

A call for Timely International Movement of Emergency

Diagnostic Specimens for Wildlife



As with domestic animals, wildlife fall victim to outbreaks of both infectious and non-infectious diseases. But unlike domestic animals, the movement of diagnostic specimens to and among diagnostic laboratories can be delayed for months to years by international regulations intended to control the trade in threatened and endangered species. The unintended result of those restrictions have impeded international collaboration for rapid disease investigation and control measures. Recent

examples include significant export and import-side delays during investigation of large-scale die-offs affecting Saiga antelope populations and mass mortality events in marine mammals.

The lack of clarity in the current regulations and processes under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) contribute to unfortunate delays and consequences for already-threatened species and inadvertently imperil conservation and animal health efforts.

To promote timely international movement of emergency diagnostic specimens for investigation, a Resolution on “Simplified Procedures for Permits and Certificates” (working document 56) will be voted on at the 18th CITES Conference of the Parties, 23 May – 3 June 2019 in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

The Resolution proposes use of the OIE Reference Laboratory model, building on the existing OIE-CITES collaboration agreement and facilitating necessary expedited transfer of emergency diagnostic materials while ensuring conformity with OIE standards.

“We kindly request you to consider contacting the CITES delegate in your country to discuss the importance of the proposed resolution”

and consider how it may serve to improve animal health in your country and facilitate collaboration among OIE members.

The list of National CITES Authorities can be found at: www.cites.org/eng/cms/index.php/component/cp