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**Unit 01 - Food of Animal Origin (1) - Mammals**

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FINAL REPORT OF A MISSION TO ROMANIA FROM 22 TO 26 MARCH 1999  
IN THE FIELD OF ANIMAL HEALTH.



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## 1 Mission details

The mission took place from 22 to 26 March 1999.

The mission team was composed of one inspector from the Food and Veterinary Office and one Member State expert.

Category	Reason for mission	Tick as appropriate
JPP	Included in planned mission programme	X
JXX	Other routine animal health mission.	X

Representatives from the National Sanitary Veterinary Agency and of the Central Institute for Veterinary Diagnosis accompanied the inspection team throughout the mission.

The mission started with an opening meeting and was concluded by a final one, both held at the NVSA Headquarters.

The mission wishes to thank the Romanian veterinary service for the warm welcome and organisation of the mission.

## 2 Purpose

Category	Purpose of the mission		Tick as appropriate
ATC	Audit of competent authority in third country	First approval mission	
ATS		Subsequent mission	X
IMA	Controls over identification/certification/movement:	Live animals	X

The purpose of the mission was the follow-up of previous missions, to assess the implementation of specified legislation (cf. legal basis n° 2, 4, 5, 6 and 8), paying special attention to animal health and trichinellosis control in horses intended to be imported into the EU for human consumption and to the issues of transport conditions for animals transported from Romania into EU.

Category	Sites visited	Number	
CCA	Competent authority offices	Central	X
CRA		Regional	3
CLA		Local	X
LCR	Laboratory service	Central/reference	3
LRR		Regional	1
LLL		Local	
TIR	Technical institutes and research stations	X	
BIP	Border inspection posts	2	
FQC	Quarantine centres	3	

An establishment producing a meat product called “Salami Sibiu” for which Romania introduced a special request was visited also.

### 3 Background

#### 3.1 Summary of previous animal health missions finding

Several missions have been undertaken in the past to Romania in the field of animal and public health. Animal health missions carried out in 1992 (Doc VI/2097/92), 1993, 1995 (Doc./VI5997/95) and 1997 (XXIV/1760/97) identified the following issues:

- Trichinellosis: the 1992 mission identified a deterioration of the situation from 1986 to 1992, and the need to study the reservoir in the wildlife population.
- Official animal identification and issue and control of certification.
- Documentation of *Brucella melitensis* free status.
- Compensation for animals slaughtered within the framework of disease eradication programmes.

The last mission report (June 1997) concluded that the performance of the Veterinary Services was adequate but recommended that particular attention be paid to the issues of animal identification, *Brucella melitensis* free status certification and BSE Surveillance in native animals.

#### 3.2 Live animals imports from Romania

Romania is on the list of third countries from which Member States are authorised to import live animals and products as per Council Decision 79/542/EEC.

The general animal health requirements for bovine, ovine and caprine animals and swine are in accordance with the ones described in Council Directive 72/462/EEC.

- The specific conditions concerning the animal health conditions and veterinary certification for imports of live animals of bovine and porcine species from Romania are laid down in Decision 98/372/EC. According to this decision, imports from the whole territory of Romania are authorised for bovines for breeding and

production and bovines for slaughter. No imports of swine for breeding and production or for slaughter are authorised

- The specific conditions concerning the animal health and veterinary certification for imports of live animals of ovine and caprine species for breeding, for fattening or for slaughter are laid down in Decision 93/198/EEC as last amended by Decision 97/231/EC.

As far as equidae are concerned Romania is on list B in the list of countries from which imports are authorised, for all types of equidae. Romania exports equidae for human consumption mainly to Italy.

## **4 Legal basis for the mission**

The mission was carried out under the general provision of Community law and in particular:

1. Council Directive 72/462/EEC on health and veterinary inspections problems upon importation of bovine, ovine and caprine animals and swine, fresh meat or meat products from third countries.
2. Council Directive 91/628/EEC on the protection of animals during transport and amending Directives 90/425/EEC and 91/496/EEC.
3. Council Directive 92/102/EEC on the identification and registration of animals.
4. Commission Decision 93/196/EEC on health conditions and veterinary certification for imports of equidae for slaughter.
5. Commission Decision 93/197/EEC on animal health conditions and veterinary certification for imports of registered equidae and equidae for breeding and production, as last amended.
6. Commission Decision 97/232/EC drawing up a list of third countries from which the Member States authorise imports of sheep and goats
7. Commission Decision 98/140/EC laying certain rules concerning on-the-spot checks carried out in the veterinary field by Commission experts in third countries
8. Commission Decision 98/372/EC concerning the animal health conditions and veterinary certification for imports of live animals of bovine and porcine species from certain European countries, as last amended

## **5 Observations**

### **5.1 General Veterinary Administration**

The National Sanitary Veterinary Agency (NSVA) of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food is the Competent Authority.

A description of the Romanian veterinary services was given in doc. XXIV/1760/97. The main changes since are the following:

- Changes in personnel in the central veterinary services, (however, at the time of the mission, the CVO in charge was the same as in April 1997).

- The name of several entities changed, so for example the Central Laboratory for Veterinary Diagnosis is now called the Central Institute for Veterinary Diagnosis;
- “Privatisation” of communal veterinary services.

The former organisation consisted of three levels; central, district (Judez) and local (veterinary circumscription), covering from 1 to 7 villages. There are 41 Districts. The veterinary services informed the mission that from 1<sup>st</sup> April 1999 the local veterinarians would be “privatised”: they will not receive a salary from the Ministry of Agriculture. The State will conclude private contracts for the implementation of the “strategic programme”(the national programme of serological surveillance and prophylactic campaigns).

It is foreseen that the contracted private practitioners will receive 60% of their income through the realisation of the “strategic programme” and 40% through private practice.

The premises and equipment needed to realise the “strategic programme ”will remain the property of the veterinary services and will be given as a concession to the veterinarian taking up the practice. Initially the veterinarians presently in function will stay in charge. It is planned to call a tender to award the implementation contract for the surveillance programme.

The first legislation on private practice was passed on 6 August 1998.

- Privatisation of research institutions: The Institute Pasteur, will be privatised.
- Registration and Distribution of Drugs: The registration of drugs is under the responsibility of the "Central Institute for the Scientific Control of Veterinary Biologicals and Drugs". The institute is well equipped and well managed, the only grey area seems to be the pattern of the final distribution of drugs, which is still under discussion, in the light of the privatisation. At present both the circumscription veterinarians and the “pharmaceutical points” managed by veterinarians are allowed to sell drugs to the farmers. The idea is to reserve the sale of all type of drugs to the veterinarians only, mainly to secure income for the private practitioners but the definitive structure of final distribution has not been defined yet.
- Staff data communicated to OIE by the Romania Veterinary Services: there are 8320 veterinarians and 7280 technical personnel in Romania.

The distribution of veterinarians is the following:

Government officials	5002 of which approximately 2959 will be “privatised” in the near future
Laboratories, universities, training Institutions	725
Private practitioners	2533
Others	60

- The task activities, implementation of surveillance programmes, etc. to be performed by the State veterinarians, list of notifiable diseases and action to be taken are described in a basic document “Strategic programme”. It is a very comprehensive document and its contents are well known and understood by all the veterinarians met by the inspection team, at every level.
- An important role is played by the “Central Institute for Veterinary Diagnosis”. The Institute is the State Sanitary authority in the field of diagnosis and diagnostic experts’ reports; it is responsible for elaboration, implementation, follow-up and control of the surveillance programme. Recently the Department for the co-ordination of the BIPs and the Department for EU veterinary aspects of EU integration and Legislative Harmonisation, have been moved to the Central Institute.
- National legislation provides for slaughter of positive animals in the frame of National eradication campaigns and compensation of owners. In practice, in recent years funds for compensation of owners were not sufficient. Field veterinary services gave priority to eradication first of Tuberculosis, secondly Leucosis and subsequently other diseases, inter alia, Equine Infectious Anaemia.

## **5.2 Holding registration, Animal Identification and traceability of exported animals**

A system of registration of holdings exists at communal level. The City Hall keeps a register of all the “holdings” and there is a register of holdings at the office of the “Veterinary circumscription”. This register is updated twice a year by physical inspection of the herd. There are no formal links between the register in the city hall and the one at the veterinary office.

The total livestock population is divided into the following categories, mainly according to the type of ownership<sup>1</sup>

- Farm (State)
- Collective farm (Co-operatives)
- Private farmers (small holders)

There seems to be difficulties in translating “holding”, as it appears that only the large farms (State farms and Collective farms) are included.

The control and the interest of the veterinary services in the livestock living on these different types of premises decrease from the first to the last category.

Following the recommendation made in doc. XXIV/1760/97, since 30.09.1997, there is an obligation to mark the animals (cattle, sheep pigs and equidae) moved from one district to another to be exported to the EU, before they leave the locality of origin. The local veterinarian under the supervision of the district veterinarian carries this out.

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<sup>1</sup> For a description of the different types of farm structure, see: EU-DGVI working document Agricultural Situation and prospects in the Central European Countries ROMANIA of May 1998, available on Internet.

Usually it is the trader who applies for the identification before the animals leave the district of origin, firstly to the local veterinarian and subsequently to the district veterinarian.

On 22.04.1998, the identification of all bovine animals of high genetic value was made compulsory. The agency in charge is the “National Agency for the improvement of reproduction in the zootechnical sector”, which belongs to the Ministry of Agriculture. Thus, the veterinary services are not involved in this bovine animal identification, which is seen as a zootechnical measure.

The eartags bear a code of the type RO, five numbers for the locality and five numbers for the animal. At present the eartags are changed at the quarantine farm; the document with the connection between the old and new number is kept by the manager of the quarantine farm.

Horses are identified by the trader or manager of the quarantine farm with a collar bearing a number, or by cutting the coat. The quarantine manager keeps data on the origin of the animals.

### **5.3 Animal Health Situation**

#### *5.3.1 Livestock population:*

Source: Annual FAO/OIE/WHO Questionnaire 1998

Cattle:	3 142 000
Sheep:	8 921 000
Equidae:	839 000
Swine:	7 189 000

#### *5.3.2 List A diseases:*

Romania is free from list A diseases.

- FMD: a serological surveillance for FMD on animals imported, exported or living in areas considered at risk (near borders or transit route) is carried out. In 1998, 8627 test for FMD and 2306 for SVD were performed. The results were negative.
- Classical Swine Fever: No cases have been reported since 1974. There is a policy of vaccination. Serological surveys searching for viral antigen are undertaken. All the results have been negative.

### 5.3.3 *List B diseases:*

- Bovine Tuberculosis: is present in 17 out of 41 districts with 71 foci of infection in 1998. Eradication of bovine tuberculosis is a priority for the veterinary services and priority in the use of the limited resources available for compensation is given to TB eradication.
- Leucosis is present in 27 districts with 277 foci of infection in 1998
- Brucellosis: bovine, bubaline and porcine populations are systematically tested for brucellosis, sheep are systematically tested for *Brucella Ovis*. There is no comprehensive programme of tests for the small ruminants population is because Romania considers itself to be free from *Brucella melitensis*. In 1998 1748867 tests for Bovine Brucellosis, and 42944 for *Brucella melitensis* were performed, all with negative results.
- Rabies is present in 13 districts and, of the 1104 diagnostic tests performed in 1998, 53 were positive.

### 5.3.4 *Horses diseases:*

Horses are used for agricultural work and transport. Horse carts are still the means of transport of field circumscription veterinarians.

Glanders was last reported in 1960, dourine in 1965 and horse pox in 1957.

Infectious anaemia is endemic in several districts. In 1998, there were 16 districts infected, with 781 foci of infection involving 908 cases, 12 animals died and 27 animals were slaughtered. The animals found positive are branded but no movement control is implemented. Stamping out is not carried out as there are no funds available for compensation.

### 5.3.5 *Trichinellosis:*

Trichinellosis is well recognised as a problem issue.

It is endemic in pigs, wildlife and horses. As far as pigs are concerned, all districts are infected. Detailed information on the epidemiology in pigs was provided. Data on Trichinellosis in horses rely on ELISA test results.

Unfortunately, serological diagnosis is not valid in horses (Soulé et al, 1989; Pozio et al. 1997), because 4-5 months after the infection circulating antibodies in the serum can no longer be detected, although there may still be infective larvae in the muscle.

There is a national programme for surveillance, prevention and control of Trichinellosis. The programme consists of application of general hygienic measures at farm level, eradication through test and slaughter of positive breeding pigs in reproduction units, trichinoscopic control of meat product from sensitive animals (pigs, wild boars, bears, nutrias (*Myocastor coypus*), etc), awareness campaigns.

The current strategic programme consists of:

- In vivo ELISA test of equine animals intended for export for slaughter to the EU and at the special request of veterinary administrations of other countries importing products from Romania and at the special request of swine owners. Breeding herds are tested by ELISA and positive animals are eliminated.
- Control on products of animal origin: Trichinoscopic examination of all the pigs and horses slaughtered in slaughterhouses and in private holdings, bears and wild boars, nutrias and others susceptible animals and, if requested by the relevant veterinary administration, for export to other countries.
- In 1998, 4 151 582 animals out of a susceptible population of 6 745 122 animals were tested.

Type	Total tested	Positive	%
Pigs Slaughter house	2 744 441	4 508	0.16%
Pigs Private slaughter	1 389 635	1974	14,2
Wild Boars	5 158	19	0,37
Bears	164	26	15.8

Out of 1056 persons suspected of trichinellosis, 794 (75%) were confirmed to be infected.

- Trichinellosis in horses: Horses are not eaten so trichinellosis in horses is not considered an issue compared to swine trichinellosis.

In 1996 Italy detected *Trichinella spiralis* larvae in a naturally infected horse taken to a public slaughterhouse during the routine examination of horses imported from Romania. ELISA test is performed on horses sent for slaughter to the EU. In 1997, 726 horses were tested by ELISA and 44 were found to be positive (6%) in 1998, 285 horses were tested of which 33 (11%) were positive.

Recently, horses have not been sent to the EU under the category “slaughter horse” but only as “horses for breeding and production”, the Romanian expression used is “horses for work”, (data from the Borders Inspection Services).

#### 5.3.6 BSE:

The “Strategic programme” for the surveillance of BSE for 1998 has been modified partially taking on board the recommendation of the last FVO mission in 1997. Indigenous cattle have been included in the sampling for BSE. In 1998, 1383 histological examinations were performed (345 in imported animals and the balance in native animals).

## 5.4 Imports

Romania imports few animals from abroad, mainly animals of high genetic value, and one-day-old chickens. Data for 1998 are as follows:

Horse: 100; 13 for agricultural work and 87 for sport

Donkey: 3  
Bovine: 1,328, 1,032 for breeding, and 296 for slaughter  
Pigs: 4,406 for breeding

## **5.5 Live animal exports to the EU, quarantine stations and certification**

Live animal exports to the EU (Romanian data) in 1998.

Horse: 20,070, of which 260 to Germany and 19,810 to Italy.  
Donkeys: 7,040, to Italy.  
Bovine: 36,170, of which 17,040 Italy, 600 to Germany and 18,350 and to Greece  
Buffaloes: 490 to UK.  
Sheep: 350,000 of which 115,800 to Italy and 135,000 to Greece.  
Rabbits: 6,300 to Italy.  
Pheasants: 165,090 to Italy.

Quarantine farm: There are 68 quarantine farms for ruminants, which are all privately owned.

### *5.5.1 Bovine:*

Bovine animals are exported to the EU as animals for fattening and slaughter. The minimum weight for export according to the Romanian legislation is 250kg.

The quarantine farms are privately managed; the trader/manager of the quarantine farm collects animals, buying them in markets or directly from individual farmers. Animals leave the farm marked by the local veterinarian and accompanied by a health certificate issued by the local vet. When there is movement from one district to another, the district veterinarian of the place of origin informs the district veterinarian of the place of arrival by phone.

In the two quarantine farms visited one “lot” was present. The “all in-all out” principle applies. The quarantine farms visited were found to be of good standard however there were no double doors, no logbook of people visiting the premises or of the official veterinarian visits.

Animals are eartagged with new eartags when entering the quarantine farm. The quarantine manager keeps records of the farm of origin, sometimes electronically.

The quarantine is 30 days during which the animals are tested for FMD, and undergo prophylactic treatment (antihelminthic treatment and anthrax vaccination).

Export certificates were in conformity with the provisions of Dec.98/372/EC.

Some certificates were left without a dash in the empty spaces.

#### 5.5.2 *Sheep:*

Ovine animals are exported as animals for fattening or slaughter. The minimum weight for export according to the Romanian legislation is 15kg.

Goats and kids and lambs are bought from the smallholders and from markets. If they originate from another district and hence are already identified, they are eartagged again. In the quarantine visited, the concept of all in/all out was applied to the single pens inside a shelter. The suggestion was made to consider the full shelter as one unit.

All the small ruminants sent to Italy are tested for *Brucella melitensis*, but as there is no comprehensive national programme for testing of herds, freedom from Brucellosis, as defined by EU Legislation cannot be guaranteed. When lambs are exported the ewe and her lamb undergo the quarantine together, both are tested, and eventually the lamb is sent for slaughter or fattening and the dam is sent back to the farm.

The quarantine is 30 days, during which they are tested for FMD and undergo prophylactic treatment (antihelminthic treatment and anthrax vaccination).

#### 5.5.3 *Equidae:*

Equidae are exported for fattening and slaughter mainly to Italy.

In 1996 a compulsory ELISA test for Trichinellosis for equidae sent for slaughter was introduced. Following these measures, most traders preferred to export the equidae under the category 'equidae for breeding and production'. The Romanian term used in the statistics means "horses for agricultural work".

The horses are bought in markets or directly from the small holders and identified by the trader.

They remain 30 days in the quarantine stables where they receive antihelminthic treatment, anthrax vaccination, and undergo two tests at 30 days interval for Equine Infectious Anaemia.

No positive result has been found in recent years in these quarantine stables, notwithstanding the epidemic situation of the disease.

Animals are not tested for Dourine.

Animals are not marked on the left front hoof with an S (Slaughter) as they are sent as “equidae for breeding and production”.

The inspectors were told that the procedure described above, which differs from the requirement of Dec 93/197/EEC was agreed bilaterally between the Romanian veterinary services and the Italian ones.

The accompanying documents are the following:

- Health certificate
- International Transport Certificate

The copies of the certificates seen at the BIP visited and at the farm were as follows:

- The certificates were only in Italian.
- Page one of the Certificate follows the model laid down in 93/197/EEC (Permanent importation).
- The certificate is intended for use for one single animal, but the “identification” section bore the collective number of horses.
- The following pages consisted of photocopies of the Italian Official Journal, corresponding to 93/196/EEC (horses for slaughter within five days of import).

Shipments to Italy are accompanied by additional documents:

- Certificate of Control of Radioactivity, certificate of negative ELISA for trichinella and negative Coggin's test.
- “Nota de constatare” (about conditions of transport), signed by the BIP veterinarian and the transporter, where both parties state the health and transport conditions of the equidae and aimed at discharging responsibility of the Romanian veterinary services in case any complaint were to arise at the point of destination. The inspectors were told that this protocol was agreed bilaterally between the Romanian veterinary services and the Italian services.
- “Dichiarazione aggiuntiva” (additional declaration) stating that 15% of Consignment has been tested for Trichinellosis by ELISA with negative results, that the animals are seronegative to Infectious Anaemia and that the animals have been raised in compatible groups and are accustomed to one another.

## **5.6 Animal welfare during transport**

Transporters and lorries are all foreign. There are no Romanian authorised transporters or lorries. Romanian competent authorities said they were not aware of the obligations laid down in Directive 91/628/EEC in relation to animal welfare.

The mission was told that sometimes horses arrive at the BIP of Arad from Costanza, having already travelled 8 hours. No facilities for unloading, watering or resting are available at the border posts.

## 5.7 Border Post

Border posts were functioning and equipped with equipment for communication, basic laboratory tests and clinical treatment of wounded animals.

The co-ordination of the BIPs has been recently put under the responsibility of the Institute of Veterinary Diagnosis.

The personnel agreed that, as not all personnel understand Italian, they might sign certificates without understanding them.

The border post personnel follow instructions from the central office. There seems to be limited knowledge of EU requirements as far as certification is concerned.

## 5.8 Salami Sibiu

In 1996 the Romanian authorities introduced a request to export a product called “Salami Sibiu”

Five plants produce “Salami Sibiu”, of which 3 are already on the list of EC approved establishments. One of these plants was visited. It can produce 6 types of dry product according to the request. As “Salami Sibiu” is the most expensive of them, and was produced mainly for export, and since no export takes place, the plant is producing mainly other types of dry products. The plant is of high standard and processes the meat of pigs coming from one single farm (slaughtered in one slaughterhouse), controlled by the same group which control the plant.

The Romanian authorities provided technical information on the product, which was forwarded to the Scientific Committee. The latter asked for more complete information.

## 6 Conclusions

- The Veterinary services of Romania are well structured and have a clear mandate and working programme (strategic programme) and the recommendations of the last mission have been partially addressed.
- Ruminant health situation is generally good and under control. Romania is free of CSF with vaccination, trichinellosis is endemic and there is a control programme for pigs. Health status of horses is less well controlled. Epidemiology and control of trichinellosis rely on serological test, the test is reliable for pigs, unfortunately, serological diagnosis in horses is not acceptable (Soulé et al, 1989; Pozio et al. 1997), because, 4-5 months after the infection, there are no circulating antibodies in the horse sera although there are still infective larvae of *Trichinella* in their muscles.
- Animal identification and traceability is not fully under the control of the official veterinary Services.
- The current budgetary constraints, which have led to the current accelerated process of privatisation of clinical veterinary service, make it impossible to fulfil the slaughter programme.

- In relation to export of live animals to EU: certification is not in compliance with Dir. 96/93/EC.
  - Bovines often pass through a market before being introduced in the quarantine, but generally, the requirements of 98/372/EC are fulfilled.
  - The animal health requirements for small ruminants and the horses sent to Europe are not fulfilled.
  - The requirements of 93/198/EC as far as traceability and freedom from *Brucella melitensis* are concerned, are not fulfilled but the general health status is good, thousands of tests are performed every year, and the health risks are limited.
  - Horses are imported on certificates which are not applicable and they do not comply with either the terms of the correct certificate or those of the one used. It seems that one of the reasons for the confusion may arise from the wish of exporters to avoid the test for Trichinella.

## 7 Recommendations

To the Commission services:

1. To consider banning import of horses other than for slaughter until Romania can guarantee that certification for breeding and production horses is properly performed.
2. To take measures to ensure that meat of equidae coming from Romania and placed on the market has been submitted to the treatment described in Annex 4 of Directive 77/96/EEC.
3. To clarify with the Italian veterinary service whether special agreements have been concluded with third countries requiring pre-import Trichinellosis ELISA test for horses, although a harmonised Community certificate exists.

To importing Member States:

1. To ensure that checks on live animals at Border Inspection Posts comply fully with the requirements of Council Directive 91/496/EEC, laying down the principle governing the organisation of veterinary checks on animal entering the Community from third countries, and, in particular, with the requirement for documentary and identity checks as laid down in Article 4.

To the Romanian Competent Authority:

The Competent Authority should present to the services of the EU within 3 months of reception a workplan intended to address the following points:

1. To continue to develop the animal identification process and to ensure that the veterinary services have full control of the system.
2. To implement the EC requirements concerning health status requirements of horses intended for export to the EU.
3. To introduce and use certificates which comply with current EU legislation in respect of exports of small ruminants and horses to the EU, in languages understood by the certifying officials, and containing the guarantees laid down in EU legislation with particular attention to the distinction between:
  - equidae sent for slaughter, and
  - equidae sent for breeding and production.
4. To withdraw the requirement of ELISA testing for trichinellosis on horses sent for slaughter to EU countries, as this is not an EU requirement.
5. To put in place a system which allows the requirements of EU legislation with regard to the certification of freedom from *Brucella melitensis* to be fulfilled.