The OIE ad hoc Group on animal welfare and laying hens production systems (the ad hoc Group) met for the first time at the OIE Headquarters on 21–23 November 2016.

The members of the ad hoc Group and other participants at the meeting are listed at Appendix I. The adopted Agenda is at Appendix II.

1. Welcome and introduction

Dr Matthew Stone, Deputy Director General of International Standards and Science of the OIE, welcomed all members and thanked them for their agreement to work with the OIE on this important topic. Dr Stone explained the work developed by the OIE in the area of animal welfare recommendations relevant to livestock production systems and OIE Member Countries will take a strong interest in this work.

While developing the chapter the varying conditions that exist in 180 OIE Member Countries should be taken into account to ensure sufficient flexibility to make implementation feasible for Members to the greatest extent possible.

The report of the meeting will be presented for consideration by the Terrestrial Animal Health Standards Commission (the Code Commission), at their February 2017 meeting. The publication of the report will take place after the Code Commission meeting, in early March 2017.

Dr Stone drew the attention of members to one of the discussion papers, the report of the first meeting of the ad hoc Group on animal welfare and livestock production systems (Paris, 8–10 April 2008) in which three key elements influencing animal welfare are described, i.e. animal health, environment and management. Dr Stone also indicated the importance of completing the chapters related to animal welfare standards, in view of the adoption of the new ISO Technical Specification 34700.

2. Confirmation of the Terms of Reference (ToR)

Dr Leopoldo Stuardo explained that the ToR are based on the discussion paper prepared by the OIE Animal Welfare Working Group (AWWG) and the report of the ad hoc Group on animal welfare and livestock production systems. The latter report includes a list of elements to be addressed in OIE guidelines on animal welfare in livestock production systems. Dr Stuardo advised the ad hoc Group that it is important to keep in mind that the OIE standards are directed fundamentally towards the Veterinary Services.
Annex 38 (contd)

The Group agreed to the scope of the new chapter and stressed the need to clarify the different production systems in order to not create confusion, for example by mixing up extensive production systems with organic production systems.

The Group agreed that the chapter should include recommendations starting from pullets through to mature laying hens. In addition, the Group discussed the existing problems with the slaughter and disposal of end of lays (spent) hens at the end of the production process.

Finally, during the discussion of the ToR, the ad hoc Group considered and agreed that breeding was beyond its scope for the development of the new chapter. There are unique practices related to breeding that differ considerably from those in pullet and laying hen production. It is the view of the Group that a separate chapter on chicken breeding, or perhaps poultry breeding, would be a more effective approach to develop applicable standards for the breeding and hatchery industries. The ad hoc Group adopted the modified ToR according to their discussion (see Appendix III).

3. Introduction of members

Members introduced themselves and summarised their fields of expertise and their current areas of work and research.

4. Discussion of working documents and other relevant documents

The ad hoc Group noted the documents sent by the OIE Headquarters and some documents sent by some of the Members. The ad hoc Group reviewed those with references relevant to the development of the recommendations.

5. Development of draft standards

The ad hoc Group discussed and agreed to continue using outcome-based criteria or measurables as good indicators of animal welfare, rather than indicate input design criteria because they reflect the complex interaction of multiple design inputs. Dr Stuardo mentioned that to better understand these concepts, the Code Commission is proposing, for comments by Member Countries, a new article in Chapter 7.1. on “Guiding principles for the use of animal-based measures”.

The ad hoc Group agreed to use Chapter 7.10. on “Animal welfare and broiler production systems” as the basis for development of the new chapter, modifying the format and structure, in order to improve its readability and use in practical terms.

The ad hoc Group discussed the way to deal with the fate of the males, and it was agreed that this topic will be covered in a future revision of this chapter so sufficient considerations on the topic can be given.

When the ad hoc Group discussed the recommendations they noted that aspects such as different production systems, spent hen management, feather pecking, moulting, space allowance, perching and nesting are among the main subjects to be covered by this new chapter.

A draft new chapter for the Terrestrial Animal Health Code (Terrestrial Code) was developed during the meeting and can be found in Annex IV.

The draft new chapter is structured along the following lines:

a) definitions to be used for the purpose of this chapter;
b) scope of the recommendations, including the type of production system considered;
c) identification and brief descriptions of relevant ‘outcome-based criteria or measurables’;
d) recommendations for measures applied to laying hens and pullets;
e) references.
6. **Review and finalise report of meeting**

The *ad hoc* Group agreed to complete their meeting report and draft standard by December 2016, for its submission to the February 2017 Code Commission meeting.

7. **Next meeting**

It was agreed that the next meeting will take place after receipt of comments on the report of the February 2017 Code Commission meeting, most probably during the second semester of 2017.
OIE AD HOC GROUP ON ANIMAL WELFARE AND LAYING HENS PRODUCTION SYSTEMS


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Annex 38 (cont’d)

Appendix II

OIE AD HOC GROUP ON ANIMAL WELFARE AND 
LAYING HENS PRODUCTION SYSTEMS


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Adopted agenda

1. Welcome and introduction – Dr Matthew Stone
2. Confirmation of Terms of Reference
3. Introduction of Members
4. Discussion of working documents and other relevant documents
5. Development of draft standards
6. Review and finalise report of meeting
7. Next meeting

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Terms of Reference

Taking into account:
- The background history of the OIE regarding animal welfare and production systems;
- The discussion paper on the “Development of animal welfare guidelines for production systems”, written by the AWWG in 2006;
- The recommendations of the OIE ad hoc Group on animal welfare and livestock production in 2008; and
- The existing animal welfare and animal health standards in the Terrestrial Code, particularly Chapter 7.1, Article 7.1.2. on the “Guiding Principles for animal welfare” and Article 7.1.4. on the “General Principles for the welfare of animals in livestock production”, and Chapter 6.5 on the “Prevention, detection and control of Salmonella in poultry”.

The ad hoc Group is asked:
To elaborate a draft animal welfare standard for laying hen production systems (intensive, extensive and semi intensive, to be reviewed by the ad hoc Group), for eventual inclusion in the Terrestrial Code. This standard should cover, inter alia:
- appropriate definitions and scope;
- housing;
- feeding and watering of the animals;
- environmental considerations;
- management of endemic diseases;
- management practices;
- personnel training;
- emergency management plans (e.g. disease outbreak, failure of electrical systems, fire, etc.);
- handling facilities (on farm only);
- protection from predators.

This standard must:
- be based on science (scientific references must be provided and included in the draft text);
- harmonised in their structure with the rest of the Terrestrial Code, including the other animal welfare and production system chapters; and
- use criteria that address the outcomes at the animal level (animal-based).

In developing these standards, the ad hoc Group should review relevant resource materials, including extracts from the Terrestrial Code, reports from the AWWG and other ad hoc group meetings, examples of existing practices, and the regulatory frameworks that manage animal welfare risks from all five OIE Regions. A draft document is expected after the first meeting and will be submitted to the AWWG, the Code Commission and OIE Member Countries, for comments, to be addressed by the ad hoc Group in a second meeting.
Annex 38 (contd)

Appendix IV

[Note: this Annex has been replaced by Annex 28 to the report of the meeting of the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Standards Commission which was held on 18–29 September 2017.]