proof reading of the bulletin or other articles:

- (a) USVI, Belize, CARICOM Secretariat, Puerto Rico, Cuba, USDA/APHIS (Paula Morales);
- (b) Noted that research papers from UWI will be posted on the link;
- (c) St. Georges University in Grenada will be invited by the Grenada CVO to submit research articles;
- (d) Bryan Sanford of Barbados had indicated his interest to be a reporter and
- (e) Other names will be submitted by Members to the editorial board as well as proof reading and reporters within 15 days.

10. **AVIAN INFLUENZA AND NEWCASTLE DISEASE WORKING GROUP (NATIONAL PLANS REVIEW, USDA PROJECT FUNDING, DIAGNOSTICS, FIGHTING COCKS)**

THE MEETING:

- (i) **Noted** the presentation on the activities of the AI&ND working group and endorsed the recommendations to review member countries' existing surveillance protocols for avian influenza and to prepare a shortened surveillance guide for easy use.
- (ii) **Recommended** that countries with a significant poultry industry should use targeted surveillance in areas where the biological risks are greater with respect to wild birds.
- (iii) **Accepted** the new terms of reference of the laboratory sub-group of the AI&ND working group:
 - (a) To evaluate training needs in avian influenza diagnostics and related standards;
 - (b) If necessary, to source training in rt-PCR for countries with this capability;
 - (c) To source training for countries without the rt-PCR in general laboratory diagnosis in AI;
 - (d) To source and coordinate participation in inter laboratory assays for molecular diagnostics; and

- (e) To submit a paper on the most appropriate tests depending on laboratory capability and type of surveillance the country would implement.
- (iv) **Recommended** that countries develop a minimum level of surveillance for avian influenza, to consider using regional laboratories and to identify an OIE Reference Laboratory to access in the event that confirmation of an outbreak is needed.
- (v) **Noted** the comments by Nevis that questionnaires sent to the SC members were complicated and therefore resulted in delays in completion.
- (vi) **Noted** the offer by US Virgin Islands to provide copies of public relations materials on cock fighting to the WG to use when developing the risk communication strategies.
- (vii) **Noted** the comments by Puerto Rico that even in countries where cock fighting is legal, information on ownership and location of birds was difficult to obtain because of concerns by owners that this information will be used against them for taxation purposes.
- (viii) **Noted** the need for completion of the questionnaire on fighting cocks by all countries.

11. TICKS AND TICK-BORNE DISEASES WORKING GROUP (MODELLING AND MAPPING, TICK ECOLOGY, HEARTWATER SURVEILLANCE)

THE MEETING:

- (i) **Noted** the research conducted by CIRAD, OIE Reference Laboratory for Heartwater disease, on *Amblyomma* tick modelling and its use for tick surveillance and control;
- (ii) **Also noted** the activities conducted by Guadeloupe following the recommendations in 2009 of the Ticks and TBD working group on the sociological study on adoption of tick control and the surveillance network of Heartwater; and
- (iii) **Recommended** the member countries of the Ticks and TBD working group to prepare strategy and surveillance protocols for TBT to allow for better efficiency and discussions at the next Ticks and TBD Working Group meeting proposed for June 2011 in St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

12. NEW ANIMAL HEALTH CONSTRAINTS AND DISASTER MANAGEMENT TO BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT IN THE CARIBBEAN

12.1 Haiti and Screwworm

THE MEETING:

- (i) **Noted** the current status of Haiti with respect to the difficulties and challenges faced by the Veterinary Services in their efforts to manage their production and marketing systems and the incidence of diseases in the animal population (especially food animals);
- (ii) **Also noted** the presentation on screwworm by the COMEXA:
 - (a) A proposed second meeting of the CaribVET ad hoc screwworm group in June 2011 in Mexico hosted by the Commission in conjunction with identification training;
 - (b) Requested the Epidemiology working group to expedite the scoring for priority diseases in order to classify screwworm and, if classified as a priority disease regionally, to formally convene the Screwworm Working Group;
 - (c) Members of the ad hoc group are committed to work on the feasibility of a pilot project on screwworms in one of the infested Caribbean countries (surveys and incidence) to identify sources of funding for the project, exchange of data and samples etc; and
 - (d) Noted the proposal to conduct a simulation exercise proposed for late February 2012 in the Dominican Republic.

12.2 Animal Care and Welfare

THE MEETING NOTED:

- (i) That APHIS has a programme Unit created after Hurricane Katrina to ensure the proper care of human victims of disasters who are owners of pet animals;
- (ii) The contact information provided for Members wishing to share information or make further enquiries.
- (iii) That the OIE has several training events planned for the discussion of the OIE animal welfare draft strategies in the Americas based on the OIE animal welfare guidelines.
- (iv) That comments on the draft animal welfare strategies must be submitted by OIE members before November 2011. Agreed that Suriname will collate the

comments of non OIE members for incorporation in the response to OIE. Comments of OIE non members to Suriname should be submitted before 1 August, 2011.

12.3 Role of CaribVET in Emergency Situations

THE MEETING NOTED:

- (i) That CaribVET should consider the following roles in emergency response which will be discussed at the next meeting of CaribVET:
 - (a) Taking a leadership role in the Region for emergency response especially in the coordination of response activities and initiatives; and
 - (b) To assist in pre-disaster preparedness such as the preparation of disaster plans, coordination of simulations and perhaps to manage/coordinate external assistance.
 - (c) To prepare a manual for undergraduate students on disaster preparedness using an updated Cuban edition.
 - (d) -
- (ii) The initiatives of the FAO in the area of disaster risk management and mainstreaming the activities in the Ministry of Agriculture and the implementation of three TCPs in Belize, Saint Lucia and Dominica and in which the CVOs in the TCP countries would be involved in the preparation of the technical manuals.
- (iii) That other agencies (US Southern Command, CDEMA) are involved in disaster management as highlighted by Grenada.
- (iv) The merging of the CaribVET Salmonella and Rabies working groups into one Veterinary Public Health working group which may also deal with leptospirosis. Dr. Louison will chair the working group until PAHO resumes its duties.

13. ELECTION OF CHAIRPERSON OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE OF CaribVET

THE MEETING:

- (i) **Noted** that Dr. Kathian Hackshaw, CVO of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, was elected as the Chairperson of CaribVET for the period 2011-2013; and

- (ii) **Agreed** that Dr. Victor Gongora of Belize will be the new chairperson for the Epidemiology Working Group.

14. **CLOSING REMARKS**

THE MEETING:

- (i) **Noted** that the Sixth Meeting of the Steering Committee of CaribVET is an official celebration of World Veterinary Year 2011(Vet 2011);
- (ii) **Expressed**
 - (a) Its deep appreciation to CIRAD Guadeloupe for the tremendous work done by CIRAD to host a very successful Sixth Meeting of the Steering Committee of CaribVET;
 - (b) Deepest appreciation to CIRAD, USDA and the Government of France for the technical and financial support to the CaribVET Network; and
 - (c) Appreciation to Dr. Victor Gongora for his leadership of the CaribVET as past Chair and to the CVO from France for his strong support to CaribVET, his commitment being shown by his presence at the Meetings.
- (iii) **Adopted** the recommendations of the Sixth Steering Committee Meeting as amended; and
- (iv) **Congratulated** the newly elected chair of the CaribVET steering committee and the members pledged their continued support to the work.