

OIE Regional Conference

“Towards the Application of the OIE Standards on Zoning”

3-5 April 2016, Amman, Jordan



Conference report

Aim of the meeting

Establishing and maintaining a disease free status throughout the country should be the final goal for Member Countries. However, establishing and maintaining a disease free status for an entire country may be difficult, especially in the case of diseases that can easily cross international boundaries. For many diseases, Member Countries have traditionally applied the concept of zoning to establish and maintain animal subpopulations with a different animal health status within national boundaries.

Compartmentalization is not a new concept for Veterinary Services. In fact, it has been applied for a long time in many disease control programs that are based on the concept of disease free herds/flocks. The recommendations in the code chapter provide a structured framework for the application and recognition of compartments within countries or zones, based on the provisions of Chapter 4.3 with the objective to facilitate trade in animals and products of animal origin and as a tool for disease management. The fundamental requirement for compartmentalization is the implementation and documentation of management and biosecurity measures to create a functional separation of subpopulations

In order to facilitate understanding of the concept of Zoning and to assist countries of the region to implement and recognize such concept in compliance with the OIE intergovernmental standards, the OIE RR ME has organized an OIE Regional Conference “Towards the Application of the OIE Standards on Zoning” hosted by the Ministry of Agriculture of Jordan in collaboration with the Hashemite Fund for the Development of Jordan Badia, in the city of Amman, on 2-5 April 2016.

This conference aimed at providing to the participants with:

1. a good understanding of the import/export sanitary conditions currently applied for trade of livestock (cattle, small ruminants and camels) in the Middle East region;
2. a sound knowledge of the OIE intergovernmental standards on trade and certification as well as on zoning/ compartmentalization;
3. a regional roadmap for the strengthening of the international trade of livestock with Middle East in compliance with the OIE intergovernmental standards.

Participants from the OIE Headquarters

- Jean-Philippe Dop, Deputy Director General

Participants from the RR/SRR or OIE experts

- RR ME : Ghazi Yehia, Xavier Pacholek, Ali El Romeh, Rita Rizk
- Experts: Alejandro Thiermann (ex-president of the Code Commission), Paolo Calistri & Francesco Pomilio (IZSAM Teramo / CC on epidemiology and risk analysis), Salah Hammami (member of the code commission).

Résumé / Summary

The conference “Towards the Application of the OIE Standards on Zoning” was attended by 61 participants including 25 representatives of the VS of 14 countries of the Middle East (Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, KSA, Lebanon, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Sudan, Turkey, UAE and Yemen) along with representatives of international and regional organisations (Arab Organisation for Agricultural development, EU-DG Santé, FAO-RNE), public and private observers from Jordan (Hashemite Fund for Badia Development – HFBD, FMV of the Jordanian University of Science and Technology) and from countries involved in livestock exportation (Brazil, France, Italy, Georgia, Greece, Hungary, UK, Romania and Armenia) and institutional cooperation (Italy), as well as experts from OIE, FAO and ISZAM.



Dr Jean-Philippe Dop, Deputy Director General of the OIE

The conference was opened by an official ceremony broadcasted on TV and gathering more than 300 VIPs and participants at the Landmark hotel in Amman.

Official speeches were made by Dr. Munther Al Refai (Jordanian OIE delegate), Dr Jean-Philippe Dop (Deputy DG of the OIE), H.E. Akef El Zu'bi (Minister of Agriculture), H.H. Sharifa Zein Bint Nasser (Chairperson of the Hashemite Fund for Badia Development - HFBD -

board of trustees), and H.E. Ali Hiasat (Minister of health) on behalf of H.E. Abdullah Ensour, Prime Minister.

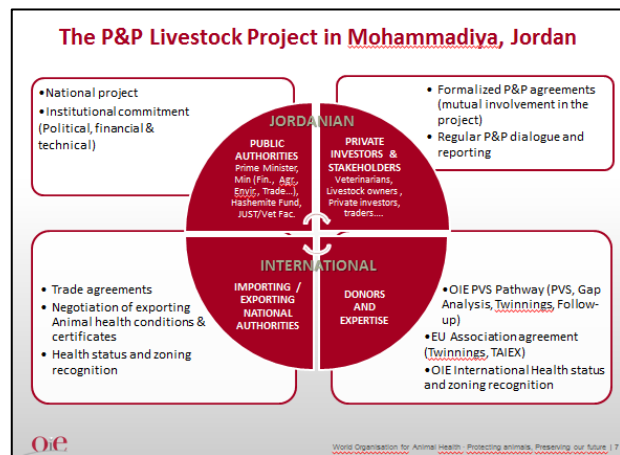
Jordanian authorities emphasized the importance of implementing the OIE concept of zoning to support the livestock trading project initiated in Mohammadiya by the 'Hachemite Fund for the development of the Badia (HFDB)', which represents a national priority for the government.



HH Sharifa Zein Bint Nasser, chairperson of the Hashemite Fund for Badia Development board of trustees

Dr. Al-Tabini, General Manager of the HFDB described the 3 strategic goals of the livestock trading project in Mohammadiya: (i) socio-economical: developing the local economy (creation of 1000 direct and indirect jobs) and food security; (ii) commercial: increasing the regional trade of livestock through building capacities enabling the import and re-export of up to 200,000 heads per month representing # 0,5 billion USD / year; and (iii) sanitary: in partnership with the Jordanian Veterinary Services and the support of international expertise (OIE, EU and Italy), establishing a diseases' free zones around the project area and securing high health standards in the regional trade of livestock.

Dr. Pacholek presented an overview of the Public Private Partnerships (PPP) to support the missions of the Veterinary services and made reference to the regional seminar held on this subject in Kaslik, Lebanon, on 10 November 2015¹. He outlined how PPPs can effectively extend the reach, impact and effectiveness of the national VS to society, provided a clear delegation of authority to the private sector supported by strong legislations / regulations & enforcement mechanisms to ensure the quality & performance of the private actors. He then conceptualized the PPP in construction in Jordan for the control of priority diseases highlighting some of the challenges to be addressed such as surveilling and mapping livestock priority diseases; rehabilitating the national laboratory capabilities (public and private); strengthening the capacities of the VS; upgrading the strategies and the effective control and eradication of priority diseases of livestock; achieving OIE official endorsement of national diseases control plans (FMD, PPR...) and OIE recognition of FMD and PPR free zones; and building confidence with the importing & exporting countries.



Dr Calistri presented how the ISZAM Teramo / OIE collaborating centers supports member countries building their capacities on epidemiology and risk analysis (with class trainings; lab trainings and residential stages based on the analysis of national data; e-learning; and twinings) in order to improve access to detection of pathogens, strengthen biosecurity and biosafety, build networks, and enhance capacity to respond to animal diseases. Dr. Yehia reminded the recommendation of the 12th conference of the OIE Regional Commission for the Middle East (March 2014, Amman, Jordan) concerning the

¹<http://www.rr-middleeast.oie.int/viewpage.asp?ID=810>

establishment of EPI-Units within the region and highlighted the potential support of ISZAM Teramo in this regard.

Dr. Al Majali discussed the impact of TADs on the increasing international trade of animals (x3 between 2000 and 2009 globally). He noted that countries with endemic diseases and lack of investments in animal health control programs were more inclined to take trade restrictions, and reminded the provisions of the WTO SPS agreement to avoid unjustified discriminatory measures. For this category of countries, serious funding is needed for infrastructures and capacity building in order to prevent, detect early and control TADs appropriately and transparently. He reviewed methods for evaluating direct and indirect losses due to TADS (cost benefit analysis, cost effectiveness analysis, linear programming, and partial budgeting) and highlighted the heavy cost of vaccination. To create response capabilities, he finally advocated for more integrated animal health systems, programs and strategies complying with international standards, and more cooperation and partnerships between developed and developing countries.



Dr Ahmed Al Majali, FAO expert and Professor at the FVM of JUST

Dr. Jean-Philippe Dop presented the 6th OIE Strategic Plan for 2016-20. The first objective aims at developing standards and guidelines to improve animal health, animal welfare and Veterinary Public Health worldwide. In this regard, the recognition of disease free zones/countries for 6 global priority diseases & the self-declaration of diseases freedom for other listed diseases are supported by the standard setting mandate of the OIE. The 2nd objective is reinforcing trust through transparency and communication on animal diseases, and the 3rd supporting and strengthening the VS (PVS Pathway) at the frontline of the public health (One health OIE/WHO/FAO collaboration). The application of the standards facilitates a safe trade of animals and their products by avoiding unjustified barriers and preventing the spread of OIE listed diseases globally. He finally reminded that OIE National Delegates are responsible to participate to the standard setting process; harmonize the national regulations in compliance with the OIE standards and guidelines; and report the animal health situation of their country (transparency).

Dr. Alejandro Thiermann provided information on the practical implementation of zoning complying with the OIE standard (Chap. 4.3 of the TAHC). He listed the geographical and biosecurity management provisions used to define free zones (and surveillance zones around) with animal sub-populations of higher health statuses. Key elements of the biosecurity plan were listed: standard operating procedures (SOPs), strict entry requirements, identification and traceability system, surveillance and diagnostic capabilities, contingency planning, and clear responsibilities of the Veterinary authorities (to ensure the effectiveness of the PPP to survey and control diseases; to provide epi data and risk assessment supporting relevant SOPs) and of the private sector managers (to implement biosecurity measures; raise awareness; notify diseases). He also outlined factors of success for the application of the zoning concept: compliance with OIE standards; quality of the VS (cf. PVS pathway); full implementation and recognition of the concept principles; clear and detailed biosecurity plan; a good communication strategy to give trust to relevant partners during 'peace time' (importers/exporters); creation of a regional spirit of collaboration and mutual recognition; imports from known diseases free zones/countries. Dr Thiermann also detailed the procedures for official OIE recognition of free zones (for 6 priority diseases), through which the Scientific Commission is responsible to undertake the assessment of applications by OIE Member Countries and to provide recommendations to the World Assembly for its final approval. He also reminded the possibility for self-declaration of freedom concerning other diseases.

Besides, Dr. Thiermann listed (i) zoning success stories - FMD free zones without vaccination (many countries), FMD free zones with vaccination (many countries including Turkey), FMD and PPR (Namibia), BSE (China), CSF (Brazil) - as well as compartments experiences - mainly for poultry, a few for pigs, one for shrimp, one for salmonids and one for lamb -. Lessons learned show that the concepts can be used to control a disease and/or to facilitate trade; the epidemiology of the diseases is determinant to decide between a compartment or zone; both provide the private sector great means to

protect their investment; and the international recognition depends mainly on the credibility of the VS and the existence of a legal framework.

During the discussions, the representative of USDA-APHIS noticed that re-exportation of animals was a new concept for live animals in the region but not for animal products. Questioned by the representative of AOAD on the additional costs for the re-exported high health status animals, Dr. Al Majali advised using a cost effectiveness analysis for their estimation, and to integrate the cost of potential outbreaks in the importing country. Comments of Dr. Thiermann stressed the importance to discuss costs and benefits between trade partners (What we gain? / what we lose?) and highlighted two positive aspects of the Jordanian livestock project for the importing countries: (i) the free zone around the project will allow Jordan to request stricter pre-quarantine conditions at importation than other countries of the region could do considering their own animal health situations (cf. SPS agreement provisions) which will allow the importation of animals with credible higher health status and (ii) the logistics of the project will facilitate a trade at the time and in the quantity needed by the different importers of the region.

The 14 participating countries of the region presented their country reports. Most of them are highly dependent on imports of livestock (and meat) for their food security (All GCC countries, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, Turkey and Yemen) and the main source of livestock exported from the region comes from the horn of Africa (Somalia, Sudan, Djibouti) through the Red Sea. These presentations revealed that pre-quarantine durations and conditions imposed for the importation of livestock from the horn of Africa are not fully harmonized (even within the GCC countries) and need to be improved to comply with the OIE standards.

Dr. Hammami, as member of the Terrestrial Animal Health Standard Commission (TAHSC), described the OIE standards applicable to trade before exportation, during transport, and at the BIP and in the quarantines. He presented the main issues discussed during the last meeting of the TAHSC in February 2016 and called for more involvement of the OIE National Delegates of the region into the standard setting process through consultation of the TAHSC and relevant AHG reports, and the transmission of comments to the OIE within the deadlines. Draft chapters in progress for comments include: Zoning and compartmentalization (Chapter 4.3), FMD (Chapter 8.8.), Infection with *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* complex (draft new Chapter 8.X.), Lumpy skin disease (Chapter 11.11), and chapters submitted for adoption during the next GA 84: Bluetongue (Chapter 8.3.), Epizootic hemorrhagic disease (Chapter 8.7.), RVF (Chapter 8.14.), PPR (Article 14.7.21.).

Finally, Dr. Pomilio described the guidelines for implementation of effective biosecurity measures (Self-assessment procedure available on the ISZAM Teramo OIE Collaborating Center website) and the Georgian CVO presented the Georgian Food Agency activities.

A working session on certification was conducted by Dr. Hammami and Dr. Pacholek around 2 questions: (i) How establishing sustainable dialogue and trust between regional & international trade partners (importing countries - high health zone/country (Jordan) - exporting countries)? And (ii) How harmonizing the national importing requirements in the Middle East (by adopting a common list of diseases to be incorporated in a shared model of animal health certificate consistent with WTO SPS rules and compatible with reasonable & competitive costs)? This session led to the addition of the 11th recommendation of the final "Amman declaration" discussed during the last session of this conference (cf. annex). Participants had 2 weeks to review this declaration but no additional comments were received.



The 3rd day included a field visit to the site of the livestock project in Mohammadiya in the South of Jordan (and then to the ruins of Petra). Infrastructures and facilities are under construction and should be finished by December 2016. Situated in the desert, the double fenced quarantine/zone will cover 150 ha (divided in 2 units) and the surrounding surveillance zone 5000 ha. Livestock will be imported through the port of Aqaba and transported by trucks to the facilities (40 km North). Re-exports of animals to the Gulf countries will be organized by trucks through the desert.

Comments

The recognition by countries of the region of zoning measures implemented to contain disease spread after emergence of outbreaks and secure trade from exporting countries has progressed during the last decades. However, the OIE zoning standard remains insufficiently recognized and implemented in Middle East and needed to be explained and promoted in a region deeply relying on trade for its food security.

In this regard, the public private partnership with the veterinary authority built around the “livestock trade and zoning project” in Mohammadiya, South of Jordan considered by the Hashemite government as a national priority, constitutes a milestone for the ownership of the concept in the region. The project was thoroughly presented and discussed as well as the zoning principles and guidelines for its successful implementation.

The presentations and fruitful discussions between delegates and experts paved the way for further ownership of the concept in the region as well as for more regional dialogue between trading partners and harmonization of the importing animal health requirements in the region in compliance with the provisions of the SPS agreement, as reflected in the annexed “Amman declaration”.



From left to right : Dr. Yehia, Dr. Al Refai, H.ES. Masri, HE Akef Zu'bi, Dr. Pacholek, Dr. Dop, Dr. Klemm and Dr. Borello

The strong involvement of the Jordanian government in the PPP represents a valuable asset for the pursuit of the recognition of the zoning concept in Middle East. Thus, the Minister of agriculture of Jordan, H.E. Akef Zu'bi, organized a meeting besides the official opening to discuss international cooperation aiming at strengthening the control of animal diseases and implementation of diseases free zones by the VS. Dr. Dop confirmed the sustainable OIE support to the Jordanian VS through the PVS Pathway, twinnings (with JUST and JOVAC), and expert missions, while the Italian CVO, Dr. Borello, assured of the total commitment of his government to help the VS under the umbrella of the OIE and/or by bilateral agreement, and Dr. Klemm

expressed the EU Commission's adherence to the zoning concept and interest to provide technical assistance through TAIEX and/or twinning mechanisms. H.E. Said Masri, former Minister of agriculture and private investor in the PPP project, stressed how the capacity building of the VS was necessary for more international credibility and indicated that the request of Jordan to the EU delegation for an EU twinning had been positively received.

Follow-up

1. Participation of the Minister of Agriculture, H.E. Akef El Zu'bi (Minister of Agriculture) and H.H. Sharifa Zein Bint Nasser (Chairperson of the Hashemite Fund for Badia Development board of trustees) to the OIE GS 84 in Paris in May 2016.
2. Pursuing the OIE cooperation with Jordan to strengthen the VS through the PVS Pathway (PVS follow-up mission in May 2016, twinnings with JUST on Veterinary education (on-going) and with JOVAC on PPR vaccine (to be signed in May 2016) and expert missions (on zoning and recognition of official disease status).
3. Studying the possibilities to support the harmonization process of the health certificates for importation of livestock (and animal products) into the GCC countries in compliance with the OIE standards.
4. Relevance and feasibility of establishing a network of NFP on border control in reference to the last point of the 'Amman Declaration'.

Documents joints / Enclosed documents

- Agenda
- Amman declaration
- List of participants



OIE Regional Conference
“Towards the Application of the OIE Standards on Zoning”
2–5 April 2016, Amman–Jordan
Programme

TIMETABLE		
SATURDAY 2 APRIL 2016		
17:00–19:00	Registration and distribution of documents regarding the Conference	
SUNDAY 3 APRIL 2016		
08:00-09:00	Registration and distribution of documents (cont.)	
09:00-09:15	Objectives of the conference	Ghazi Yehia OIE Regional Representative for the Middle East
09:15-09:35	The Hashemite Fund for the development of Al Badiya	Raed Al-Tabini HFDB, Jordan
09:35-09:55	Mandate of the OIE Collaborating centers on Epidemiology and Risk Analysis	Paolo Calistri Head of the Epidemiology Department–IZS Teramo
09:55-10:15	Public Private Partnership	Xavier Pacholek, OIE Regional Representation for the Middle East
10:15-11:00	Welcome Reception	
11:00-11:45	Opening Ceremony	Dr Munther Al-Refai Delegate of Jordan Raed Al-Tabini, HFDB representative, JP Dop, OIE Deputy Director General
Session 1: Stakeholders involvement Chair: Munther El Rifai		
11:45–12:30	OIE 6th Strategic Plan: Trade concerns	JP Dop, OIE Deputy Director
Lunch		
Session 2: Zoning and Compartmentalization Chair: Ghazi Yehia		

14:00–15:30	Zoning: Establishment of high sanitary zones Structure and management Diseases prevention systems Contingency planning Roundtable discussion	Alejandro Thiermann Former President OIE Code Commission and Former Advisor to OIE Director General
15:30–16:00	Break	
16:00–16:30	Successful zones and compartments	Alejandro Thiermann
16:30–17:30	Groups working session: How to respond to importing countries requirements?	Facilitators: Alejandro Thiermann/ Ghazi Yehia
20:00	Reception	
MONDAY 4 APRIL 2016		
Session3: Trade in animals & animal products		
Chair: Kassem El Qahtani		
09:00–10:30	Country reports: 10mn/country	Bahrain/ Kuwait / KSA / Oman / Qatar / UAE / Egypt
10:30–11:00	Break	
11:00–12:30	Country reports (cont.)	Jordan / Lebanon / Syria / Iraq / Libya / Yemen
12:30–14:00	Lunch	
Session4:Standardsmeasures		
Chair: Hadi Al Lawati		
14:00–14:30	OIE Standards for trade– Matters of importance to the region Challenges and proposals	Salah Hammami Member of the OIE Code Commission
14:30–15:00	Guidelines for implementation of effective biosecurity measures	Francesco Pomilio Head of the National Reference Laboratory for Listeriosis –Italy
15:00–15:30	Disease impact on trade	Ahmad Al Majaly Jordan
15:30–16:00	Break	
Session5: Certification		
Chair: Saudi Arabia		
16:00–17:00	Working session on harmonization of veterinary certificates	Facilitators: Salah Hammami / Xavier Pacholek

17:00–17:30	Conclusion: Amman Declaration on compliance with international standards in Trade	Host Country / G.Yehia
19:00	Dinner	
TUESDAY 5 APRIL 2016		
Session6: Recommendations and closing		
08:00–16:00	Field trip to Mohammadiya Livestock assembling center and Petra	
19:00	Closing Ceremony	



OIE Regional Conference

“Towards the Application of the OIE Standards on Zoning”

2–5 April 2016, Amman, Jordan

Amman Declaration

Towards a Progressive Application of Zoning in the Middle East: The Way Forward.

Considering:

- 1) The socioeconomic importance of the safe trade in animals and animal products in the Middle East in terms of food security, production and traditional events;
- 2) That the establishing and maintaining a sanitary situation compatible with the development of safer trade throughout a country should be a critical goal for Member Countries;
- 3) That the establishing and maintaining a disease free situation for an entire country may be difficult, especially in the case of diseases that can easily cross international boundaries;
- 4) The difficulty to contain the disease free situation in the entire country due to the need to invest huge resources that may not be cost-effective or budget- constrained;
- 5) The provisions of the article 6 of the SPS agreement of the WTO on ‘Adaptation to Regional Conditions, Including Pest — or Disease — Free Areas and Areas of Low Pest or Disease Prevalence’;
- 6) That the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code provides guidelines for a structured framework for the application and recognition of specific controlled and protected zones within countries, with the objective to facilitate trade in animals and products of animal origin and as a tool for disease management;
- 7) That for many diseases, OIE Members have traditionally and successfully applied the concept of zoning to establish and maintain animal subpopulations with a different animal health status within national boundaries;
- 8) That the management of the biosecurity measures to create a functional separation of subpopulations will be enhancing the capacity of the Veterinary Services when applying the concept of zoning on the national territory for one or more area;
- 9) The successful application of the concept of zoning in different regions (Africa and South America);
- 10) The location of Jordan at the proximity of the cross-roads of the international trade in animals and animal products, represents an opportunity of having the holding facility of Jordan's Badia to serve the regional (Member) countries, as a disease free zone for specified diseases;

- 11) The socioeconomic impact of the application of the concept will decrease the risk of spread of trans-boundary animal diseases that results from the regional transhumance and cross-border movement of animals by engaging nomadic communities in the different layers of relevant activities of the disease free zone.

Participants declare that:

- 1) Implementation of the OIE standards by Member Countries is a step forward for any Veterinary Services to control animal diseases and improve animal health situation within the national territories;
- 2) Veterinary Services in the region support each other and harmonize their trade requirements to comply with the OIE inter-governmental standards on trade and safeguarded movement of commodities of animal origin;
- 3) Efforts should be made to seek support from international organizations and other countries that want to support the project within the framework of the OIE initiatives to strengthen capacities enabling the implementation of zones (through twinning, PVS Follow Up missions, veterinary education, etc...);
- 4) The adoption and application the concept of zoning to reduce the risk of disease spread through international trade is a needed requirement by the region amidst the increasing trade flow and associated animal and public health risks;
- 5) The importation from disease-free zones (irrespective of the geographical origin) is an appropriate and accepted application of the practices of safeguarded trade;
- 6) A proper application and establishment of such a disease free zone is not for the purpose of a geographical transit trade but to acknowledge that the zone should be considered as a specific territory/country of origin;
- 7) Certification of movements from this disease free zone - in compliance with OIE standards - is used to comply with importing countries requirements despite the previous origin of the animals;
- 8) Trade facilitation through zoning is an approach for understanding of the concept and to assist countries of the region to implement and recognize such concept in compliance with the OIE standards;
- 9) The application of pilot disease free zones paves the way to network the animal health / veterinary infrastructure of the regional countries;
- 10) The establishment of disease free zone in Jordan, in compliance with the OIE standards, is a first step towards the extending of an acceptable animal health status on the whole territory, and a demonstration of the high capacity and vigilance of the national veterinary services in the implementation of the standards. It will be considered as a model to be used by countries in the region;
- 11) Competent Authorities of the importing and exporting countries build mutual trust by signing bilateral agreements recognizing the zoning concept and including models of sanitary certificates complying with the OIE standards;
- 12) The designation of new National Focal Points to assist the OIE member countries' Delegates implementing the standards of the Section 5 of the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code on 'Trade measures, import/export procedures and veterinary certification' may facilitate the safe trade of animals and animal products in the Middle East and worldwide.

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