ANNEX 3

EU POSITION

ON THE DRAFT OIE TERRESTRIAL MANUAL CHAPTERS

PROPOSED FOR ADOPTION IN MAY 2021

The EU thanks the OIE for having taken into account most of its comments submitted previously and in general supports the adoption of the 38 draft revised chapters of the OIE Terrestrial Manual circulated to member countries in March 2021 to be proposed for adoption at the 88th OIE General Session in May 2021.

As regards Chapter 3.4.12. on Lumpy Skin Disease, the EU regrets the deletion of the sentence in Section B.1.3.1. that refers to recent PCR-based methods to distinguish between field and vaccine strains of LSD virus. These so-called DIVA PCR methods are very important diagnostic tools for countries affected by this disease, despite some challenges encountered lately.

Indeed, we understand that in recent years, LSDV strains have emerged in parts of the world that probably resulted from homologous recombination of vaccine and wild LSDV strains. These new strains are not always reliably identified as field strains by currently used DIVA PCR methods. Indeed, depending on the LSDV strain and the PCR method used, correct diagnosis i.e. differentiating field from vaccine strains may not always be possible.

Since LSDV vaccine strains are excluded from the scope of the Terrestrial Code, correct identification of strains has implications for disease notification, country status and international trade. In order to make the LSD related provisions of the Code operational, it is crucial for the OIE to provide adequate guidance in the Manual on how to reliably differentiate LSDV vaccine from field strains.

The EU therefore requests the OIE to address the wider issue of emerging recombinant LSDV strains, their correct diagnosis and notification as soon as possible. We would welcome if the Biological Standards Commission, the Scientific Commission and the Code Commission could come together to consider all relevant aspects of this issue and propose appropriate guidance for the Manual and, if necessary, the Code.