

GLTP VETERINARY COMMITTEE POSITION STATEMENT

Subject: Promotion of trade standards for commodities and products derived from animals that are compatible with biodiversity conservation

Introduction

The Greater Limpopo Transfrontier Park (GLTP) Veterinary Committee is tasked by the GLTP Joint Management Board (JMB) to assess, advise upon and implement recommendations supported by the JMB and approved at the Ministerial Committee of the Transfrontier Area.

This is a position statement of the Committee aimed at informing the JMB and affected stakeholders on the direction it proposes to take with regard to some aspects of transboundary animal disease control, with specific emphasis on foot & mouth disease (FMD).

The Committee aims to facilitate and influence policy adjustments which will support biodiversity protection and disease risk management and thereby assist in ensuring that communities are able to derive benefit both from wildlife and livestock in the Greater Transfrontier Area.

The position statement is specific to the area of our influence, which encompasses the Greater Limpopo Transfrontier Area.

Definitions:

- *Transboundary animal diseases (TAD)* - diseases of economic and public health concern that readily cross species barriers and international boundaries through the movement of livestock and wildlife
- *Non-geographic trade standards* - Trade standards for animals and animal products based on management of hazards (biological risks) inherent to the commodity or product rather than the locality of production
- *GLTFCA and adjacent areas* - the area referred to is the greater area encompassing and adjacent to the proclaimed national parks making up the GLTP.
- *Foot and mouth disease (FMD)* - one of the diseases present in the GLTFCA (maintained primarily by buffalo) with major regulatory implications for trade in susceptible animals and animal products
- *Commodity based trade (CBT)* - trade standards system for animal commodities and products founded on management of biological risks inherent to the particular commodity or product, irrespective of the geographical area from which the product was derived, i.e. a non-geographic standards approach.

The GLTFP Veterinary Committee:

- Influences stakeholders in the GLTFCA to support SADC and the OIE to develop FMD management strategies that are regionally appropriate, and to adopt certification and auditing systems that allow wider international acceptance of appropriately produced livestock products.
- Wishes to support SADC and in line with statements made at the Global Foot & Mouth Disease Workshop (June 2012 Bangkok) in recognizing the importance of wildlife (and in particular buffalo) to the economies of southern African countries, the importance of TFCA's and the need for alternative options to control of foot & mouth disease in the region. The importance and special requirements of the southern African situation is recognized by OIE, FAO, World Bank and others.
- Preventive measures currently aimed at FMD management are proving increasingly ineffective throughout southern Africa and therefore require re-evaluation and improvement.
- Recognises that livestock/wildlife interface disease surveillance is central to the monitoring of TADs and, more importantly, to the development of risk analyses and formulation of disease management strategies at the interface so contributing to the overall control of TADs at national and regional levels.
- Asserts that there is urgent need to promote production of more efficacious FMD vaccines relevant to local circumstances and to underscore the imperatives of producing vaccines that are practical and cost effective to deploy and reliable in their efficacy and local relevance.
- Recognises that in certain instances fencing remains a viable and useful multi-purpose tool for managing the wildlife-livestock interface, and can be helpful in preventing land-use conflict, problem animal control, mitigation of human-wildlife interaction and prevention of encroachment. Some fences / alignments in the GLTFCA are being re-evaluated in the interest of habitat connectivity because viable wildlife corridors are required for SADC countries' transfrontier conservation aspirations to be realized.
- Support strategic geospatial fence assessments that includes evaluation of local and ecosystem constraints and interests and must form part of all new fencing strategies to which end the GLTP veterinary committee would like to propose the formulation of a brief, bullet-point guideline as to "due-diligence" in the erection of fences within GLTFCA.
- Supports commodity-based trade and other non-geographic approaches such as compartmentalization to provide a way of ameliorating the trade impact of FMD in southern Africa. Procedures that are recommended by the OIE (World Organisation for Animal Health - the relevant international standard-setting body) and livestock production in the region needs to be implemented where appropriate.

- Endorses and supports the planned CBT pilot project in the Zimbabwean portion of the GLTFCA.
- As well as assisting with the overall FMD control efforts of Zimbabwe it is intended that this work should augment work already being conducted in the Caprivi Strip of Namibia. In this, as in other things, the committee recognise the value of collaboration between personnel involved in various geographically disparate TFCAs and so would look to promote such exchange of information through invitation of key personnel from other TFCAs to participate in the GLTFCA meetings, deliberations and structures.

Signed



Dr Markus Hofmeyr
Chairperson of the GLTP Veterinary Committee
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