



Caribbean Animal Health Network

## CHARTER – Part 1

**Adopted at  
the Seventh Meeting of the CaribVET Steering Committee  
8 May 2012, Providence, Guyana**

Version – 31 July 2012

## **PREAMBLE**

Recognizing the adverse consequences of animal diseases, including transboundary animal diseases and zoonoses, on agricultural trade, food and nutrition security and the socio-economic development of Caribbean countries;

Cognizant of the limitations of human and financial resources of individual States in designing and maintaining a rigid system to safeguarding animal and human health;

Recognizing the critical need for collaborative and coherent regional and national approaches to strengthening existing measures and initiatives against the entry and spread of animal diseases in the Caribbean;

Members of the Caribbean Animal Health Network (CaribVET) have resolved as follows -

### **Article I – The Caribbean Animal Health Network (CaribVET)**

1. This Charter formally recognises the Caribbean Animal Health Network or CaribVET and set out its objectives, membership, structure and functions.

2. CaribVET is a regional network comprising Government Officials, national, regional and international professionals and experts, and private stakeholders working in the animal production and health systems of Caribbean states and territories.

### **Article II - Interpretation**

In this Charter, unless the context otherwise requires –

- “amendment” in Article X includes repeal or replacement;
- “CARICOM” means the Caribbean Community established by the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas, signed in July 2001 in The Bahamas;
- “Chief Veterinary Officer” means the veterinary officer appointed by a State or Territory and charged with matters relating to animal health and production, however designated;
- “CIRAD” means the *Centre de coopération internationale en recherche agronomique pour le développement*, which was established by the Government of France;
- “CaribVET” means “the Caribbean Animal Health Network” consisting of members listed in Article IV of the Charter.
- “the Charter” includes the Annex.

### **Article III – Objectives**

The principal objectives of CaribVET include: –

- (a) Contribution to the harmonization of strategies relating to animal disease surveillance and control activities in the Caribbean through capacity building, research and information sharing;
- (b) Improvement of the regional sanitary situation;
- (c) Safeguarding animal health and welfare in the Caribbean; and
- (d) Promotion of trade.

#### **Article IV - Membership**

1. Membership of CaribVET is open to the following individuals or entities operating within the Caribbean:

- (a) Chief Veterinary Officers;
- (b) National, Regional and International Organisations;
- (c) Universities and Research institutions;
- (d) Regional private sector groups and associations;
- (e) Regional non-governmental organisations;
- (f) Directors of Laboratories offering veterinary and veterinary public health services; and
- (g) Other individuals as determined by the Steering Committee.

2. Application for Membership by any of the individuals or entities in paragraph 1, shall be considered by the Steering Committee.

#### **Article V – Functions**

The functions of the CaribVET are as follows –

- (a) To support the development of a regional strategy on animal health;
- (b) To improve the competitiveness in animal production in the region through conformity with international animal health standards;
- (c) To strengthen national surveillance, monitoring and management skills related to animal diseases;
- (d) To assist in establishing/strengthening early detection, alert and response mechanisms and or systems for animal diseases at the national and regional level;
- (e) To create and support the development of technical tools for improving the Regions' technical and diagnostic capacity;

- (f) To impart and expand the knowledge base of animal diseases including zoonoses and their distribution;
- (g) To collaborate with national and regional animal and veterinary public health initiatives aimed at achieving food security/stability and food safety; and
- (h) To undertake other functions incidental or consequential to the above functions.

## **Article VI – The Institutional Structure of CaribVET**

1. The institutional structure of CaribVET consists of the following –
  - (a) Steering Committee;
  - (b) Coordination Unit; and
  - (c) Technical Working Groups;
  
2. (1) The Steering Committee is composed of –
  - i. Chief Veterinary Officers;
  - ii. One representative from each of the organisations identified in Article IV paragraph (1) sub-paragraphs (b) to (f); and
  - iii. Other individuals as determined by the Steering Committee.

(2) The members of the Steering Committee shall select a Chairperson and a Co-Chair to serve two year terms.

(3) The Steering Committee is the management and decision-making body of CaribVET and will establish appropriate rules of procedure.
  
3. The Coordinating Unit of CaribVET is composed of –
  - (a) Chairperson of CaribVET;
  - (b) Co-Chair of CaribVET;
  - (c) Chairperson of Technical Working Groups;
  - (d) Representatives of CIRAD, the CARICOM Secretariat, international donors and partners; and
  - (e) Any other persons as determined by the Coordinating Unit.

4. (1) Technical Working Groups, which are established by the Steering Committee, include:

(a) Specific Diseases Working Group:

- i. Avian Diseases Working Group;
- ii. Swine Diseases Working Group;
- iii. Ticks and Tick-Borne Diseases Working Group;
- iv. Veterinary Public Health Working Group;

(b) Transversal Working Groups:

- i. Epidemiology Working Group;
- ii. Laboratory Quality Assurance and Diagnostic Working Group;

(2) The terms of reference of the Technical Working Groups shall be determined by the Steering Committee.

(3) Technical Working Groups are appointed by the Steering Committee and each Technical Working Group is composed of:

- (a) A Chairperson, selected by the Steering Committee;
- (b) Members of the Steering Committee possessing appropriate expertise; and
- (c) Any other person as recommended by the Working Group.

### **Article VII Authority of CaribVET**

1. CaribVET may conclude agreements necessary to execute its functions, and in particular may conclude agreements to secure funding and to cooperate with States, Territories and organisations.
2. CaribVET may be represented by the Chairperson or Co-Chair of the Steering Committee. The Chairperson or Co-Chair may sign agreements on behalf of CaribVET in keeping with the objectives and functions set out in this Charter and any decision of the Steering Committee.

### **Article VIII - Relationship with National Surveillance Networks**

1. CaribVET will work in close collaboration with national surveillance networks to promote international standards and regional harmonisation with respect to animal health issues.

## **Article IX - Communications**

1. An important element of CaribVET is that it operates as a forum to exchange information in which data collection, analysis and interpretation adhere to scientific principles.
2. CaribVET will ensure confidentiality of all information exchanged through the network and may require authority for publication or dissemination of such information in the seminars, newsletters, and bulletins to Members of the Network and the public in general.

## **Article X - Funds**

1. The various activities of CaribVET may be funded by –
  - (a) States and territories;
  - (b) Research Institutions;
  - (c) International Organisations;
  - (d) Non-Governmental Organisations; or
  - (e) Any other benefactor.
2. Funds acquired on behalf of CaribVET must be used in accordance with the terms and conditions of the funders and utilised in a transparent manner. An account of all funds provided to or expended on behalf of CaribVET will be presented to the Steering Committee.
3. (1) The Steering Committee is responsible for the oversight of all financial matters and in particular the expenditure and accounting in respect of any funds provided to or expended on behalf of CaribVET.  
  
(2) The Steering Committee shall ensure that proper accounts are kept in respect of any funds received and expended by CaribVET, and that appropriate financial reports are presented to the Steering Committee annually, or as required.  
  
(3) The Steering Committee shall establish a Finance Sub-Committee to facilitate the management of funds and projects and the preparation of financial reports, including accounts, expenditure reports and audits.

## **Article XI – Amendments to the Charter**

Any Member of CaribVET may propose amendments to the Charter and such amendments will require two-thirds majority of all the Members of the Steering Committee to be valid and effectual.

## **Article XII – Settlement of Disputes**

Any dispute between or among Members of CaribVET must be resolved by way of negotiation.

## **Article XIII - Savings**

The decisions and the recommendations of the Steering Committee and the Technical Working Groups of CaribVET should not conflict or contradict with the obligations of its Membership to International and other binding Agreements, nor should it contravene the decisions and recommendations of the World Animal Health Organisation (OIE) when implementing the objects and functions listed in Articles III and IV of the Charter.

## **Article XIII – The Annex**

The Annex provides the origins, history and the functioning of CaribVET. If there is a gap or omission in regard to the functioning of CaribVET, reference should be made to the Annex to fill such gaps or omissions.

## **Article XIV – Adoption of the Charter**

1. This Charter is adopted by resolution of the members of CaribVET.
2. The following Members of CaribVET resolve to cooperate with one another and participate fully in the regional network to achieve its objectives and to execute the functions and activities set out in this Charter.

## **Chief Veterinary Officers from the following States and Territories:**

1. Anguilla
2. Antigua and Barbuda
3. Aruba
4. Barbados

5. Belize
6. Bermuda
7. Bonaire
8. British Virgin Islands
9. Cayman Islands
10. Cuba
11. Curacao
12. Dominica
13. Dominican Republic
14. French Guyana
15. Grenada
16. Guadeloupe
17. Guyana
18. Haiti
19. Jamaica
20. Martinique
21. Montserrat
22. Nevis
23. Puerto Rico
24. Saint Lucia
25. Saint Kitts
26. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
27. Sint Maarten
28. Suriname
29. The Bahamas
30. Trinidad and Tobago
31. Turks and Caicos Islands
32. US Virgin Islands

**Representatives from the following entities:**

33. Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat (CCS),
34. Centre de Coopération Internationale en Recherche Agronomique pour le Développement (CIRAD)

35. Centro Nacional de Sanidad Agropecuaria (CENSA)
36. Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO)
37. Inter American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA)
38. Pan American Health Organisation (PAHO)
39. University of Guyana (UG)
40. United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)
41. University of the West Indies (UWI)
42. World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE)