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PANAFTOSA

Pan American Center for Foot-and-Mouth
Disease and Veterinary Public Health

A large, dimly lit conference room with many people seated at long tables covered with white cloths. The room has a high ceiling with recessed lighting and large windows in the background. The overall atmosphere is professional and formal.

**REPORT OF THE EX OFFICIO SECRETARIAT FOR THE 52nd MEETING
OF THE SOUTH AMERICAN COMMISSION FOR THE FIGHT AGAINST
FOOT-AND-MOUTH DISEASE (COSALFA)**

Georgetown

April 22, 2026

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REPORT OF THE EX OFFICIO SECRETARIAT FOR THE 52nd MEETING OF THE SOUTH AMERICAN COMMISSION FOR THE FIGHT AGAINST FOOT-AND-MOUTH DISEASE (COSALFA)

(Working Document)

INTRODUCTION

The Report of the ex officio Secretariat is submitted for the consideration of the delegates of the member countries of COSALFA 52, presented as a working document for the analysis and discussion of progress in the eradication and prevention of foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) during the period from April 2025 to March 2026.

The report presents a summary of the actions carried out in the countries of South America and Panama and includes an evaluation of compliance with the resolutions of the 51st COSALFA, held on April 3–4, 2025. This evaluation is based on the information collected by the ex officio Secretariat within the framework of the commitments undertaken with the Hemispheric Program for the Eradication of Foot-and-Mouth Disease (PHEFA), complemented by contributions from the delegates.

It also presents the technical cooperation activities, the outcomes of agreements and projects, and the interinstitutional coordination and cooperation efforts with other agencies, developed by the Pan American Foot-and-Mouth Disease Center and Veterinary Public Health of the Pan American Health Organization / World Health Organization (PANAFTOSA/PAHO) in support of countries implementing the PHEFA Action Plan.

The regional situation of foot-and-mouth disease is described based on the official reports submitted by the countries and on the technical information analyzed by PANAFTOSA.

I. STATUS OF FOOT-AND-MOUTH DISEASE IN THE COUNTRIES OF SOUTH AMERICA AND PANAMA IN 2025

Regional attention continues to focus on Venezuela and its border with Colombia, considered the main epidemiological risk area for the Region. During the year, discussions were held regarding the revision of the operational plan in Venezuela, aimed at its effective implementation through a zonal approach focused on targeting actions. The plan is currently in the final phase of approval by Venezuelan authorities. Meanwhile, in Colombia, the public and private sectors continue implementing two annual vaccination cycles, with special emphasis on areas bordering Venezuela as a key measure to mitigate risk.

Regarding the transition from FMD-free with vaccination status to FMD-free without vaccination, countries continue advancing according to their respective national plans. Bolivia and Brazil completed the transition of their territories to FMD-free without vaccination status, with official recognition granted by WOAHA in May 2025. This represents a significant milestone in the final stage of the Hemispheric Program for the Eradication of Foot-and-Mouth Disease (PHEFA).

In July 2025, Colombia submitted technical documentation to WOAHA requesting recognition of a new FMD-free zone without vaccination, comprising the departments of Amazonas and Vaupés and the municipality of Miraflores. The final decision will be considered during the WOAHA World Assembly of Delegates scheduled for May 2026. Ecuador conducted its last systematic vaccination campaign in April 2025 and is currently in the process of transitioning its mainland territory to FMD-free without vaccination status, with expectations of obtaining official WOAHA recognition in the coming year.

Paraguay established at the beginning of 2026 the Management Committee for the transition plan toward FMD-free status without vaccination. This mechanism integrates representatives from the public and private sectors and marks the formal start of a stage of technical analysis, strategic planning, and institutional coordination to evaluate the sanitary, epidemiological, and operational conditions required for the suspension of systematic vaccination.

In terms of prevention and preparedness for sanitary emergencies, countries continue strengthening contingency plans and operational capacities. Over the past 12 months: Argentina, Brazil, Ecuador and Paraguay updated their contingency plans. Brazil and Peru also carried out simulation exercises to strengthen preparedness and response capacity of their official veterinary services in the event of sanitary emergencies.

In this context, in December 2025 the Hemispheric Committee for the Eradication of Foot-and-Mouth Disease (COHEFA) approved the new PHEFA Action Plan for 2026–2030, establishing the regional roadmap for the final stage of disease eradication in the Americas. Currently, approximately 99% of the cattle herds in the Region is located in areas recognized by WOAHA as free of foot-and-mouth disease: 66% in zones free without vaccination 34% in zones free with vaccination. This demonstrates the sustained progress of the continent toward the definitive eradication of the disease.

II. DEGREE OF COMPLIANCE WITH THE RESOLUTIONS OF THE 51st COSALFA

RESOLUTION I – HEMISPHERIC PROGRAM FOR THE ERADICATION OF FOOT-AND-MOUTH DISEASE (PHEFA)

IT IS RESOLVED:

1. To congratulate and recognize all COSALFA member countries, especially Bolivia and Brazil, for the progress achieved within the framework of the 2021–2025 PHEFA Action Plan.
2. To thank PAHO, through PANAFTOSA/PAHO, for its continuous support to the countries of the region in the eradication of foot-and-mouth disease.
3. To request PANAFTOSA/PAHO, in coordination with the countries, to prepare a new PHEFA Action Plan to guide the next steps toward the eradication of foot-and-mouth disease in the Americas.

LEVEL OF COMPLIANCE

PANAFTOSA/PAHO prepared the proposal for the new PHEFA Action Plan through an inclusive, technical, and transparent process, with the support of specialists from countries in the Region. The proposal was previously shared and discussed with the heads of the national veterinary services of the COSALFA member countries, as well as those of Central America, Mexico, and the Dominican Republic. Additionally, considering the regional priority of advancing toward the elimination of the remaining risk, the plan was presented and specifically analyzed with representatives from the public and private sectors of Venezuela. The document was made available to the countries 30 days prior to the 4th Extraordinary Meeting of the Hemispheric Committee for the Eradication of Foot-and-Mouth Disease (COHEFA) in its three official versions, through the corresponding institutional website (<https://www.paho.org/es/panaftosa/cohefa/4a-reunion-extraordinaria-cohefa>).

Subsequently, the proposal was discussed, adjusted, and approved by the representatives of the COHEFA subregions during the virtual meeting held on 16 December 2025, establishing the political and technical framework of the Hemispheric Program for the 2026–2030 period. The final document has been published and is available in the three official languages of COSALFA, constituting the strategic reference for guiding regional actions aimed at eliminating the remaining risk and consolidating the eradication of foot-and-mouth disease in the Americas (<https://iris.paho.org/items/ed2ba408-a77a-40a7-9c72-5df24b4de13c>).

Resolution accomplished

RESOLUTION II – STRENGTHENING AND CONTINUOUS SUPPORT FOR THE NORTHERN ANDEAN SUBREGION

IT IS RESOLVED:

1. To request PANAFTOSA/PAHO to continue providing the necessary technical cooperation to Venezuela in order to strengthen the PROFA (Program for the Surveillance, Prevention, Control and Eradication of Foot-and-Mouth Disease).
2. To urge INSAI to continue strengthening the official veterinary service structure required to ensure the implementation and operationalization of the PROFA in accordance with the new operational plan.
3. To urge FUNVESSA to implement, with commitment and urgency, the actions necessary to ensure compliance with its responsibilities within the PROFA, particularly regarding the national strategy for foot-and-mouth disease vaccination throughout the Venezuelan territory.

LEVEL OF COMPLIANCE

PANAFTOSA/PAHO has continued providing technical cooperation through the organization of virtual meetings with the National Institute of Comprehensive Agricultural Health (INSAI) and the Venezuelan Foundation for Animal Health Services (FUNVESSA). It has also prepared and submitted semiannual reports to the COSALFA delegates detailing the vaccination cycles and activities carried out in Venezuela.

In addition, PANAFTOSA/PAHO, together with the PAHO Country Office in Venezuela, has actively participated in the technical review of the country's operational plan during 2025, which is currently in the final stage of approval by the Venezuelan Government.

Furthermore, in 2025, INSAI introduced a fee of US\$ 3.00 per slaughtered bovine, with the aim of financing and structuring surveillance activities for foot-and-mouth disease.

Resolution accomplished

RESOLUTION III – REGIONAL FOOT-AND-MOUTH DISEASE ANTIGEN BANK – BANVACO

IT IS RESOLVED:

1. To urge PANAFTOSA/PAHO to continue its work with the countries participating in the provisional BANVACO.
2. To urge countries to formalize their adhesion to BANVACO through the signing of the Constitutive Agreement.
3. To congratulate Bolivia for formalizing its intention to adhere to BANVACO.
4. To urge PAHO, through PANAFTOSA/PAHO, to explore alternatives so that the minimum requirement of three countries established in Clause Eleven (11.1) of the Constitutive Agreement may be modified to two countries, to facilitate and expedite the operationalization of BANVACO.

LEVEL OF COMPLIANCE

Following the 51st COSALFA meeting, PANAFTOSA/PAHO worked jointly with the PAHO Legal Office to modify the BANVACO Constitutive Agreement, specifically Clause Eleven (11.1), to address the request of COSALFA member countries and facilitate the accession of new countries to the mechanism.

Once this modification was implemented, PANAFTOSA/PAHO advanced the process for the establishment of BANVACO, with confirmation of two founding members: Paraguay and Ecuador.

In June 2025, PANAFTOSA/PAHO sent an official communication to the heads of the veterinary services of countries in the Americas, providing information on BANVACO and the modalities for accession. Additionally, PANAFTOSA/PAHO professionals participated in several virtual meetings with countries that requested further information on the operation, governance, and operational mechanisms of the bank.

In August 2025, the initial BANVACO meeting was held with the participation of the three full members: SENACSA (Paraguay), AGROCALIDAD (Ecuador), and MAPA (Brazil). Subsequently, MGAP (Uruguay) joined as an associate member in November 2025, and SENASAG (Bolivia) formalized its incorporation in March 2026.

Since its establishment, PANAFTOSA/PAHO, together with the members of BANVACO, has coordinated the development and implementation of the first work plan for the 2025–2026 period, aimed at establishing the operational structure, defining mechanisms for the procurement and management of antigens and vaccines, and consolidating the governance of the bank.

At the same time, under the coordination of PANAFTOSA/PAHO, meetings were held with members of the Technical Advisory Committee and with the working groups, to advance the technical, operational, regulatory, and administrative aspects required for the implementation of BANVACO.

Resolution accomplished

RESOLUTION IV – NETWORK OF ANIMAL HEALTH LABORATORIES OF COSALFA

IT IS RESOLVED:

1. To recognize the efforts of PAHO in the construction of the new PANAFTOSA/PAHO Reference Laboratory and to highlight its role in providing technical cooperation to the official laboratories of the member countries.
2. To urge countries to incorporate the recommendations identified during the latest meeting of the Network of Animal Health Laboratories of COSALFA countries, in order to strengthen and maintain the analytical capacity for the diagnosis of vesicular diseases.
3. To request PANAFTOSA/PAHO to maintain a quality management and biological risk management system in its reference laboratory, in accordance with the ISO/IEC 17025, 17043, 17034, and 35001 standards.
4. To request PANAFTOSA/PAHO to continue strengthening the Network of Animal Health Laboratories of COSALFA member countries.
5. To urge the public and private sectors represented in COSALFA to contribute resources to strengthen the capacity of national laboratories, in accordance with the regulations and organizational structures of each country.

LEVEL OF COMPLIANCE

PANAFTOSA/PAHO began the progressive implementation of its activities in the new laboratory located in Duque de Caxias. During the second half of 2025, practical training sessions were conducted in the new facilities. The full transition of activities to the new facilities is planned to take place gradually throughout 2026 and the first half of 2027.

Throughout 2025, PANAFTOSA/PAHO maintained its quality management system and certifications, ensuring the continuity and reliability of the production of reference materials, diagnostic activities, and its role as a regional reference laboratory.

In parallel, PANAFTOSA/PAHO shared with member countries the technical report containing the recommendations identified by the COSALFA Animal Health Laboratory Network, promoting their incorporation into national work plans and network-strengthening activities, while supporting laboratories in addressing their needs to maintain and improve diagnostic activities.

As part of the follow-up to these recommendations, PANAFTOSA/PAHO, in collaboration with the Andean Community, developed a project aimed at preparing a regional guide for the development of laboratory contingency plans, including the first laboratory simulation exercise conducted in the region, with the objective of strengthening regional diagnostic response capacity in the event of health events compatible with vesicular diseases.

Resolution accomplished

RESOLUTION V – PREVENTION AND PREPAREDNESS FOR FOOT-AND-MOUTH DISEASE EMERGENCIES

IT IS RESOLVED:

1. To request PANAFTOSA/PAHO to identify and train professionals from the COSALFA member countries in the management of foot-and-mouth disease emergencies.
2. To urge PANAFTOSA/PAHO to strengthen countries' prevention and emergency preparedness through training in risk mitigation tools.
3. To call upon the public and private sectors represented in COSALFA to commit to providing the necessary resources for the training of their professionals in emergency management.

LEVEL OF COMPLIANCE

PANAFTOSA/PAHO requested the 13 COSALFA member countries to identify—based on specific experience and training requirements—two official veterinarians and one private-sector veterinarian from each country to form a regional group of animal health emergency managers, specifically in the context of foot-and-mouth disease. At the close of the nomination period, seven countries had identified the three requested professionals (Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Panama, and Paraguay). In addition, Peru identified the two official professionals but has not yet nominated the private-sector veterinarian. Once professionals from all member countries—both public and private sectors—have been identified, PANAFTOSA/PAHO will begin developing, in collaboration with this group, a continuous training plan to strengthen the capacities of animal health emergency managers in the region.

With the support of professionals from Brazil, Chile, Colombia, and Paraguay, PANAFTOSA/PAHO also published two technical documents aimed at strengthening emergency preparedness: 1) *Manual of Procedures for the Management of Suspected Foot-and-Mouth Disease and Other Vesicular Diseases* (<https://iris.paho.org/items/ecb2cb97-3218-4a86-9889-68d2f7d9740f>); 2) *Guide for the Development of a National Communication Plan on Foot-and-Mouth Disease* (<https://iris.paho.org/items/2615890d-17b0-4107-afb6-7d9336d2c984>).

PANAFTOSA/PAHO also conducted a regional training and modeling course aimed at strengthening the capacities of Official Veterinary Services to assess the risk of introduction of the foot-and-mouth disease virus in the Americas. The course received technical support from the University of California, Davis. Additionally, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) financed the participation of one representative from each South American country in the workshop held at PANAFTOSA/PAHO headquarters.

Furthermore, PANAFTOSA/PAHO has continued collaborating with countries on modeling the potential impact of foot-and-mouth disease emergencies resulting from a possible reintroduction of the virus. During the period between COSALFA meetings, progress was made in scenario modeling for Paraguay, in the review of data from Ecuador, and in the publication of the study for Bolivia.

Resolution partially accomplished

III. TECHNICAL COOPERATION ACTIVITIES ON FOOT-AND-MOUTH DISEASE

1. Technical cooperation with Argentina

PANAFTOSA/PAHO has provided technical cooperation to the National Service for Agrifood Health and Quality (SENASA) in the process of updating the National Contingency Plan for Foot-and-Mouth Disease.

2. Technical cooperation with Bolivia

PANAFTOSA/PAHO supported the National Service for Agricultural Health and Food Safety (SENASAG) in its emergency preparedness through the development of a study simulating the impact of control strategies in the event of a foot-and-mouth disease outbreak in the country (<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC12490914/>).

3. Technical cooperation with Brazil

PANAFTOSA/PAHO participated in several training activities organized by the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAPA) and the state veterinary services, acting as a speaker or instructor in multiple training events conducted during the reporting period. In this context, PANAFTOSA/PAHO took part in training sessions on the management of suspected cases of foot-and-mouth disease in the states of Bahia, Rondônia, and São Paulo, training approximately 180 official veterinarians. PANAFTOSA/PAHO also participated as a speaker in state-level foot-and-mouth disease seminars in Mato Grosso and Rio Grande do Sul, and as an observer in a field simulation exercise conducted in the state of Minas Gerais, where around 200 professionals were trained. Additionally, PANAFTOSA/PAHO delivered two training courses on Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Applied to Animal Health Surveillance for 46 official veterinarians from 25 states of Brazil.

4. Technical cooperation with Chile

PANAFTOSA/PAHO, in collaboration with the Agricultural and Livestock Service of Chile (SAG), conducted four national field epidemiology workshops that trained more than 100 professionals from the veterinary, agricultural, health, and academic sectors. The activities, held in different regions of the country (Temuco, Santiago, Puerto Montt, and Iquique), strategically covered the national territory and strengthened surveillance and response capacities for health emergencies, including priority diseases such as foot-and-mouth disease. The initiative was funded by the Pandemic Fund through the PROTECT Project, with additional institutional contributions that facilitated the participation of professionals from multiple sectors.

5. Technical cooperation with Colombia

PANAFTOSA/PAHO has continued providing technical cooperation to the Colombian Agricultural Institute (ICA) in the design of sampling strategies for immunity assessment and viral transmission studies.

Additionally, several virtual meetings were held to discuss technical aspects related to the process of suspending vaccination in the departments of Amazonas and Vaupés, as well as in the municipality of Miraflores, and to review the dossier submitted to WOAHA.

6. Technical cooperation with Ecuador

PANAFTOSA/PAHO continued providing technical cooperation to the National Agency for Phytosanitary and Zoosanitary Regulation and Control (AGROCALIDAD) for the design and analysis of serological studies, as well as for the provision of diagnostic kits and reference materials within the framework of the National Foot-and-Mouth Disease Eradication Program.

A field mission was also conducted to support the development of the transition plan toward foot-and-mouth disease–free status without vaccination.

At the request of AGROCALIDAD, PANAFTOSA/PAHO developed an online course aimed at strengthening surveillance capacities for foot-and-mouth disease among official veterinarians. The course lasted six months and had more than 200 participants enrolled. The course is available at: <https://portalpanaftosa.org/es/course/index.php?categoryid=188>.

AGROCALIDAD has signed the 12th amendment to the Technical Cooperation Agreement with PANAFTOSA/PAHO in order to continue strengthening Ecuador’s national foot-and-mouth disease program.

7. Technical cooperation with Guyana

PANAFTOSA/PAHO provided technical cooperation to the Guyana Livestock Development Authority (GLDA) in emergency preparedness and response activities, including the presentation and discussion of BANVACO with the country’s animal health authorities. Additionally, PANAFTOSA/PAHO worked with the technical team of GLDA throughout 2025 and the first quarter of 2026 in the organization of COSALFA 52.

8. Technical cooperation with Paraguay

Throughout 2025, PANAFTOSA/PAHO provided technical support to the National Service for Animal Quality and Health (SENACSA) and to the private sector in Paraguay in the development of the roadmap for the transition toward foot-and-mouth disease–free status without vaccination. In July 2025, PANAFTOSA/PAHO carried out a technical mission to the country, during which strategic issues related to the transition process were addressed with the national animal health authorities and the private sector. These included technical, regulatory, and operational aspects, as well as the role of the Regional Antigen Bank (BANVACO) in strengthening preparedness for animal health emergencies.

In this context, PANAFTOSA/PAHO worked closely with the Permanent Veterinary Committee of the Southern Cone (CVP), the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), and SENACSA in the organization of the Regional Foot-and-Mouth Disease Workshop “From Status to Market: Emerging Scenarios and Strategic Decisions in Foot-and-Mouth Disease”, providing technical cooperation. This activity is described in greater detail in the section corresponding to the CVP.

PANAFTOSA/PAHO also collaborated with SENACSA and the University of North Carolina (United States) in conducting a modeling study to simulate the impact of different control strategies in the event of a foot-and-mouth disease outbreak in Paraguay.

In addition, PANAFTOSA/PAHO supported the training of public- and private-sector professionals in the management and implementation of actions during animal health emergencies through an in-person workshop held in March 2026, in which 90 SENACSA professionals participated. This activity forms part of the preparation process for the field simulation exercise scheduled for 4–8 May 2026.

In March 2026, SENACSA signed a Technical Cooperation Agreement with PANAFTOSA/PAHO, with a duration of five years, aimed at strengthening Paraguay's National Foot-and-Mouth Disease Program and supporting the consolidation of the transition toward foot-and-mouth disease-free status without vaccination, in line with the guidelines of the Hemispheric Program for the Eradication of Foot-and-Mouth Disease (PHEFA).

9. Technical cooperation with Peru

PANAFTOSA/PAHO provided technical cooperation to the National Agrarian Health Service of Peru (SENASA) during the field simulation exercise conducted in 2025, including the participation of professionals from the field and laboratory areas in virtual lectures and technical discussions with national professionals.

10. Technical cooperation with Uruguay

PANAFTOSA/PAHO held technical meetings with professionals from the Animal Health Division of the Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries (MGAP) of Uruguay, with the objective of presenting the technical, operational, and governance aspects related to Uruguay's adherence to BANVACO. In parallel, coordination was carried out with the technical teams of MGAP for the organization of a field simulation exercise planned for the second half of 2026.

11. Technical cooperation with Venezuela

In December 2025, PANAFTOSA/PAHO received a request from the National Institute of Comprehensive Agricultural Health (INSAI) to review the proposed operational plan, with the objective of developing a feasible plan to improve the foot-and-mouth disease surveillance system in the country and, consequently, to advance toward seeking certification from the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) as a foot-and-mouth disease-free country. Following the initial review, and in order to gather further inputs regarding the current status of the program in Venezuela, PANAFTOSA/PAHO proposed conducting a field mission during the first quarter of 2026 to finalize the proposal and initiate its implementation. The mission is expected to take place during the first half of April 2026.

In the meantime, virtual meetings were held with INSAI and the Venezuelan Foundation for Animal Health Services (FUNVESSA) to monitor the vaccination cycles. PANAFTOSA/PAHO has prepared the technical reports for the first and second semesters, which have been shared with all COSALFA delegates.

12. Other activities with COSALFA countries

PANAFTOSA/PAHO has held individual virtual meetings with the officials responsible for foot-and-mouth disease programs and national laboratories for the diagnosis of vesicular diseases in COSALFA countries. The purpose of these annual meetings is to identify each country's needs regarding technical cooperation in the area of foot-and-mouth disease and to coordinate strategies for their implementation. In addition, a network of national FMD program coordinators from COSALFA member countries has been maintained, through which PANAFTOSA/PAHO distributes technical and scientific materials related to foot-and-mouth disease on a weekly basis via email.

PANAFTOSA/PAHO has also prepared, in coordination with the national FMD program coordinators, the technical document “Foot-and-Mouth Disease Outbreaks in Free Countries and Zones in the Americas During the 21st Century” (<https://www.paho.org/es/documentos/brotos-fiebre-aftosa-paises-zonas-libres-continente-americano-durante-siglo-xxi>). The document aims to provide, in a structured manner, a synthesis of the available information on foot-and-mouth disease outbreaks that have occurred in countries and zones recognized as free in the Americas during the 21st century.

13. Permanent Veterinary Committee (CVP)

PANAFTOSA/PAHO continues to support the Permanent Veterinary Committee of the Southern Cone (CVP), particularly in the activities of the Foot-and-Mouth Disease Technical Group. Within this framework, PANAFTOSA/PAHO participated in technical meetings of the group for the presentation and discussion of the 2026–2030 Action Plan of the Hemispheric Program for the Eradication of Foot-and-Mouth Disease (PHEFA).

PANAFTOSA/PAHO also played a significant technical role in the organization of the Regional Foot-and-Mouth Disease Workshop “From Status to Market: Emerging Scenarios and Strategic Decisions in Foot-and-Mouth Disease”, held in Paraguay under the coordination of the CVP, the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), and the National Service for Animal Quality and Health (SENACSA). During this activity, PANAFTOSA/PAHO contributed updated technical information on the global and regional epidemiological situation of the disease, as well as modeling tools for the analysis of strategic scenarios.

Through technical presentations and the facilitation of working groups and public–private dialogue spaces, PANAFTOSA/PAHO contributed to strengthening the regional discussion on risk analysis, emergency preparedness, and strategic decision-making, including key topics such as the transition toward higher sanitary status and the operation of the Regional Antigen Bank (BANVACO).

14. Andean Community

PANAFTOSA/PAHO has provided technical cooperation to the countries of the Andean Community to strengthen capacities for the prevention, preparedness, response to emergencies, and recovery from foot-and-mouth disease outbreaks in the Andean subregion.

This project, coordinated by the Andean Technical Committee for Agricultural Health (COTSA), included the participation of PANAFTOSA/PAHO professionals in workshops held in Pedro Leopoldo, Brazil (laboratory) and Lima, Peru (fieldwork).

The objectives of the project are to develop a contingency plan guide for the analysis and diagnostic laboratories of the Official Agricultural Health Services (SOSA) of the Andean Community Member Countries, and to develop a regional preparedness strategy for the Andean Community to prevent emerging threats and crises in animal health.

15. Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA)

PANAFTOSA/PAHO collaborated closely with the CVP, IICA, and SENACSA from Paraguay in the Regional Foot-and-Mouth Disease Workshop “From Status to Market: Emerging Scenarios and Strategic Decisions in Foot-and-Mouth Disease”, providing technical assistance. This collaborative activity is described in greater detail in the section corresponding to the CVP.

16. International Regional Organization for Plant and Animal Health (OIRSA)

PANAFTOSA/PAHO developed a regional training and modeling course on foot-and-mouth disease, with the collaboration of OIRSA in the organization and coordination of the module aimed at the countries of Central America, as described in the section corresponding to Resolution V.

17. World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH)

Technical cooperation between PANAFTOSA/PAHO and the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) was maintained throughout the reporting period. In 2025, PANAFTOSA/PAHO participated in person, as an expert, in the meeting of the WOAH ad hoc Group for the Evaluation of Foot-and-Mouth Disease Status, as well as in several technical consultations submitted to this group during the period. PANAFTOSA/PAHO also participated in person in the 92nd WOAH World Assembly of Delegates, held in May 2025.

Additionally, from 25 to 27 February 2025, PANAFTOSA/PAHO provided technical support to WOAH during the Regional Follow-up Workshop on WOAH Procedures, held in Issyk-Kul, Kyrgyzstan, with the participation of representatives from Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan. The technical contribution included specialized presentations on foot-and-mouth disease surveillance—including clinical and active surveillance, non-structural protein (NSP) testing, sampling strategies, and survey design—as well as technical advice during practical exercises reviewing dossiers for official recognition of sanitary status. This participation contributed to strengthening countries’ capacities to prepare applications for official recognition of sanitary status and to enhance their surveillance systems for foot-and-mouth disease and peste des petits ruminants (PPR).

PANAFTOSA/PAHO also actively participated in the activities of the WOAH/FAO Reference Laboratory Network for Foot-and-Mouth Disease, contributing to technical and scientific exchange, harmonization of diagnostic methodologies, and the strengthening of international cooperation in the diagnosis and surveillance of the disease.

18. PANAFTOSA/PAHO Laboratory

In 2025, the laboratory continued advancing its strategic actions through the harmonization of diagnostic procedures, the validation of methodologies, and support for the implementation of quality management system requirements in accordance with ISO/IEC 17025:2017.

It also continued providing proficiency testing, reference materials, and specialized technical assistance to the official veterinary services of countries in the region.

It is important to highlight that the laboratory maintains a quality management and biosafety system in which all diagnostic methods used in routine activities comply with ISO/IEC 17025, accredited by CGCRE/INMETRO. Currently, the scope of accreditation includes 13 tests, ensuring the accuracy and reliability of the results issued, thereby reaffirming the responsibility and commitment of PANAFTOSA/PAHO to the countries of the region. The laboratory is also accredited in accordance with ISO 17034:2016, which guarantees the reliability, traceability, and quality assurance of the reference materials supplied.

The laboratory contributed to the training of professionals by collaborating in two emergency simulation exercises conducted jointly with the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock of Brazil. These initiatives strengthened theoretical and practical knowledge in clinical and epidemiological investigation, sample collection and submission, foot-and-mouth disease diagnosis, and the application of biosafety measures and control strategies.

In addition, in partnership with the Andean Community, PANAFTOSA supported the Workshop for Strengthening Contingency Plans of Andean Community Animal Health Laboratories, with the aim of reinforcing the capacity of Member States to prevent, prepare for, and respond in a coordinated manner to health emergencies resulting from transboundary animal diseases affecting livestock production. During the reporting period, the laboratory produced and distributed reference materials to meet the demand of countries in the region, thereby contributing to the strengthening of their diagnostic capacities (Table 1).

Table 1. Reference materials distributed to countries in 2025.

REFERENCE MATERIALS	ELISA FMD gIII (Ac 3ABC)	EITB (Ac NSP FMD confirmatory)	ELISA CFL-FMD (O)	ELISA CFL-FMD (A)	ELISA TYPING (FMD – VSV)
TOTAL	183	39	49	49	19

The XV Round of the Proficiency Testing Exercise (PEP-2025), organized by the PANAFTOSA Reference Laboratory – Proficiency Testing Program for Foot-and-Mouth Disease and Vesicular Stomatitis, was carried out during the second half of 2025, with the participation of 35 Animal Health laboratories: 29 national official laboratories, 4 WOA reference laboratories for foot-and-mouth disease and vesicular stomatitis, and 2 private laboratories producing foot-and-mouth disease vaccines.

The results are currently under evaluation for the preparation of the final report. This activity, which is strategic for the region, constitutes an essential mechanism to verify the performance of laboratories in diagnostic activities, ensuring the validity and reliability of analytical results, while promoting the establishment of a continuous monitoring system for the quality of diagnostic processes for foot-and-mouth disease and other vesicular diseases. In the field of innovation and technical cooperation, in collaboration with the Biological Institute of São Paulo and the Agricultural Defense Coordination of the State of São Paulo, a study was conducted to evaluate the immune response following vaccination against foot-and-mouth disease during the period 2021–2023, as well as to implement quarterly monitoring thereafter to analyze the decline in immunity.

The study covers two years of vaccination (2021–2023) and two years following the suspension of vaccination (2024–2025). Considering that one of the pillars of the Hemispheric Program for the Eradication of Foot-and-Mouth Disease (PHEFA) is the strengthening of laboratory diagnosis for vesicular diseases, which constitutes a fundamental support for the maintenance of epidemiological surveillance, especially in the investigation of suspected cases and emergency interventions, there is a need to validate new diagnostic tools. These tools must address aspects related to speed, laboratory capacity and coverage, biosafety, diagnostic scope, and logistical aspects associated with the safe transport of infectious samples.

In this context, and with the objective of strengthening foot-and-mouth disease surveillance systems in the region, the laboratory conducted studies to validate two commercial LFD (lateral flow device) kits for the detection of the foot-and-mouth disease virus (PAN-FMDV) and for the typing of positive epithelial samples from the historical collection of PANAFTOSA, previously characterized using reference methods. The results obtained were satisfactory, allowing the recommendation of this tool for foot-and-mouth disease programs, as well as for emergency situations. The laboratory, recognized as a WOAHA Reference Laboratory for Foot-and-Mouth Disease and Vesicular Stomatitis, represented the COSALFA countries at the 20th Annual Meeting of the WOAHA/FAO Reference Laboratory Network for Foot-and-Mouth Disease, held on 23–24 October 2025, where it presented updated information on the epidemiological situation in the region.

The laboratory also participated in Phase XXXVI (2024–2025) of the international proficiency testing program organized by the World Reference Laboratory for Foot-and-Mouth Disease (WRLFMD) at The Pirbright Institute (United Kingdom), fully meeting the established requirements and achieving satisfactory performance, with the highest classification in performance (level 4) and technical capacity (PCP 5). These results, in accordance with the standards established for WOAHA reference laboratories, reinforce scientific credibility and reaffirm the international recognition of PANAFTOSA. In 2025, PANAFTOSA also participated in another proficiency testing exercise for foot-and-mouth disease diagnosis, promoted by VETQAS (United Kingdom). The program aims to demonstrate the ability of participating laboratories to detect antibodies against Eurasian strains of the foot-and-mouth disease virus in serum samples, using ELISA methods and/or virus neutralization tests. The laboratory obtained satisfactory results, confirming the diagnostic capability of its analytical methods.

During the reporting period, the laboratory coordinated the activities of the Regional Commission for Biological Risk Management and Laboratory Biosafety, whose purpose is to strengthen regional biosafety in relation to high-risk agents. To this end, the commission promotes technical cooperation among laboratories of member countries, fostering the exchange of experiences, capacity building, and the adoption of good practices. The commission also evaluates the biosafety requirements and conditions necessary for the handling of foot-and-mouth disease virus strains, ensuring that all activities are conducted in accordance with the highest international standards. In addition, it establishes the biosafety requirements that must be met by laboratories supplying the virus bank and defines clear and transparent mechanisms for their evaluation and monitoring.

Through these actions, the Regional Commission contributes to strengthening the diagnostic and biosafety infrastructure in the region, consolidating a coordinated and reliable system for the prevention and control of transboundary animal diseases.