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Workshop I: Sanitary and regulations on embryo transfer

IETS and HASAC: the genesis of the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) recommendations for safe trade of embryos

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The International Society for Embryo Technologies (IETS) was created in 1974. To meet the needs for specific regulation in terms of health safety, IETS created an Import & Export committee, chaired by R Mapletoft, in the early 80's. A formal relationship between IETS and the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) was then set up in 1987. With the development of new embryo technologies and the concern about the safety of animals produced with such technologies entering the food chain, the scope of the committee was expanded in 2000 under the initiative of M Thibier so as to include those issues, resulting in the current IETS Health and Safety Advisory Committee (HASAC, https://www.iets.org/comm_hasac.asp). HASAC functions to advise the IETS Board members, IETS members and OIE. HASAC is composed of IETS members from academic, regulatory and industry sectors, under the direction of a chair nominated by the IETS Board of Governors (BoG) (current chair: Julie Gard, succeeding to F Fieni, P Chavatte-Palmer and M Thibier). Its aims are: - to review regularly and extensively the literature in order to evaluate potential risks, based on scientific evidence, with regard to international trade of embryos and human consumption of animal or animal products derived from embryo transfer and related technologies. - to provide guidelines such as codes of practice, recommendations and any information pertinent to the safe movement of embryos and safe introduction into the food chain of animal or animal products derived from reproductive biotechnologies without unduly restricting technological advances and commerce.- to communicate to IETS members all its achievements and upon acceptance by IETS BoG, to all the relevant International Agencies. Three HASAC subcommittees meet annually but work electronically throughout the year: 1. The Research subcommittee maintains and revises literature relevant to the animal health implications of current and emerging technologies. A large database, including an abstract, HASAC interpretation and conclusions on all publications examined, is updated each year. Based on these yearly evaluations, science-based recommendations are then handed for evaluation to the Regulatory subcommittee. 2. The Regulatory subcommittee examines new evidence provided by the scientific subcommittee and discusses whether current recommendations for the management of the risks potentially associated with embryos in terms of pathogen-embryo interactions should be modified. Any proposed modifications to alter text with regards to regulations and/or OIE recommendations are put forward to the BoG and, if approved, subsequently formally proposed to the OIE for incorporation into the Terrestrial Animal health Code. Commission members of OIE most often support the proposed amendments from IETS/HASAC before finally being voted on, and mostly accepted, by the OIE General Assembly. 3. The Manual, Forms and Certificates subcommittee develops, elaborates and publishes a code of practice providing guidelines to practitioners for managing their operations so that pertinent quality assurance standards will be met. Additionally, this committee creates and maintains recording and identification systems of embryos to ensure traceability.