

WOAH Standards on Zoning and Compartmentalisation

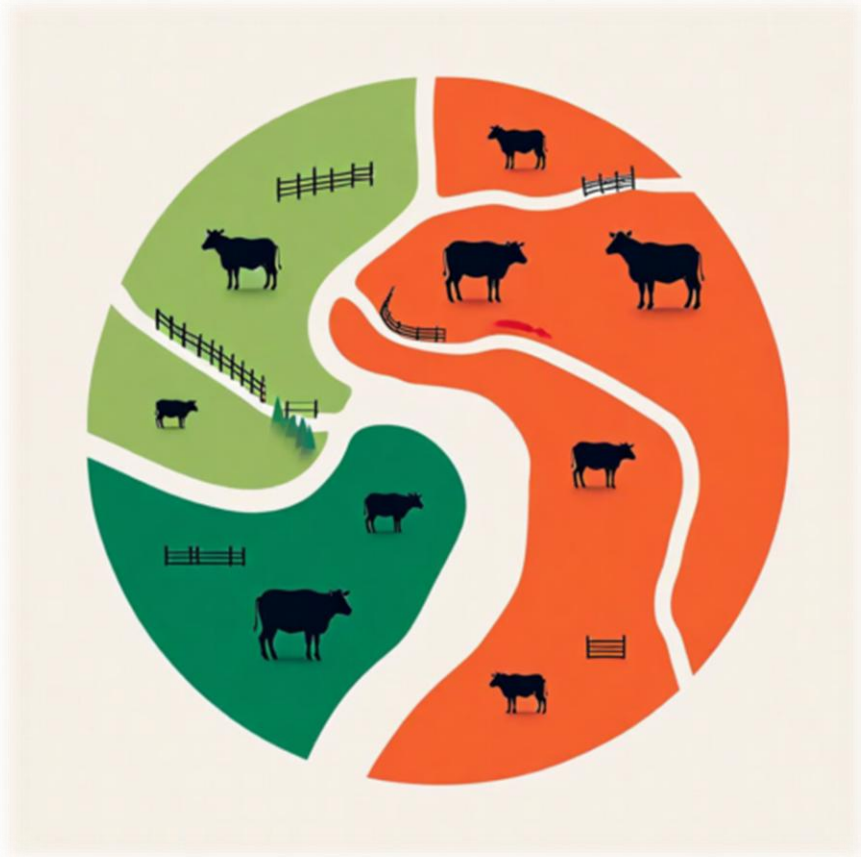
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Terrestrial Animal Health Standards Commission
(Code Commission)

**Sub -regional training workshop on zoning and compartmentalisation
in the facilitation of safe trade, 28-30 April 2026**



Outline of the presentation



1. Current WOAH Standards relating to zoning and compartmentalisation
2. Effective implementation of zoning and resulting benefits
3. Work of *ad hoc* Group on zoning and the latest draft chapters
4. Feedback from Global Forum on Zoning



1. Current WOAAH Standards relating to Zoning and Compartmentalisation



Current standards on zoning & compartmentalisation

- Section 4: Disease Prevention and Control
 - **Chapter 4.4. Zoning and compartmentalisation**
 - **Chapter 4.5. Application of compartmentalisation**
 - Other chapters on animal identification and traceability, vaccination, biosecurity (TBA)



- Section 1: chapters on surveillance for animals and vector
- Section 3: chapters on quality of VS, vet legislation
- Section 5: chapters on measures and procedures applicable to the exportation/transit/importation of commodities
- Section 8: disease-specific chapters (additional provisions)



Chapter 4.4. Zoning and Compartmentalization

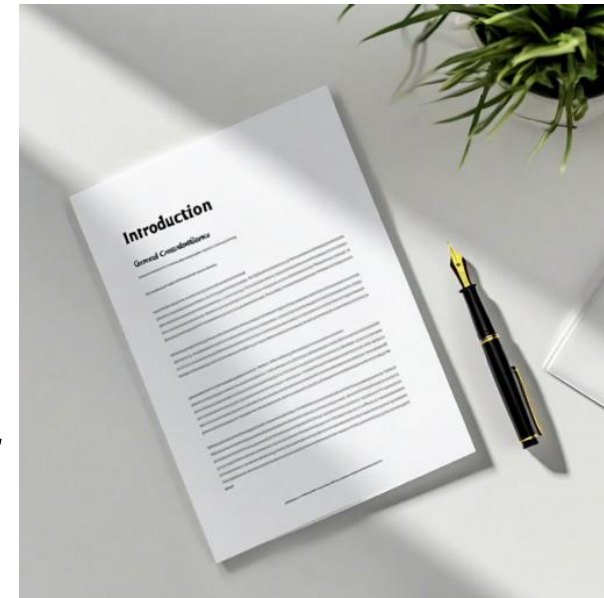
Article 1: Introduction

Subpopulations may be separated by **natural or artificial geographical barriers** or by the **application of appropriate biosecurity**.[...] In practice, **spatial considerations** and **appropriate management**, including biosecurity plans, play important roles in the application of both concepts.

Article 2: General considerations

The procedures used to establish and maintain the animal health status of a zone or compartment depend on **the epidemiology of the disease**, including the **presence and role of vectors**, **susceptible wildlife** and **environmental factors**, [...]

Biosecurity and surveillance are essential components and should be developed through active cooperation between industry and the Veterinary Services.





Chapter 4.4. Zoning and Compartmentalization

Article 2: General considerations [cont.]

The VA should provide **movement certification**, when necessary, and carry out documented periodic **inspections** of facilities, biosecurity, records, and surveillance procedures. They should also **audit** surveillance, reporting, laboratory diagnostics and when relevant, vaccination.

The **production sector's responsibilities** include the application of biosecurity, documenting and recording of movements of commodities and personnel, managing quality assurance schemes, documenting the implementation of corrective actions, [...].



Chapter 4.4. Zoning and Compartmentalization

- Glossary definitions and Articles 4 to 7 -



1. **Zone** – a part of a county **defined by the VA**, containing an animal population or **subpopulation with a specific animal health status** with respect to an infection or infestation for the purposes of international trade or disease prevention and control.
2. **Free zone** – a zone in which the absence of a specific infection or infestation has been demonstrated in accordance with the Terrestrial Code.
3. **Infected zone** – a zone where an infection or infestation has been confirmed.



Chapter 4.4. Zoning and Compartmentalization

- Glossary definitions and Articles 4 to 7 -

4. Protection zone – a zone where specific biosecurity and sanitary measures are implemented **to prevent the entry of a pathogenic agent into a free country or zone from a neighboring country or zone** of different animal health status.

5. Containment zone – an infected zone defined within a previously free country or zone, **which includes all suspected or confirmed cases that are epidemiologically linked** and where movement control, biosecurity and sanitary measures are applied to prevent the spread of, and to eradicate, the infection or infestation.





Chapter 4.4. Zoning and Compartmentalization

- Article 8 on bilateral recognition of zones -

- Countries may recognize each other's zones **through a bilateral process**, by exchanging information to allow the recognition of different subpopulations within their territories.
- The VA of the exporting country should explain to the importing country the basis for claiming an animal health status for a given zone, and demonstrate through documentation that it has implemented the WOAHP recommendations for maintaining the zone.
- The VA of the importing country should recognize the existence of the zone when it has been demonstrated that appropriate measures have been applied according to the Terrestrial Code.



2. Effective implementation of zoning and resulting benefits



Importance of quality Veterinary Services

- Good **surveillance** practices combined with a strong **laboratory system** is necessary to ensure that disease is contained to established boundaries.
- **Competent Authorities** as well as **private stakeholders** need regular communication and training to be aware and supportive of control measures.
- Excellent **animal identification and traceability** are indispensable to the implementation of zoning. Use of permits to document movements allows auditing of the system.



Strategic Advantages: Why Implement Zoning?

- Many countries have animal industries located in specific regions, which may have a higher level of interest in **disease control/eradication for local or international trade**.
- Many countries have **localized areas of disease risk** due to wild animal reservoir populations, borders shared with other countries, insect vectors of disease, etc.
- Implementation of free zones may allow for more efficient use of resources and can encourage new stakeholder participation based on success in the zone.



Summary of best practices for zoning

Risk-Based

- Analyze regional risk factors

Engage

- Communication with veterinarians and stakeholders, and training on zoning

Incentivise

- Provide motivation for compliance.

Economic

- Document trade and production benefits.



3. Work of *ad hoc* Group on zoning and the latest draft chapters



ad hoc Group on Zoning - Background



- TAHSC noted in 2023 that comments on various chapters showed **Members' incomplete, different understanding of critical aspects of zoning**, especially containment zones and protection zones.
- TAHSC noted that Members focus on benefits of zoning to enhance international trade, but **should also consider zoning as a useful tool for managing disease**.



AHG on Zoning - Scope

- Revised chapters should **clearly explain the different types and purposes of zones** used to maintain different subpopulations with specific animal health statuses.
- Revisions should clarify consistency around implementation of zones regardless of the disease of concern.
- The chapter should **describe in detail the requirements for properly implementing different types of zones**, any constraints on the number and duration of zones, noting the difference between diseases for which WOAH grants official status and other diseases.



Meeting of the AHG on Zoning

- The Zoning *ad hoc* Group met twice in 2025, the last time immediately after the WOAH Global Forum on Zoning in December 2025.
- *Ad hoc* Group members attended the Global Zoning Forum and were able to hear Member concerns about implementation of zoning.
- The current Chapter 4.4. has been revised to focus on various methods to create subpopulations of animals and what these methods have in common.





Meeting of the AHG on Zoning

- The AHG on Zoning has drafted a new Chapter 4.Y. 'Application of Zoning' to provide more detail on types of zones and ways they can be used to facilitate disease control.
- They revised some glossary definitions to provide more clarity.
- The Code Commission reviewed the AHG's drafts at its February 2026 meeting and made amendments. It is circulating the two chapters and associated glossary definitions for comment.
- [Feb 2026 TAHSC report](#)

(Annexes 23 and 24, *Glossary* in Annex 19)





Revised Draft Chapter 4.4.

- The title of this chapter was changed to indicate that it is a standard on creating subpopulations of animals, and zoning and compartmentalisation are two possible mechanisms to accomplish this. As of Feb 2026, the title is “**Defining, establishing and maintaining subpopulations of animals.**”
- The chapter outlines principles for defining, establishing and maintaining animal subpopulations including provision of sufficient human and financial resources for surveillance, biosecurity, laboratory diagnosis, and animal identification and traceability.
- The Code Commission asked the AHG to expand the chapter to add more detail and examples of other useful options or mechanisms to create alternative subpopulations of animals beyond zoning and compartmentalization.



New Draft Chapter 4.Y. 'Application of Zoning'

- The chapter presents different reasons why a Member may want to apply zoning.
- It covers common features of all types of zones:
 - Geographical limits
 - Epidemiological separation of animal subpopulations
 - Biosecurity and sanitary measures to prevent spread of disease
 - Animal identification and traceability
 - Surveillance
- It describes roles and responsibilities of VA and private stakeholders
- Specific types of zones (FZ, IZ, PZ, CZ) are covered in detail.



Proposed Glossary definitions

- ZONE means a ~~part of a country~~ geographical area defined by the *Veterinary Authority*, containing a ~~an animal population~~ or *subpopulation* with a specific *animal health status* with respect to an *infection* or *infestation* or specific animal health management measures ~~for the purposes of international trade~~ or disease prevention or control.
- FREE ZONE means a zone in which the absence of a specific infection or infestation in a ~~an animal~~ subpopulation has been demonstrated in accordance with the relevant requirements of the Terrestrial Code.



Proposed Glossary definitions

- PROTECTION ZONE means a zone where specific *biosecurity* and *sanitary measures* are implemented in response to an increased risk of disease introduction to prevent the entry and spread of a pathogenic agent into a free country or zone, ~~from a neighbouring country or zone of a different *animal health status*.~~
- CONTAINMENT ZONE means an infected zone, defined within a previously free country or zone, ~~which includes all suspected or confirmed cases that are epidemiologically linked and~~ where movement control, biosecurity and sanitary measures are applied to prevent the spread of, and to eradicate, the infection or infestation.



4. Feedback from Global Forum on Zoning



Global Forum on Zoning - Background

- WOAHA Observatory completed its first thematic study on zoning, which showed that Members have successfully established zones with a positive effect on control of animal diseases and a positive impact on trade.
- The study also revealed that **implementation of zones in resource-limited settings, and ongoing maintenance of disease-free zones presents practical challenges.**
- As a result, in December 2025, WOAHA hosted an inter-regional Forum on Zoning to bring together Veterinary Authorities and private sector participants to exchange experiences, challenges, best practices and lessons learned.





Top 10 Takeaway from the Forum

1. **Cost vs. benefit:** zoning is expensive, but benefits can be worthwhile.
2. Active and passive **surveillance** is critical to establish and justify boundaries of zones.
3. Reliable **animal identification and traceability** are necessary to reap the benefits of zoning
4. **Public-private partnerships** can assist with funding, resources and communication plans to improve effectiveness of zoning.
5. **Planning:** ability to rapidly implement emergency response plans and secure access to funding significantly facilitates effective zoning.
6. **Quality Veterinary Services:** ensure that everyone knows their role, is well trained and adequate resources to implement the zoning plan.



Top 10 Takeaway from the Forum

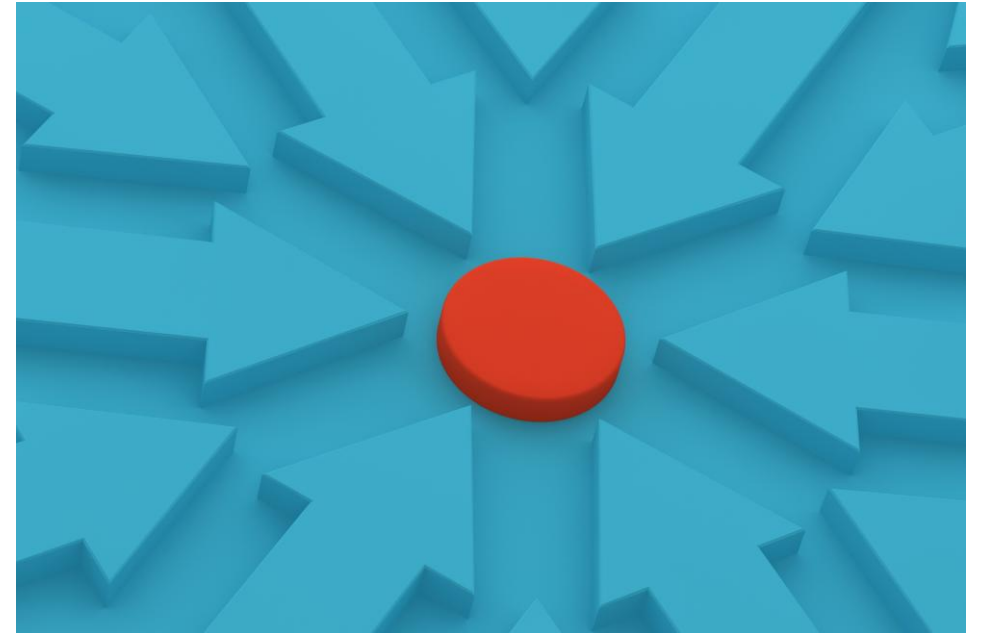


7. **Laboratory capacity** and back up plans are critical when surveillance and diagnostic testing increase.
8. **Vaccination** is a tool that can be used to reduce disease spread and decrease the need for depopulation with compensation.
9. **WOAH tools:** WOAH official recognition and self-declaration of zones facilitate international acceptance.
10. **Trust and transparency:** communication is key with stakeholders, and trading partners.



Call to Action: Shaping the Future Standards

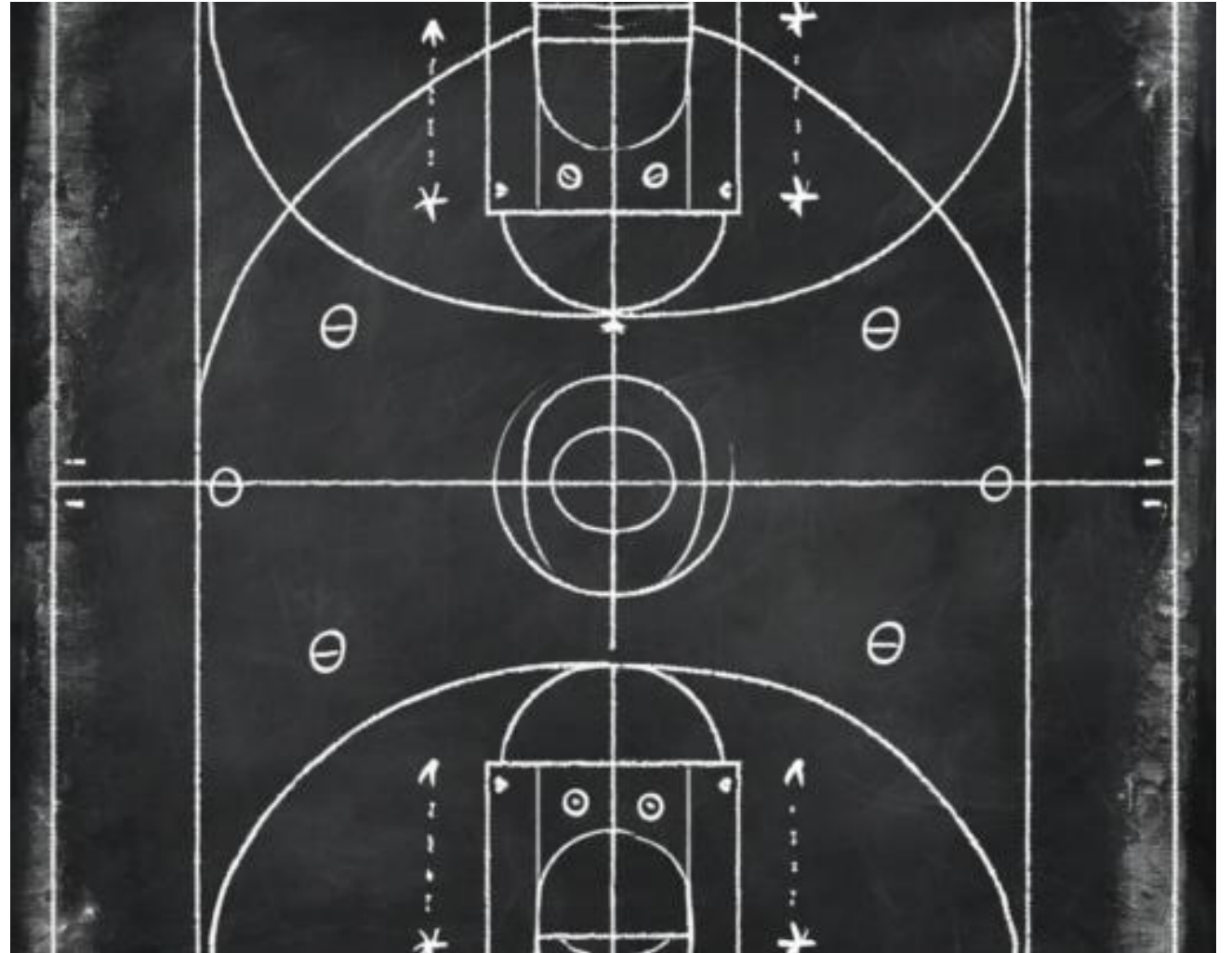
- **Correct application of WOAHA standards** for zoning can facilitate disease control and enhance trade
- WOAHA is committed to assisting Members in implementation of zoning by updating standards on zoning and providing training to allow Members to learn from each other regarding best practices for implementation of zoning
- We encourage you to read the Feb 2026 TAHSC report and submit comments on proposed changes (**Deadline 3 July 2026**).





Thank you

Acknowledgement:
Dr. Joyce Bowling-Heyward
Standards Dept,
WOAH Headquarters



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