



PAN AMERICAN HEALTH ORGANIZATION
WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION



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REPORT COHEFA VII



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VII MEETING OF THE HEMISPHERIC COMMITTEE FOR THE ERADICATION OF FOOT-AND-MOUTH DISEASE

Washington, D.C., 12 April 1999

COHEFA7/FR (Eng.)
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FINAL REPORT

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FINAL REPORT

The VII Meeting of the Hemispheric Committee for the Eradication of Foot-and-Mouth Disease (COHEFA VII) was held at the Headquarters of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) in Washington, D.C., United States of America, on 12 April 1999, as convened by the Director of PAHO.

Officers

The following officers were elected by unanimous vote:

President:	Mr. Rodolfo Masuda	Peru
Vice President:	Mr. Marco Polo Micheletti	Honduras
Rapporteur:	Dr. Miguel Angel Cano Melgarejo	Paraguay

Dr. George A. O. Alleyne, Director of PAHO, acted as Secretary ex officio of the meeting, and Dr. José Germán Rodríguez Torres, Director of the Pan American Foot-and-Mouth Disease Center, served as Technical Secretary.

Participants

For the Amazon Subregion: Dr. Aluisio Berbert Sathler, Director of the Department to Protect Animal Health of Brazil, and Mr. Antenor Amorin Nogueira, President of the National Forum of Meat Livestock.

For the Andean Subregion: Dr. Franz Rivas, Sectoral Director General of the Livestock Health Service (SASA) of Venezuela, and Dr. Manuel Heredia, representative of the National Cattlemen's Federation of Venezuela.

For the Caribbean Subregion: the Honorable Reeza Mohammed, Minister of Agriculture of Trinidad and Tobago.

For the Meso America Subregion: Dr. Marco Polo Micheletti, Minister of Agriculture of Honduras, and Mr. Mario Etchelecu, of the National Cattlemen's Association of Panama.

For the North America Subregion: Mr. Claude Lavigne, Director of Animal Health and Production of Canada, and Dr. Enrique Salinas Aguilera, of the National Cattlemen's Confederation of Mexico.

For the Southern Cone Subregion: Dr. Dante Geymonat, Director General of Livestock Services of Uruguay, and Mr. Miguel Angel Cano Melgarejo, President of the Cattlemen's Association of Paraguay.

Agenda

Opening of the Meeting

Election of the President, the Vice President, and the Rapporteur

Address of the Director of the Pan American Health Organization, Sir George Alleyne

Adoption of the Agenda and Program of Sessions

Report of the Secretariat of the Committee

Report on the XXV and XXVI Regular Meetings of the South American Commission for the Control of Foot-and-Mouth Disease (COSALFA)

Discussion of the Plan of Action of the Hemispheric Program for the Eradication of Foot-and-Mouth Disease

- Southern Cone
- Andean Area
- Amazon Area
- Areas Free of Foot-and-Mouth Disease

New Functions of the Pan American Foot-and-Mouth Disease Center (PANAFTOSA): Its Organization and Mechanisms for Technical Cooperation

Other Matters

Conclusions and Recommendations

Closing of the Meeting

Sessions

Two sessions and one closing session were held.

First Session

Dr. George A. O. Alleyne welcomed the delegations and reported that before the session, the heads of delegation that met appointed the meeting's officers. He then noted that Honduras nominated the delegate of Peru as President of COHEFA VII, which was seconded by the representative of Brazil. The delegate of Uruguay nominated the delegate of Honduras as Vice President, which was seconded by the delegate of Mexico. Finally, the President of COHEFA VII nominated the representative of Paraguay as the Rapporteur.

The Director expressed both joy and sorrow upon opening the meeting: joy over the strides made since the last meeting, and sorrow that this disease still exists on the continent. He gave a retrospective presentation on the current situation and mentioned the progress made in the Andean region, the disease-free region, and the Southern Cone, underscoring that Argentina, Paraguay, and Uruguay remain free of the disease and that Argentina will cease vaccination on 30 April and seek recognition as a free area without vaccination. He stated that the President of Bolivia promised support for the program, in part from the cattlemen's association.

He added that PANAFTOSA has played an important role throughout the eradication process and that it is considered to be the most important specialized center on the topic in the world. Finally, he reiterated the importance of collective action in pursuing eradication.

Dr. Alleyne apologized for the absence of English versions of the working documents and promised that they would be sent in due time to the delegations.

The President opened the session and read the provisional program of sessions, which was approved by the plenary.

The Director of PANAFTOSA read the report of the Technical Secretariat indicating the progress achieved and the problems observed in the epidemiology of foot-and-mouth disease and the eradication programs in the region of the PHEFA in 1997-1998.

That report highlighted the progress made in the Southern Cone subregional project, in particular, that the disease-free countries and areas maintained that status. Argentina decided to seek recognition as disease-free without vaccination, while Paraguay and southern Brazil are evaluating potential options.

With regard to the Andean area, he reiterated the commitment to establish the Andean Regional Agreement, strengthen border-health plans, and designate joint monitoring and evaluation committees, in keeping with past COSALFA resolutions.

Regarding the Amazon subproject and non-Amazon Brazil, the importance of establishing health care and epidemiological surveillance was stressed, in order to regain the area's status as unaffected by the disease.

The importance of reestablishing prevention activities in the free areas by restructuring health services and implementing prevention and care programs in cases of emergency was also underscored.

The report was opened for discussion, and the Director requested that the delegates focus on the activities of the Technical Secretariat and not on the budget, which will be discussed in detail during RIMSA XI. The Director then had to excuse himself and was replaced by Dr. Stephen Corber, Director of the Division of Disease Prevention and Control of PAHO.

The delegate of Saint Lucia then asked for an explanation regarding the absence of some countries on the list of disease-free countries, since the Caribbean countries are aware of their situation in terms of foot-and-mouth disease.

The delegate of Honduras pointed out the imbalance between administrative and investment costs, as well as the difference between the resources allocated for foot-and-mouth disease and those for zoonoses, since his country needs more support for the latter. The delegates of Cuba, Panama, and Venezuela endorsed those statements.

The delegate of Colombia requested that it be noted for the record that the Atlantic coast of Colombia has been free of foot-and-mouth disease for 24 months, with the exception of the foci in Sucre, which were eradicated through animal elimination. He also pointed out that Peru had made progress in its health situation, making it possible for it to seek international recognition.

The delegate of Venezuela seconded the statement made by Colombia and cited his country's joint actions with Colombia, establishing a common foundation for the fight against foot-and-mouth disease.

The delegate of Venezuela representing the cattle association apologized for the absence of the President of FEDENAGA, who he was replacing. He highlighted the association's participation in the activities and stated that the establishment of a buffer zone with Colombia to allow for its international recognition was being examined.

The delegate of Paraguay reported on the establishment of a fund with resources allocated for the officially appraised value of the animals sold, which is important for financing program expenses and the emergency fund, which receives 30% of the resources.

The delegate of Mexico referred to the need to seek additional contributions to the budget to cover the expenses for activities on prevention and some zoonoses, such as tuberculosis.

The representative of the cattle sector of Panama took the floor on behalf of the private sector in the subregion to highlight that cattlemen in his country and in the subregion pay a high price in order for the entire northern region of the Americas to remain disease-free. He added that tuberculosis and rabies had cost the sector greatly. He was therefore requesting that the budget be revised to address activities for controlling those diseases.

Dr. Rodríguez, Director of PANAFTOSA, took the floor and provided an explanation on the topics being discussed. He said that in the case of Saint Lucia, the guidelines for OIE recognition had already been submitted and that PANAFTOSA does not have the authority to grant recognition. He also reiterated the statements made at COSALFA XXVI about the support requested by Guyana.

With regard to the budget, he quoted the Director and added that the Organization is aware of the budgetary limitations and the imbalance in resources allocated for maintenance and investment. He cited agreements with countries and private institutions that have well-defined objectives and shared financing. He added that the PAHO Administration has made an effort to reduce the Center's operating costs.

He further noted that there is awareness of the impact of zoonoses throughout the Hemisphere and that it is necessary to work together. Regarding the observations made by Colombia, Venezuela, and Paraguay on the health situation of the countries, that topic will be presented in greater detail under item 7.

He then cited the excellent work in epidemiological surveillance and the development of productive 'municipios' with community participation in Cuba. He also made himself available for any other comments on the report.

The floor was then given to Dr. Aluisio Sathler, Delegate of Brazil, who, as President of the XXV and XXVI Meetings of COSALFA, read the report from those meetings. He clarified that both meetings were held in Brazil. He mentioned the progress observed in the national and regional programs, resulting from the efforts of the countries and the private sector, which led to OIE recognition of countries and areas that are disease-free with vaccination.

Dr. Sathler stressed the importance of private sector participation in the coordination, execution, and evaluation of the programs. The report was submitted to the plenary, and there were no comments thereon.

Drs. Victor Saraiva, Hugo Tamayo, and Francisco Muzio, PANAFTOSA consultants, then presented the Report on the Plan of Action of the Hemispheric Program for the Eradication of Foot-and Mouth Disease, by programmatic subregion.

Second Session

The plenary of the Committee met to discuss the Report on the Plan of Action of the Hemispheric Program for the Eradication of Foot-and-Mouth Disease and the following observations were made: The delegate of Panama took the floor and said that the quality of surveillance in his country is dropping. He highlighted the new structure of COPEG, which covers the entire country and requested that the data presented be reviewed. He also placed the LADIVES laboratory at the disposal of all the countries in the area and reiterated the importance of gathering samples for proper epidemiological surveillance of vesicular diseases.

The delegate of Brazil commended the PANAFTOSA consultants on the quality of the reports, in particular the reports on stomatitis in the south. He stressed the importance and swift action of the national epidemiological surveillance system, particularly as the number of foot-and-mouth disease foci is dropping. The system is based on shared managerial structures and a solid health education program for the community. The efficiency of the laboratory system in Brazil was also underscored.

The delegate of Chile discussed the importance of prevention and surveillance in the free countries/areas, stressing the importance of border agreements, such as the tripartite agreement with Bolivia and Peru. That agreement is marked by the creation of a local border system, which was established at last meeting on the agreement.

He then said that the amounts contributed by Chile might seem low but explained that the low expenditure presented is due to the fact that the country is free of all the

diseases on list A and that the amount of resources is therefore divided up among the structure.

The delegate of Bolivia reiterated the importance of the tripartite agreement and of the difficulties the country is experiencing. He stated that the best mechanisms for carrying out the best programs are bi- or multinational agreements.

The delegate of the cattle sector of Brazil thanked the meeting for the opportunity to speak and then summarized the status of foot-and-mouth disease in Brazil and the future plans for obtaining a new health status, maintaining the support the sector lends to eradication activities. He then spoke about joint activities with Bolivia, in an effort to standardize techniques and programs with that neighboring country.

The delegate of Venezuela then noted for the record the joint effort in the public and private sectors. The establishment of joint actions and horizontal cooperation among the countries leads to eradication. He cited the border agreement and surveillance activities based on an automated system developed in the country. He believes that it will therefore be possible to meet the goals set forth in the programming.

In the case of zoonoses, he requested the cooperation of the other countries to address the need to secure funds to meet technical cooperation needs.

The Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, on behalf of the English-speaking Caribbean, commented that as a result of the risk analyses conducted in the past, authorization was given to import products of animal origin from countries recognized as free of foot-and-mouth disease by the OIE, such as Uruguay and Argentina. He cited the importance of prevention in order to maintain that status. He explained that Trinidad and Tobago has an emergency program, but that it has not yet been tested. Furthermore, he offered his country as the venue for the next meeting of the Committee and requested that a mock operation be conducted in that country.

Colombia discussed vesicular stomatitis and its epidemiological importance. He reiterated Colombia's interest in being the site of a seminar on the disease, programmed by his country, PANAFTOSA, and Plum Island. He requested the participation of all the countries in attendance to present topics at the seminar, which will be held in the first half of the year.

The delegate of Guyana shared the opinion of the delegate of Brazil on the emergency fund and suggested that a body of experts on emergency care be established that could support the activities to eradicate foci in free regions or foci that put them at risk.

The delegate of the cattle association of Mexico noted the importance of the work presented and expressed his congratulations on the success achieved. He then cited the experience of eradication activities in his country in the 1940s. He added that Mexico continues to protect its borders and is implementing a prevention program.

The delegate of the cattle association of Venezuela asked for the floor to reiterate the need to fulfill the resolution from COHEFA VI on the establishment of an animal health reference center in PANAFTOSA. He also said that the decisions taken in COSALFA must be accepted.

The delegate of the Dominican Republic requested assistance for risk prevention and analysis regarding trade in products of animal origin.

Dr. Medardo Lasso, as an observer for Ecuador, commented that the presentations showed that the sectors involved in the programs in the Region are coordinated. He added that, for example, he heads an official institution that shares responsibilities with the private sector and that Ecuador has taken initial steps but that much remains to be done.

He advised that caution be taken regarding the reallocation of resources for zoonoses requested by some countries and added that ideally those resources would be increased. Finally, he cited the effort of the Galapagos Islands to obtain the status of a free area, which it lost in 1997 because of one focus. This was achieved through the quick action of national authorities and through the support of APHIS/USDA. PANAFTOSA supported the epidemiological study on the situation and designed the epidemiological sera sampling. The country is pursuing official status as disease-free from the OIE.

The delegate of Venezuela mentioned the need to establish health agreements with Trinidad and Tobago and to renew border health actions with Guyana and Brazil, which will make it possible to forge closer commercial ties among the countries.

There were no further statements, and the President closed the topic by citing Bolivia's recent presentation of its National Plan, which has the widespread participation of the private sector, the representatives of neighboring countries, and president of the country.

The meeting then moved on to discuss item 9 on the agenda, New Functions of PANAFTOSA, which was presented by the Technical Secretary.

The final report of the External Advisory Group to the Director of PAHO proposed that the programmatic orientation of PANAFTOSA technical cooperation also

include zoonoses and that INPPAZ remain a reference center on food protection. PANAFTOSA took on those new functions in May 1998.

The direct cooperation expected from PANAFTOSA is related to support for the implementation of programs to eradicate rabies and control brucellosis, tuberculosis, and equine encephalitis. It is not the direct responsibility of PANAFTOSA to provide support for laboratories for those diseases, since it does not have the necessary facilities. Nonetheless, there will be a search in the region for institutions that can collaborate on work coordinated by PANAFTOSA.

To deal with the new functions, the PAHO Administration has strengthened PANAFTOSA's budget and staff. The new mission is geared towards a virtual center that would coordinate the technical cooperation to be mobilized from various potential sources.

The true status of brucellosis and tuberculosis is beginning to be ascertained, as is the status of the national programs on those diseases. In the case of rabies, a hemispheric information and epidemiological surveillance system is being developed that is adapted to the eradication needs of that disease.

The delegate of Mexico expressed his support for this new work mission and added that horizontal cooperation could be the answer to the animal health problems of the countries.

The delegate of Cuba agreed with those statements and offered to share with PANAFTOSA and the countries present the knowledge gained in his country on the diagnosis of and epidemiological studies on the aforementioned zoonoses.

The delegate of Brazil, as a component of the External Advisory Group, reiterated the importance of the recommendations of that group that have already been adopted by PAHO. He reiterated that it is essential for Brazil and for the Region of the Americas to have a technical structure that meets the animal health cooperation needs, since foot-and-mouth disease is rapidly being eradicated. Brazil supported the effective implementation of this center of excellence, which should seek out knowledge wherever it exists, acting as a virtual center of excellence for animal health.

Closing Session

The President of COHEFA VII opened the session and, on behalf of the participants, expressed thanks for all the support received from the different international technical and economic cooperation agencies for the eradication of foot-and-mouth disease and the fight against the zoonoses that have an economic impact on their countries.

After reading the minutes, the Director of PAHO thanked the delegates and observers for their participation and said that, in light of the resolutions formulated, he was convinced that the meeting had achieved the objectives that it had set to disseminate the progress made and to discuss the problems of programs, in order to seek common solutions with the support of all the sectors involved.

The President thanked those in attendance for their strong participation, which contributed to the success of the meeting. He then adjourned the meeting.

Resolutions

COHEFA7.R1: Progress in the Objectives of the Hemispheric Plan on Foot-And-Mouth Disease

THE VII MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE,

Considering:

The gains made toward the eradication of foot-and-mouth disease from the Southern Cone area, as shown by the rapid progress in extending disease-free areas;

The progress made by the national programs for the eradication of foot-and-mouth disease from the Andean area, in particular from some zones, such as the Atlantic coast of Colombia and the entire territory of Peru;

The need to establish homogenous animal health programs along borders within the Andean and Amazon subregional projects, in order to meet the goals set forth in the Hemispheric Plan for the Eradication of Foot-and-Mouth Disease (PHEFA);

The positive results of private sector participation in managing the national programs, in close collaboration with the government services;

The negative impact of vesicular stomatitis on the cattle economy in the countries, primarily in the Andean subregion, as foot-and-mouth disease is eradicated;

The need to maintain the Central American, North American, and Caribbean subregions disease-free; and

The increased number and extension of countries and areas that are free of foot-and-mouth disease in South America, which necessitates a change in the programs' approach, with a view to preventing the reintroduction of that and other exotic diseases,

RESOLVES:

1. To commend PANAFTOSA for its work as Technical Secretariat to support the fulfillment of the goals of the PHEFA.
2. To endorse the congratulations extended by COSALFA XXVI to the Governments of Peru and Colombia for their contribution to the eradication of foot-and-mouth disease from the subregion.

3. To request that PAHO/PANAFTOSA strengthen its technical cooperation for research into and surveillance of vesicular stomatitis, particularly in the countries of the Andean area.
4. To request that PANAFTOSA gear its technical cooperation towards the programs to prevent foot-and-mouth disease in the subregions of Central America, North America, and the Caribbean.
5. To urge the countries that are still working towards the elimination of foot-and-mouth disease to redouble their efforts to fulfill the goals set, using an approach of collective and regional support.
6. To congratulate the countries in the Southern Cone area for the progress made and to urge them, based on their experiences, to collaborate with those countries and/or areas with a different health status, in order to bolster their actions in pursuit of eradication.
7. To recommend that the countries in the Andean area subregional project, in keeping with the decision taken at the XXVI Meeting of COSALFA, sign the Agreement on Eradication for the subregion as soon as possible, which allows for the execution of the respective project.
8. To endorse the resolutions from the XXV and XXVI Regular Meetings of COSALFA and to recommend to RIMSA XI that they be adopted.
9. To urge the countries of the Region to support the development of an integrated information and surveillance system, in which the technical cooperation agencies already working on this participate.
10. To urge the countries to produce or strengthen initiatives for co-management by the public and private sectors, with the cooperation of PANAFTOSA/PAHO, for the execution of health projects that are technically and financially sustainable.

(Adopted at the second session, 12 April 1999)

COHEFA7.R2: Transformation of the Pan American Foot-And-Mouth Disease Center into A Hemispheric Reference Center on Animal Health

THE VII MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE,

Considering,

The provisions of Resolution II from COHEFA VI, endorsing the recommendations from COSALFA XXIII and XXIV and from the External Advisory Group to the Director of PAHO on the Program on Veterinary Public Health, making PANAFTOSA responsible for managing the technical cooperation on zoonoses; and

The need to gear the technical cooperation provided by PANAFTOSA towards controlling and eradicating animal diseases that affect public health, productivity, and trade in products of animal origin, making it a Hemispheric Reference Center on Animal Health,

RESOLVES:

To reiterate Resolution II from COHEFA VI, recommending that the PAHO Administration take the measures needed to fulfill that resolution.

(Adopted at the second session, 12 April 1999)

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, those named below have signed the present Final Report in the English and Spanish languages.

DONE in Washington, D.C., United States of America, on this twelfth day of April, nineteen hundred and ninety-nine.

Eng. Rodolfo Masuda
President of COHEFA VII
Delegate of Peru

George A. O. Alleyne
Secretary *ex officio*
Director
Pan American Health Organization