

Questions and Answers on the Community Animal Health Policy 2007-13

Why has the Commission developed a new Community Animal Health Policy (CAHP)?

The EU plays a crucial role in maintaining animal health throughout Europe. The fully harmonised legislation and coordinated approach has been crucial in tackling and containing serious animal disease outbreaks, while also allowing for the better functioning of the Internal Market in animals and animal products.

However, the main elements of the existing animal health policy were drawn up between 1986 and 1995. Since then, the EU has expanded from a Union of 12 Member States to 27, and the environment in which the animal health policy is working has changed considerably. The diseases that pose the greatest threat to animals and humans have changed in the past decade, and new challenges have emerged or may emerge in the near future. Therefore, there is a need to reassess where animal health actions should be primarily focussed. Trading conditions have also changed greatly, and there has been a massive increase in the volume of trade in animals and animal products, both within the EU and with third countries. This requires a renewed look at how best to ensure safe imports and engage in positive transactions with trading partners. There have also been significant advances and developments in science and technology over the past decade, that present new possibilities and approaches to maintaining animal health and tackling animal diseases.

The new Community Animal Health Policy 2007-13 takes all these changes and developments into account, while allowing flexibility to face the possible challenges that may arise in the future.

How did the Commission devise the strategy for the new animal health policy?

In December 2004, the Commission launched an external evaluation and stakeholder consultation in order to receive the widest possible feedback on where improvements could be made to the EU's animal health policy and the direction that should be taken in the future in this field. The evaluation was carried out over two years and the final report was published in June 2006. Included in the evaluation was an EU wide survey (with over 100 respondents), a separate survey of 34 third countries, and more than 100 interviews with national authorities and other stakeholders. On the basis of the results of this evaluation process, the Commission then drew up the Communication on the Community Animal Health Policy 1007-13.

What are the objectives of the new animal health strategy?

The goals of the new strategy are:

- To ensure a high level of public health and food safety by reducing the risks that problems with animal health can pose to humans
- To promote animal health by preventing or reducing the incidence of animal diseases, and in doing so, protect farming and the rural economy.
- To improve economic growth, cohesion and competitiveness in animal-related sectors
- To support the EU Sustainable Development Strategy by promoting farming and animal welfare practices which prevent threats to animal health and minimise the environmental impact of raising animals

What are the main elements of the CAHP?

The Communication outlines a 6-year action plan, based on four pillars:

Pillar 1: Choosing priorities for EU action

Over the past decade, there has been much change in the field of animal health, veterinary techniques, international trade and research. Some diseases which were once a great threat to human health may no longer pose such a risk, while other diseases appear to present a greater threat than before. Therefore, priorities for funding and resources need to be reassessed, based on careful risk assessment and solid scientific advice. This will be done based on feedback from the Technology Platform on Animal Health – composed of industry and other non-governmental stakeholders, and supported by DG Research. Ultimately, funds should be focused on diseases with high public relevance in terms of their potential impact on human health, society and/or the economy.

Pillar 2: Creating a modern legislative framework

The existing legislation on animal health covers many different policy areas: intra-community trade, imports, animal disease control, animal nutrition and animal welfare. This series of linked and interrelated policy actions will be replaced by a single regulatory framework that is as aligned as possible with international standards and guidelines. An umbrella piece of legislation, along the lines of General Food Law Regulation, which has proved so successful the EU's food safety policy, could be developed. This General Law would provide the basic, fundamental rules and principles for animal health, while more specific rules on various animal health issues could then be improved, developed or created where needed. The aim is to have simpler, more modern and more relevant animal health rules, which are flexible enough to be adapted to new situations as they arise.

Pillar 3: Preventing animal disease outbreaks

The motto of the new animal health strategy is that "prevention is better than cure". Identifying problems before they emerge and being ready to manage crises before they occur should help to significantly reduce the direct and indirect costs of animal disease outbreaks. Already, action taken at EU level against certain animal diseases has shown the clear benefits that taking a pre-emptive approach to animal health threats can have. For example, the stringent monitoring and biosecurity measures which were implemented in response to the threat of H5N1 avian influenza helped to minimise the impact of this disease in the EU. The CAHP 2007-13 will focus on reinforcing biosecurity measures in all areas in which animals are found (farms, markets, border posts, transport vehicles etc). Disease surveillance will be stepped up, and the EU traceability framework (identification, labelling, TRACES etc) will be strengthened. In addition, the Commission and Member States will continue to develop emergency preparedness plans and systems.

Pillar 4: Promoting research and innovation

Science is the very basis of the EU animal health policy, and it is on the basis of solid scientific advice that any future measures will be developed. Therefore, the new strategy foresees more investment in and support for research and innovation in animal-related sectors. Public-private partnerships will be created and strengthened, to ensure sufficient resources and funding for important projects such as vaccine development. The network of Community and National Reference Laboratories will be developed, in order to maximise the knowledge that exists at EU level. The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) and the European Medicines Agency (EMA) will also play a greater role in the new animal health policy, providing high-quality, independent scientific advice and risk assessment. The 7th Research Framework

Programme (2007-13), which runs parallel to the new animal health strategy, and will be an important tool in supporting research into animal health and welfare issues.

What is the budget for the CAHP 2007-13?

The new strategy is designed to fit within the budget already foreseen for the EU's animal health policy. Under the financial perspectives for 2007-13, a maximum amount of funding for veterinary and phytosanitary measures has been set for each year, up to a maximum of €450 million in current prices by 2013 (see table).

Funding for Food Safety, Animal Health and Plant Health 2007-13 (in current prices, Mio €)							
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Eradication and Surveillance programmes	245	308	308	308	308	308	308
Veterinary Emergency Fund	48	48	48	48	48	48	48
Other veterinary measures	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
Food and Feed Safety	35	35	45	55	65	75	84
Total	338	401	411	421	431	441	450

Does the new strategy only cover farm animals?

No. The CAHP covers the health of all animals in the EU which are kept for food, farming, sport, entertainment, as pets and in zoos. Wild animals, hunted animals and animals used for research will also fall under its remit, as will any animals which are transported to, from or through the EU. This wide scope is an acknowledgement of the fact that animal disease are not limited to particular species, and a health problem for one category of animals can also pose a threat for many other animals.

Is animal welfare covered by the new animal health policy?

Yes. In fact, animal welfare will be an integral part of the new policy, and will be taken into account when deciding on any new measures. The strategy recognises the important link between the health of animals and their welfare, and the Commission strives to attain as high a level of animal welfare for all animals in the EU as possible.

What is foreseen with regard to import controls and trade with third countries under the new CAHP?

Improving the safety of imports and adapting EU controls to take into account the radical change in trading conditions over the past decades are key objectives of the new strategy. The aim is to have the highest possible level of protection against the different threats that certain imports can pose to human and animal health. This does not mean that the EU intends to impose a rigid new border control system or create unnecessary burdens for EU importers and trading partners. Instead, controls will be focussed on the high risk imports, and communication with trading partners will be strengthened, to allow earlier and more accurate warnings on risky products of non-EU origin. At the same time, there will be renewed efforts to help third countries to combat threats to animal health and food safety at the source, which should help to improve the safety of the final products sent to Europe.

Stronger measures also be taken against illegal trade, which poses a great risk to human and animal health as contraband products evade the official checks and certification processes that legally traded products must undergo. Ordinary travellers will also be made more aware of their responsibilities when it comes to the goods that they carry into the EU, so that animal diseases are not inadvertently introduced to the EU through personal imports.

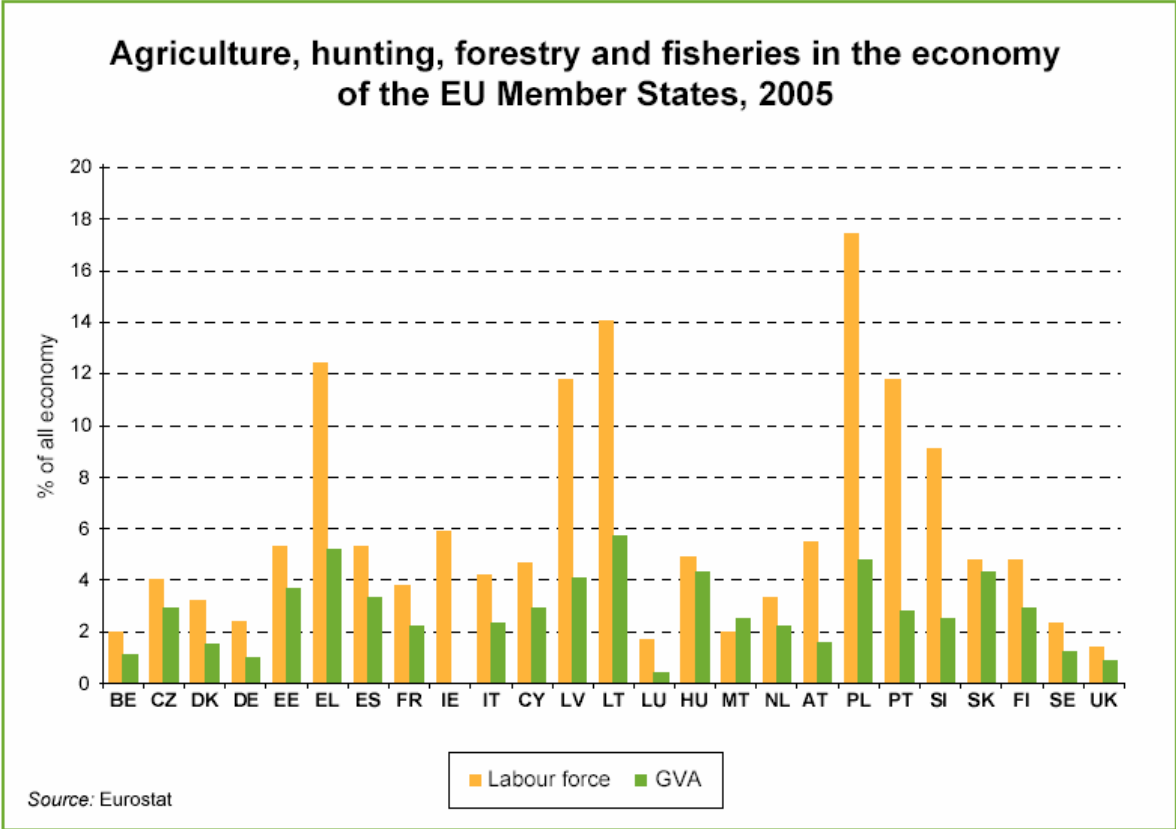
Who will be responsible for the implementation of the Community Animal Health Policy?

The Community animal health policy covers more than just the control and eradication of animal diseases. It also deals with issues related to animal welfare, food safety, agriculture, the environment, sustainable development, trade and research, all of which have strong links to animal health. As such, the new strategy will require cross-sector support and cooperation at all levels to fulfil its potential and meet its objectives. The role and responsibilities linked to animal health will be shared across the board – from farmers, to transporters, to industry, to authorities and even to consumers. The Commission will work with Member States to develop a system of incentives for those who go beyond the minimum standards required, and clear targets and indicators will be set to monitor the progress made in meeting the CAHP's goals.

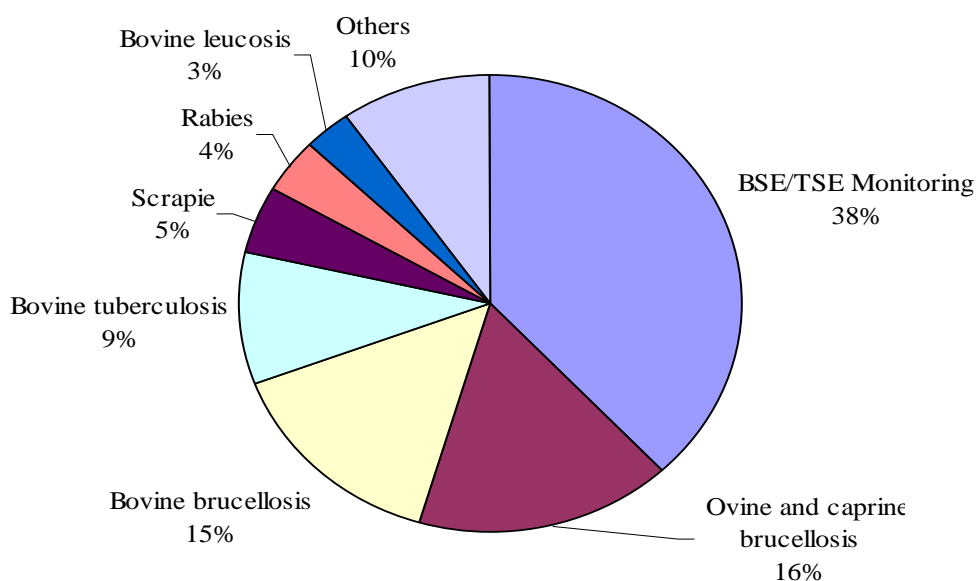
What are the next steps, after the Communication?

The Council and the Parliament are expected to adopt their positions on the CAHP Communication by the end of 2007. Meanwhile, the Commission is preparing a detailed Action Plan on how to meet each of the objectives of the new strategy (e.g. how to improve biosecurity, what concrete measures are needed to improve import controls etc). All of the actions will be included in the Commission's work programme for 2008-09. Stakeholders will be asked to give their input and will be kept involved in every step of the development of the new policy.

Key Data

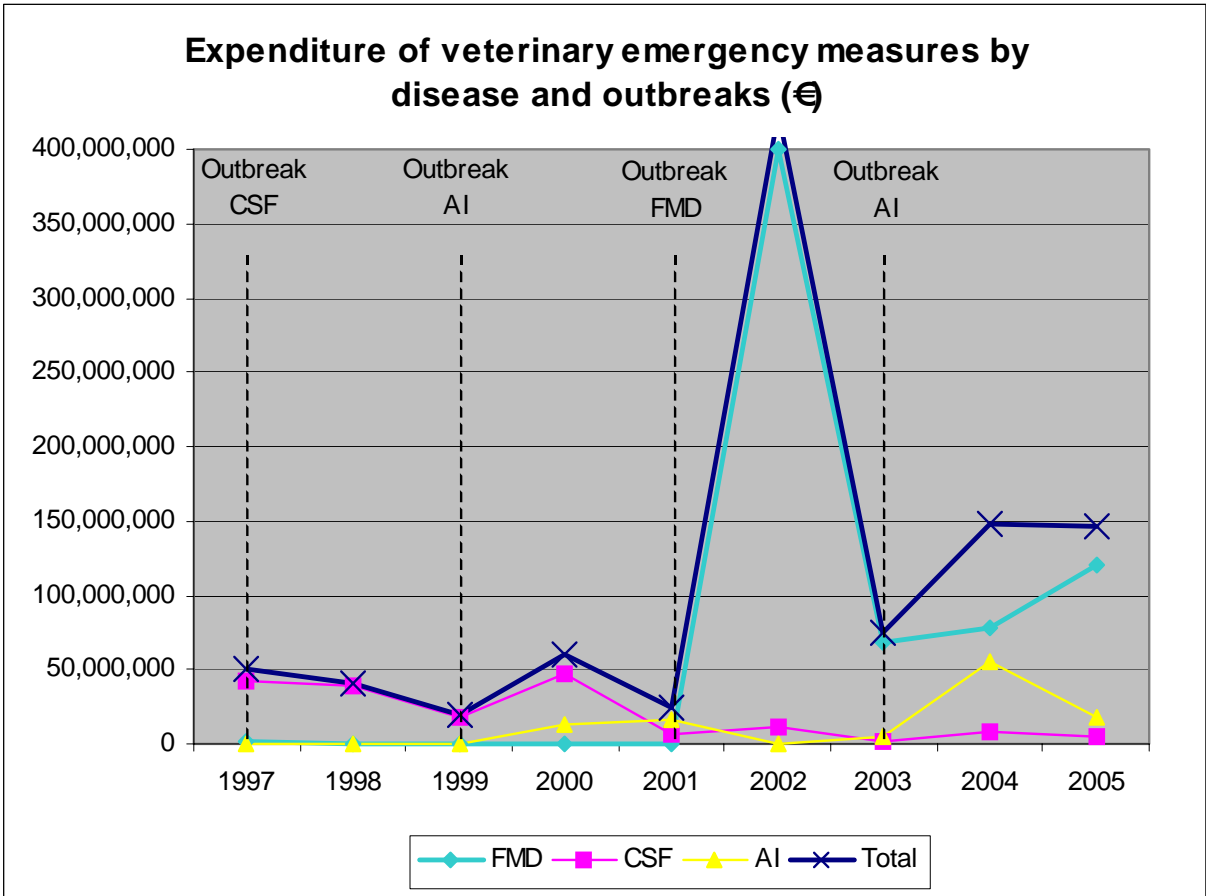


**Breakdown of EU15 spending on animal disease monitoring and eradication
per disease for the period 1995-2005 (in million €)**

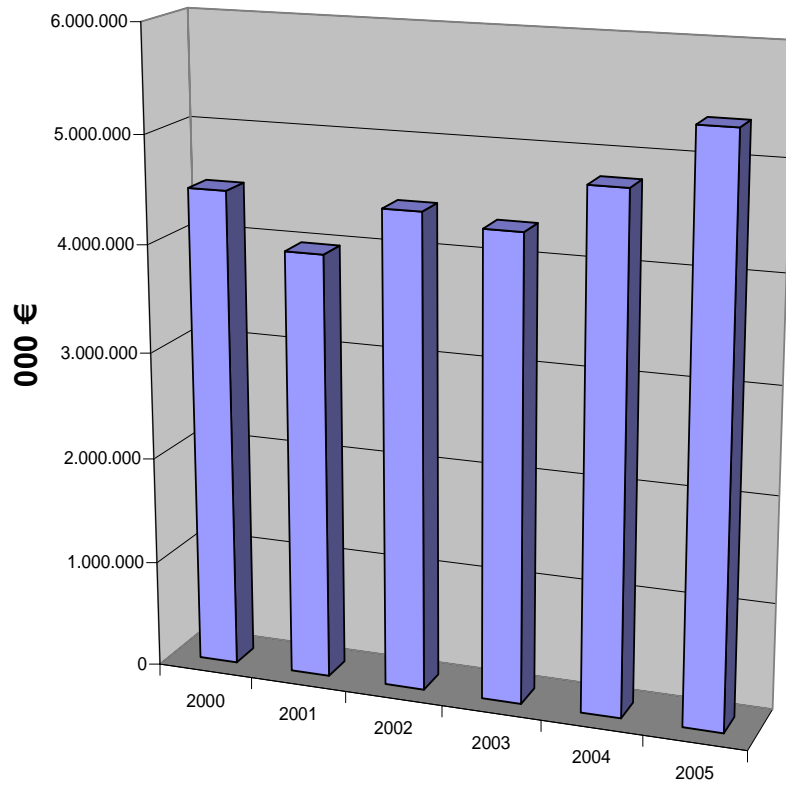


COMMUNITY EXPENDITURE ON EMERGENCY MEASURES

Year	CSF	FMD	AI	Other diseases	Total
1995	No data	No data	No data	No data	34,480,000
1996	No data	No data	No data	No data	2,350,000
1997	42,548,958	1,750,000	0	5,503,199	49,802,157
1998	38,523,284	0	0	2,476,715	40,999,999
1999	18,077,535	0	0	2,107,465	20,184,999
2000	47,053,494	0	13,790,015	0	60,843,509
2001	6,279,224	0	17,001,072	731,147	24,011,443
2002	11,418,920	400,448,883	0	12,456,105	424,323,908
2003	1,782,493	67,821,327	4,763,797	469,419	74,837,036
2004	8,923,019	78,733,804	55,916,517	5,137,362	148,710,703
2005	4,159,354	119,961,100	18,227,041	3,297,091	145,644,586
TOTAL costs	178,766,281	668,715,114	109,698,442	32,178,503	1,026,188,340



INTRA-EU-25 TRADE IN LIVE ANIMALS



Source: Eurostat