

## ANNEX 3

### EU POSITION

#### ON THE DRAFT OIE *TERRESTRIAL MANUAL* CHAPTERS

#### PROPOSED FOR ADOPTION IN MAY 2019

The EU in general supports the adoption of the draft revised chapters of the OIE *Terrestrial Manual* to be proposed for adoption in May 2019 as circulated to member countries on 22 March 2019, with the exception of the draft Chapters 3.1.6. on Echinococcosis and 3.8.1. on African swine fever.

#### **Chapter 3.1.6. Echinococcosis (infection with *Echinococcus granulosus* and with *E. multilocularis*)**

The EU requests deletion of the newly added Table 2 *Global distribution of Echinococcus granulosus (s.l.) with associated genotypes found in different animal hosts (data obtained from Deplazes et al., 2017)* which does not seem necessary for the purposes of the OIE *Terrestrial Manual*.

Indeed, that table contains very detailed information on the worldwide distribution of *Echinococcus* species and genotypes as well as host species derived from a 2017 scientific publication. However the table contains inaccuracies, namely as regards the entry for Western and Northern Europe in relation to Ireland and Denmark.

Indeed, in row 5 of Table 2 it is stated that *E. granulosus* G1 to G3 and *E. equinus* (G4) are present in Ireland and Denmark as well as the other countries mentioned. However, *E. granulosus* G1 to G3 strains have never been detected in Ireland, whereas *E. equinus* (G4) has. This is supported by the very publication on which the table is based, Deplazes *et al.*, 2017<sup>1</sup>. Furthermore, Deplazes *et al.* (2017) neither states that *E. granulosus* occurs in Denmark, on the contrary it is stated that the prevalence of that species is 0%.

The table would thus need to be deleted, since it incorrectly implies that *E. granulosus* has been confirmed in Ireland and Denmark, which may have serious consequences both for the countries' status and their international trade relations if stated like this in the OIE *Terrestrial Manual*.

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. on p. 376: "Ireland is not believed to be endemic for other species/genotypes of *E. granulosus* s.l. (Torgerson and Budke, 2003)"; and on p. 377: "Ireland is believed to be non endemic for *E. granulosus* and no reports of autochthonous cases of cystic echinococcosis have been registered, although it is endemic for *E. equinus* (Torgerson and Budke, 2003)".

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In summary, it would seem sufficient to reference the publication in the text, without including a detailed table, as interested readers could also access that information directly from the scientific publication. Furthermore, the information contained in the table is prone to changes and would thus quickly be outdated. As a general rule, readers of the OIE *Terrestrial Manual* should rather be directed to the OIE *World Animal Health Information System* that contains official, accurate and up to date information on disease occurrence throughout the world.

#### Chapter 3.8.1. African swine fever (infection with African swine fever virus)

As indicated in our comments submitted previously (available here: [https://ec.europa.eu/food/sites/food/files/safety/docs/ia\\_standards\\_oie\\_eu\\_position\\_terrestrial-manual\\_201809.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/food/sites/food/files/safety/docs/ia_standards_oie_eu_position_terrestrial-manual_201809.pdf), p. 23-25), the EU wishes to reiterate that there is a clear lack of scientific evidence for the putative role played by so-called “carrier pigs” in the epidemiology of African swine fever (ASF).

Indeed, the concept of “carrier” in the context of ASF is problematic for several reasons. There is no commonly agreed definition of an “ASF carrier pig”. Rather, any surviving or seropositive animal has in the past in general been referred to as a “carrier”. There is however to date no scientific evidence that such survivors play any significant role in the epidemiology of the disease, in particular when pigs are infected with ASFV genotype II which is currently widespread in Eastern Europe and Asia.

Furthermore, there is no clear data in the literature referenced in the relevant paragraph of the draft OIE *Terrestrial Manual* chapter (Arias & Sánchez-Vizcaíno, 2002; Sanchez-Vizcaino *et al.*, 2015) that would support the following statement: “The serological recognition of carrier pigs has been vital for the success of eradication programmes in endemic ASF areas.”

In contrast, in a recent scientific opinion<sup>2</sup>, the European Food Safety Authority states the following:

“To date there are no scientific data demonstrating shedding by carriers of ASFV genotype II in the eastern European Union. Even if there are no carriers, there are several mechanisms that can lead to long-term circulation of ASFV in pig or wild boar populations.”;

“It should be noted that, during field observations, it is not possible to determine if a clinically healthy animal in which antibodies to ASFV are detected is an animal that has recovered from the disease (such animals do not necessarily shed ASFV) or a carrier. If, during field observations, the clinically healthy animal is seropositive and DNA of ASFV has been detected by polymerase chain reaction (PCR), the animal can still be either a recovered animal which is not shedding ASFV, but has detectable ASFV DNA in its tissues, or a carrier shedding infectious ASF virus.”;

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<sup>2</sup> EFSA AHAW Panel (EFSA Panel on Animal Health and Welfare), 2015. Scientific opinion on African swine fever. EFSA Journal 2015;13(7):4163, 92 pp. doi:10.2903/j.efsa.2015.4163, available here: <https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/efsajournal/pub/4163>

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“As yet, no scientific data have demonstrated the presence in the eastern EU of carrier pigs infected with ASFV genotype II and capable of intermittent viral shedding.”

The EU therefore requests that the concept of “carrier pig” be removed altogether from the draft OIE *Terrestrial Manual* chapter and suggests the following amended wording for Lines 94-100:

“[...] Animals which have recovered from either acute or chronic infections may potentially become persistently infected, ~~acting as virus carriers~~. The biological basis for the persistence of ASFV is still not well understood, nor is it clear which role it plays in the epidemiology of the disease in different genotypes of the pathogen and epidemiological situations ~~the extent to which carriers may shed the virus~~. The serological recognition of carrier pigs has been vital for the success of eradication programmes in endemic ASF areas (Arias & Sánchez-Vizcaíno, 2002; Sanchez-Vizcaino *et al.*, 2015).”