Japan's comments on the Report of the meeting of the OIE Aquatic Animal Health Standards Commission in September 2022

Annex 4. Item 5.1. – Chapter 1.3. Diseases listed by the OIE – Listing of infection with Megalocytivirus2. THE OIE AQUATIC ANIMAL HEALTH CODE

Text

The Commission reviewed the report of the ad hoc Group on susceptibility of fish species to infection with OIE listed diseases for infection with red sea bream iridovirus (RSIV). The Commission also noted that distinguishing susceptible species for infection with RSIV requires nucleic acid sequence and/or phylogenetic tree analyses to determine whether the pathogenic agent is RSIV or another genogroup. Therefore, evidence is sometimes lacking for the ad hoc Group to identify susceptible species to the level of genotype. As a result, the ad hoc Group completed preliminary assessments for susceptibility of fish species to infection with red sea bream iridovirus (RSIV), infectious spleen and kidney necrosis virus (ISKNV) and turbot reddish body iridovirus (TRBIV) and in its interim report recommended the Commission to consider listing the virus at the level of Megalocytivirus, including ISKNV, RSIV and TRBIV (but not the more distantly related scale drop disease virus, SDDV).

The Commission agreed that the complexity associated with the different genogroups of Megalocytivirus warranted an assessment against the criteria in Article 1.2.2. of Chapter 1.2. Criteria for listing aquatic animal diseases. The Commission agreed to assess the virus species infectious spleen and kidney necrosis virus (ISKNV), including its 3 genogroups RSIV, ISKNV and TRBIV. The Commission agreed that the RSIV genogroup (currently listed in the Aquatic Code), as well as the two genogroups ISKNV and TRBIV meet the listing criteria 1, 2, 3, and 4b.

The Commission noted that the three genogroups (RSIV, ISKNV, and TRBIV) have overlapping susceptible species, similar epidemiology, and similar diagnostic methods. As a result, the commission agreed that the proposed listed disease should be named "infection with infectious spleen and kidney necrosis virus (ISKNV)". Infection with ISKNV would be defined to include the three genogroups of the species ISKNV (i.e. ISKNV, RSIV and TRBIV) but would exclude the other recognized species of Megalocytivirus, SDDV.

Japan questions and opposes the proposal of the Aquatic Animals Commission to rename RSVI and closely related viruses as one pathogen, Megalocytivirus.

First, the Aquatic Animals Commission mentions that the RSIV chapter does not include ISKNV; however, the current OIE manual states that ISKNV is also included in "Infection with RSIV", which is a misunderstanding.

Secondly, we would like to clarify why the Aquatic Animals Commission has changed its previous policy for chapters on ISKNV and RSIV. The report in February 2022 mentions that ISKNV would be separated from RSIV and written into another chapter; "These viruses are not currently listed by the OIE and are not included within the scope of the infection with red sea bream iridovirus (RSIV) chapter. If ISKNV, TRBIV or other Megalocytivirus were to be listed, the viruses would need to be assessed against the listing criteria in Chapter 1.2. of the Aquatic Code. If they were found to fulfil the listing criteria, they could be proposed for listing to the OIE Assembly.".

However, this report shows the idea of returning to a single disease chapter. Is it correct to regard that the Aquatic Animals Commission recognises the difficulty of the previous plan and comes back to the idea, one disease?

If it is concluded that the procedure to identify the causative pathogen is complicated and difficult, it would be more appropriate not to change the name of the disease but to "Infection with RSIV" as it was originally named. If there are unavoidable circumstances (e.g., to include TRBIV, which is not included in the current OIE manual), Japan suggests the less misleading designation "Infection with Megalocytivirus". The name "ISKNV" may be confusing to the reader since it is not clear whether the name indicates the genotype or the name of the disease.

In addition, changing the name of the disease could cause confusion in international trade, such as changing the name of the disease subject to quarantine or changing the description of an animal health certificate.

Annex 16. Item 5.11. – Member questionnaire for revision of Chapter 4.3. Application of Compartmentalisation

(Omitted)
The current Chapter 4.2. Zoning and Compartmentalisation, was adopted in 1995 and most recently revised in 2010 while Chapter 4.3. Application of Compartmentalisation, was adopted in 2010 and most recently revised in 2016. The experiences of Members in implementing these standards and with developing Compartments will be helpful to the Commission to inform the revision of the chapter. Members are invited to comment on their experiences with the standards on Compartmentalisation in the Aquatic Code. For convenience, several questions have been provided as a basis for Member responses.

Questions for Members
1) Have the relevant Competent Authority and Aquatic Animal Health Services in your country established Compartments? If so, what is the purpose of these compartments (e.g. hatchery production; aquatic animals or their products for human consumption; domestic or international trade).
2) What is the experience of your country for establishing compartments with respect to the following:
a) Positive experiences (e.g. benefits for aquatic animal health management or trade);
b) Any impediments to establishing compartments;
c) Utility of the Aquatic Code standards on compartmentalization (Chapters 4.2. and 4.3.) (e.g. useful information, gaps, particular emphasis or guidance that is required);
d) Acceptance by international trade partners of the established Compartments.
3) Have you developed national compartmentalization policies or procedures? If yes, would you be willing to share those policies or procedures with the Aquatic Animals Commission for consideration when revising Chapter 4.3.?
4) Have you consulted your industry about their interest in developing compartments? If yes, is there interest in establishing compartments? Which industry sectors have expressed interest? What is the intended purpose of the proposed compartments?

Answers:

1) Have the relevant Competent Authority and Aquatic Animal Health Services in your country established Compartments? If so, what is the purpose of these compartments (e.g. hatchery production; aquatic animals or their products for human consumption; domestic or international trade).

Japan is establishing compartments to control specific diseases in the country and for the production of marine products for international trade, etc.

2) What is the experience of your country for establishing compartments with respect to the following:

a) Positive experiences (e.g. benefits for aquatic animal health management or trade);

Benefits include ease of proving disease-free status, shorter time to return to disease-free status, enhanced biosecurity, and enhanced traceability in the event of a disease outbreak to elucidate and follow-up infection routes.

b) Any impediments to establishing compartments;

Increased facility maintenance costs to isolate aquatic animals from other epidemic units, and difficulty in compartmentalizing marine production facilities.

c) Utility of the Aquatic Code standards on compartmentalization (Chapters 4.2. and 4.3.) (e.g. useful information, gaps, particular emphasis or guidance that is required);

It would be extremely useful in establishing compartments in Japan. Specific descriptions such as Article 4.2.3 and Chapter 4.3 are necessary for establishing standards.

d) Acceptance by international trade partners of the established Compartments.

For aquatic animals in established compartments, the competent authority issues a health certificate at the time of export. The sanitary certificate is accepted by the destination country.

3) Have you developed national compartmentalization policies or procedures? If yes, would you be willing to share those policies or procedures with the Aquatic Animals Commission for consideration when revising Chapter 4.3.?

Japan developed Compartmentalisation procedures for the export of ornamental fish. However, the procedure is based on Chapters 4.1 through 4.3 of the OIE Aquatic Code and has been revised in conjunction with any amendments to those chapters, so there is no procedure that goes beyond the related chapters in the Aquatic Code.

4) Have you consulted your industry about their interest in developing compartments? If yes, is there interest in establishing compartments? Which industry sectors have expressed interest? What is the intended purpose of the proposed compartments?

After consulting with ornamental fish aquaculture organizations, the procedures described in (3) were developed. The trade sector of aquatic products is interested in compartmentalisation. The purpose of compartmentalisation is to control diseases and to establish and maintain disease-free status.

6. Items for Member information

6.2.1. Infection with carp edema virus (CEV)

【英文】
The Commission reviewed new scientific evidence for infection with CEV and noted that since its February 2022 meeting there have been several more outbreaks reported in the Asia Pacific region. The Commission recognised that there is still uncertainty as to the impact associated with infection with CEV and the extent of the spread globally, particularly within Europe. The Commission agreed that this uncertainty emphasises the importance of Members reporting new detections of infection with CEV as an emerging disease, to ensure the collection of epidemiological information and maintain awareness of the spread of this pathogen.
The Commission agreed that infection with CEV still met the WOAH definition of an 'emerging disease'. Once again, the Commission requested Members to provide any relevant information on infection with CEV to inform the Commission's consideration whether the criteria for listing (Chapter 1.2.) should be applied or if it should no longer be considered as an emerging disease.
The Commission reminded Members that a technical disease card has been developed and is available on the WOAH website at: https://www.woah.org/en/what-we-do/animal-health-and-welfare/animal-diseases/

Comments:

As we submitted in our previous comment, Japan believes that CEV does not meet the OIE's criteria for an emerging disease and cannot support the consideration of CEV as an emerging disease. Japan gave a full explanation last time, citing science papers as well. However, the Commission responded only "The Commission agreed that infection with CEV still met the OIE definition of an 'emerging disease'.".

Japan will continue to oppose the case unless a transparent basis for judgment is provided as to why the Commission arrived at such a conclusion.

Regarding CEV outbreak cases, Japan is aware that there are high mortality rates in Europe. However, there are also cases with low mortality and low impact, such as those occurring in Asian countries including Japan. Therefore, it should be considered that there may be regional differences between Europe and Asia in terms of impact and mortality rates.

Japan would like OIE to focus on regional differences and differences in pathogenicity of this disease, and to obtain appropriate scientific information on the pathogenesis and spread of CEV outbreaks that meet the definition.

Also, in the "Control methods" section of the CEV technical disease card (https://www.woah.org/en/disease/carp-edema-virus/), there is no mention of a 0.5% salt water bath (Seno et al., 2003), which is effective in significantly reducing deaths from CEV, is missing and should be added.

References:

Ryuichiro SENO, Naotsugu HATA, Takeshi OYAMATSU, Hideo FUKUDA (2003). Curative Effect of 0.5% Salt Water Treatment on Carp, Cyprinus carpio, Infected with Carp Edema Virus (CEV) Results Mainly from Reviving the Physiological Condition of the Host, SUISANZOSHOKU 51(1), p.123-124