

# Preface

## The spread of pathogens through international trade

This year, World Veterinary Year, is also the year in which the global eradication of rinderpest has been formally announced by the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). It is timely, therefore, that the OIE should, through the vehicle of its *Scientific and Technical Review*, make available to veterinarians and their partners around the world an authoritative and comprehensive overview of the risks of spreading important diseases of terrestrial and aquatic production animals through international trade. It was, after all, the re-introduction of rinderpest into Europe through trade in cattle that led to the founding of the OIE in 1924.

The OIE was created primarily with the aim of controlling the international spread of infectious animal diseases and, although there have been many occasions since 1924 when diseases have been spread through trade in animals and animal products, it is undeniable that the risks of such spread have decreased in the decades since the OIE was founded. The Organisation's contribution to reducing this risk can be attributed not only to its efforts to improve the global animal health situation but also to its work in developing and adopting international sanitary standards which ensure the safety of traded animals and their products.

Nevertheless, with increasing globalisation, concern about the risks of spreading pathogens through trade in animals and animal products remains high amongst veterinary authorities. While the recollection of historical examples of disease spread contributes to anxiety about potential disease risks posed by trade, a careful study of the excellent papers collated in this issue of the *Review* supports the contention that trade can be managed safely. It is my expectation that the contents of this issue will prove extremely useful to those veterinarians, and their partners, who are involved throughout the world in managing the risks posed by trade in animals and their products.

There is a wealth of information in this issue of the *Review* to assist those who conduct import risk analyses according to the methodology developed, and published as a standard, by the OIE and I am sure that it will be appreciated by risk analysts and risk managers alike.

Many experts gave their valuable time to make the publication of this issue of the *Review* possible, and to each of them I offer my sincere thanks. It is the voluntary contribution of such experts that contributes to the enduring strength of the OIE. I would especially like to warmly thank Professor Stuart C. MacDiarmid, a key member of our Terrestrial Animal Health Standards Commission, for accepting our invitation to coordinate this issue of the *Review*. I am most grateful for his editorial suggestions and for his very successful efforts in formulating what is an extremely interesting and informative publication.

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