

International Aquatic Animal Health Code, 5th edition

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The fifth edition of *The International Aquatic Animal Health Code*, published by the Office International des Épidémiologies provides a comprehensive guide for Veterinary Administrations and the Competent Authorities of OIE member countries for the facilitation of international trade in aquatic animals and aquatic animal products. The code represents a worldwide standard for the control of listed aquatic animal diseases. It is interesting to note that, at present, there are no aquatic animal diseases categorized as List A diseases. Currently all aquatic animal diseases notifiable to the OIE are List B diseases (diseases of socioeconomic or public health importance within countries and significant to international trade). The term aquatic animal as used in the code refers to live fish, molluscs and crustaceans and their respective products. Aquatic amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals are excluded from this definition.

Control and prevention of the spread of disease, by international trade in aquatic animals, is covered under the following points: General Definitions, Notification Systems, Veterinary Ethics and Certification for International Trade, Input Risk Analysis, Import/Export Procedures, and Contingency Plans. Parts 2, 3 and 4 of the code cover Diseases of Fish, Molluscs and Crustaceans notifiable to the OIE as well as other significant

diseases. Part 5 details Health Control and Hygiene and provides useful information on disinfection of aquatic organisms and aquaculture systems. Model International Aquatic Animal Health Certificates are provided under part 6. Diagnostic techniques for the diseases that appear in the code are not included, but are described in a separate OIE publication, *Diagnostic Manual for Aquatic Animal Diseases*.

Certification is a prerequisite to controlling and preventing the spread of aquatic animal diseases through international trade in aquatic animals and aquatic animal products and as such the code is essential in providing a standardized approach for the Competent Authorities of the member countries. It is also an important publication for those professionals involved in advising prospective importers and exporters of aquatic animals and their products. The code is presented in a clear and unambiguous manner. The current edition covers 13 notifiable diseases and a further 18 significant diseases and is clearly a document that will continue to evolve over time as new species of aquatic animals become important for aquaculture and as new diseases evolve.

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