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FINAL REPORT
OF AN ANIMAL HEALTH MISSION TO HUNGARY
WITH REGARD TO IMPORT CONTROL*
FROM
27TH SEPTEMBER TO 1ST OCTOBER 1999



** Please note that certain comments from the Hungarian authorities have been included in the text of the report in bold, italic type*

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1. INTRODUCTION

The mission took place from 27th September to 1st October 1999. The mission team comprised of three inspectors from the Food and Veterinary Office (FVO) and a national expert from Italy, and was accompanied by representatives from the central competent authorities (CCA) throughout the entire programme which included an opening and a final meeting, both held at central level.

This mission was part of a planned series of inspection visits to third countries to assess their national animal health control measures.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE MISSION

The objective of the mission was

- to evaluate the operation of the veterinary services at all levels with particular regard to the certification of exports of livestock from Hungary into the European Union (E.U.) and
- to assess the identification, registration and internal movement control of livestock.

In pursuit of this objective, the following sites were visited :

Category	Sites visited		Number
CCA	Competent authority offices	Central	1
CRA		Regional	3
CLA		Local (District Veterinary Office)	1
LCR	Laboratory service	Central/reference (Central Veterinary Institute)	1
BIP	Border inspection posts (one to E.U., one to Romania)		2
FFF	Farms (one sheep, one cattle, one pig farm)		3

3. LEGAL BASIS FOR MISSION

The mission was carried out under the general provisions of Community legislation and, in particular:

- Council Directive 72/462/EEC of 12 December 1972 on health and veterinary inspection problems upon importation of bovine, ovine and caprine animals and swine, fresh meat or meat products from third countries

- Council Directive 90/426/EEC of 26 June 1990 on animal health conditions governing the movement and import from third countries of equidae
- Council Directive 96/93/EC of 17 December 1996 on certification of animals and animal products
- Commission Decision 98/140/EC of 4 February 1998 laying down certain detailed rules concerning on-the-spot checks carried out in the veterinary field by Commission experts in third countries.

To accomplish the above, the mission team examined the export certificates for compliance with the following legislation:

- Council Directive 90/426/EEC of 26 June 1990 on animal health conditions governing the movement and import from third countries of equidae
- Commission Decision 93/196/EEC of 5 February 1993 on animal health conditions and veterinary certification for imports of equidae for slaughter
- Commission Decision 93/197/EEC of 5 February 1993 on animal health conditions and veterinary certification for imports of registered equidae and equidae for breeding and production
- Council Directive 72/462/EEC of 12 December 1972 on health and veterinary inspection problems upon importation of bovine, ovine and caprine animals and swine, fresh meat or meat products from third countries
- Commission Decision 98/372/EC of 29 May 1998 concerning the animal health conditions and veterinary certification for imports of live animals of bovine and porcine species from certain European countries as amended by Commission Decision 98/505/EC
- Commission Decision 93/198/EEC of 17 February 1993 laying down a model for the animal health conditions and veterinary certification for the importation of domestic ovine and caprine animals from third countries
- Commission Decision 97/232/EC of 3 March 1997 drawing up lists of third countries from which the Member States authorise imports of sheep and goats
- Council Directive 92/102/EEC of 27 November 1992 on the identification and registration of animals
- Council Directive 96/93/EC of 17 December 1996 on certification of animals and animal products

4. BACKGROUND

4.1. Summary of findings obtained during previous animal health missions

Various animal health missions have been carried out to Hungary by officials from the European Commission (EC) veterinary inspection service in recent years.

In response to an outbreak of classical swine fever (CSF) on a pig farm close to the Romanian frontier in August 1990 officials from the former Office of Veterinary and Phytosanitary Inspection and Control (OVPIC) visited Hungary from the 28th to the 31st of

October 1990. The mission team noted in the report (reference number : VI/2874/91) that the apparent source of infection was the smuggling of meat across the border and that vaccination against CSF had never been taken place in the country. In addition, data was collected on the general animal health situation in the country.

Further CSF outbreaks occurred in October and November 1992 and consequently, further missions took place, from the 28th to the 31st October 1992 (reference number : VI/5962/92) and from the 15th to the 20th of February 1993. The report of the latter mission (reference number : VI/3361/93) proposed that import restrictions remain on live pigs, fresh pigmeat and pigmeat products pending the results of large scale serological surveys and underlined the need for a survey in the wild boar population.

The country was visited again from the 10th to the 15th of July 1995 for animal health reasons, and the mission report (reference number : VI/5943/95) which focussed on the outcome of the recent territorial reorganisation of the Hungarian veterinary services, identified, among other points, the risk of a conflict of interest for official veterinarians. The CSF surveillance program in wild boars appeared satisfactory, it was, however, concluded that the search for dead boars should be intensified and the number of virological examinations increased.

In addition, the EC delegation in Hungary launched a number of short term missions, for example to a Veterinary County Station and to a dairy farm and pig holdings on the 4th, 11th and 13th-14th of February 1997. During these missions information was collected on general administration issues, the animal disease and disease control situation in the county visited as well as on farm disease status, the identification, registration of animals and movement control. Public health aspects were also addressed.

The last EC veterinary inspection mission to Hungary (mammalian animal health) dates back to the 27th of March 1997 when a boar and bull artificial insemination centre were visited. *Hungary asked for the EU approval for one porcine and four bovine artificial insemination centres (approval number HU 01-05).*

4.2. Live animal imports from Hungary into the European Union

Hungary is on the list of third countries from which Member States are authorised by Council Decision 79/542/EEC to import live animals and products. At the time of the mission the country was not regionalised.

The Central Veterinary Institute (CVI) in Budapest is the only laboratory in Hungary authorised to carry out tests on live **breeding** animals for export to the EU. The institute and other laboratories are also approved by the CCA of Belgium, Germany, Denmark, Spain, Finland, Italy, Netherlands and Sweden to undertake the necessary tests prior to the importation of equidae from Eastern Europe in line with Commission Decision 93/683/EEC, as laid down in Doc VI/3058/1999 which was distributed at the Standing Veterinary Committee in April 1999. From statistical data it is evident that most equidae imported from Hungary are destined for human consumption in Italy.

Imports of live animals from Hungary to European Union (second half 1998, source Eurostat)

	Pure breeding horses	Live horses (exc. pure bred for breeding)	Horses for slaughter	Horses (exc. pure bred and slaughter)
Italy		3,584	3,582	2
Austria		91		91
Germany	3	21		21
Greece		18		18
Denmark		16		16
Total number imported	3	3,730	3,582	148

	Pure-bred breeding bovines	Heifers	Live bovine animals (exc. breeding)	Bovines for slaughter
Italy			10,317	1,099
Greece	771	765	2,509	18
Germany				1,842
Belgium	55	40		
Total number imported	826	805	14,668	1,117

	Domestic swine < 50 kg (exc. breeding)	Domestic swine >50 kg (exc. Sows and breeding)
France	43,851	
Spain	19,872	
Italy	16,715	
Belgium/Luxembourg	7,084	
Germany	3,664	426
Total number imported	91,186	426

	Live sheep	Lambs
Italy	393,082	391,829
Greece	22,056	22,056
Total number imported	415,138	413,885

5. OBSERVATIONS

5.1. Competent Veterinary Authorities

5.1.1. General Veterinary Administration

In Hungary the veterinary services operate at central, regional, district and at local level. The central competent authority is the Ministry of Agriculture and Regional Development, Department of Animal Health and Food Control. The chief veterinary officer (CVO) heads the organisation.

The Department of Animal Health and Food Control comprises three divisions. The Division of Epidemiology is in charge of the implementation of eradication programmes and contingency plans. The second unit, the Division of Food Control, deals with public health matters, and the third one, the Division of Administration, is responsible for trade, legislation and international relations. There are plans to establish a further division in charge of animal welfare.

Twenty county stations with around 60 staff each, 6 veterinary *diagnostic* institutes, *the Central Veterinary Institute, the National Food Investigating Institute, the Institute for the Investigation of Veterinary Drugs, Biologicals and Feeding-stuffs*, and 34 border inspection posts (BIPs) are working under the control of the central headquarters.

The regional level is represented by the County Animal Health and Food Control Stations. The staff are appointed by the Minister of Agriculture to whom all staff report directly. A computerised network is installed between the central and the regional level, including the BIPs, for rapid exchange of information. Each county is further divided into several districts which in turn, comprise several municipalities.

There are approximately 3200 veterinarians in the country of which 1,256 were reported to carry out full-time or part-time official duties.

State veterinary officials working at local level may, upon application, also work as private practitioners. To be approved by the Hungarian Veterinary Chamber, there must be a favorable opinion given by the head of the county veterinary station. Between 550 and 600 veterinary officials also do private consultation. However, as an internal rule, officials should not sign export certificates for animals originating from farms under their care.

On the other hand, many private veterinarians are involved in state duties which requires a formal appointment by the chief veterinarian of the county veterinary station. Background information obtained prior to the mission indicates a drastic reduction of state veterinary personnel in 1992. Typical assignments are meat inspection, vaccination, for example for infectious bovine rhinotracheitis (IBR) and sampling of livestock. However, private veterinarians are not allowed to take part in the veterinary inspection of EU approved establishments, to work at BIPs, or to certify exports of animals or products of animal origin, as stipulated by section 36 h of the Animal Health Act.

About 20% of the expenses of the national veterinary services are covered by the national budget. The major part of the expenditures is financed by fees paid to the county veterinary stations for carrying out administrative duties like issuing certificates.

5.1.2. Laboratories

There are six veterinary laboratories in the country, *the Central Veterinary Institute* and five of which operate at regional level. *Furthermore there are two institutes which are part of the State Veterinary Service: the Control Institute for Veterinary Biologicals, Drugs and Feeds and the National Food Investigating Institute.*

The Central Veterinary Institute (CVI), located in Budapest, was founded in 1928 and is the national reference laboratory for all list A diseases including classical swine fever (CSF), foot and mouth disease (FMD) and exotic diseases like African swine fever (ASF) as well as for all infectious diseases of equines. The institute is also involved in the implementation of national surveillance and eradication programmes, for example the programmes for enzootic bovine leucosis (EBL) and Aujeszky's disease, and it comprises 10 departments such as mammalian, poultry, game and fish pathology, virology, bacteriology, immunology and toxicology. To a large extent, the institute is engaged in diagnostic work whereas about 15 % of its activities are attributed to research programmes. The CVI hosts regular meetings with the *three* other veterinary laboratories which are also involved in testing samples from domestic pigs and wild boars for CSF and which participate in ring tests organised at a national level.

The equipment of the CVI seems to be adequate. Most of the reagents used for diagnostic tests are purchased on the market. Apparently there are neither close international links with other laboratories nor invitations to visit. However, in 1996 and 1998 the CVI participated in

CSF ring tests organised by the Community Reference Laboratory in Hannover. During the visit some results of the 1996 ring test were discussed and the mission team pointed out that positive test titres were not detected by the CVI. It was explained that in 1996 a test kit with low sensitivity was in use, which was, however, replaced afterwards. Thus, new test kits were introduced in 1997 in the CSF sero-surveillance programme covering four counties in Eastern Hungary. No exhaustive information on the virological examination of blood and organ samples taken in the field from domestic pigs or wild boars was given to the mission team. In particular, evidence was lacking on the use of consecutive tests like the Polymerase-Chain-Reaction (PCR) especially to verify false-positive results obtained by the Antigen-ELISA.

In 1998 the CVI participated in FMD and swine vesicular disease (SVD) inter-laboratory ring tests organised by the Community Reference Laboratory in Pirbright.

In principle, the costs for testing samples are borne by the sender of the sample, i.e. the owner of the animal from the sample is taken. This does not, however, apply to notifiable livestock diseases like classical swine fever (CSF) or enzootic bovine leucosis (EBL) where surveillance programmes are in operation and costs are paid by government. The results of the tests performed in the Institute as part of the implementation of the monitoring plans are communicated by phone, and only positive results are reported in writing. Summaries of test results were not available at the CVI, and it was explained that the data are compiled at Ministry level.

No annual report about the activities of the institute was made available to the mission team on request.

5.1.3. Border Inspection Posts

Hungary has borders with Austria, Slovakia, Ukraine, Romania, Yugoslavia, Croatia and Slovenia. The network of BIPs is operated from the county office level. The mission team visited 2 border posts, one along the frontier with the European Union, the other one located along the border between Hungary and Romania.

Very little statistical data was available for the recent period at the two BIPs visited. In the first border post, data compiled by hand indicated that 62 consignments of breeding cattle, pigs and sheep passed the post on their way to Austria and Germany during the period 01.01.1999 and 29.09.1999.

In the second BIP visited no compiled statistical data on export, import or transit of livestock were presented and it was explained that for practical reasons incomplete copies of export certificates were kept. The officials explained that livestock passports are normally withdrawn from the owner at the time of export, as they are only relevant for internal movements. In this BIP they were said to be kept by customs and, as was further explained, could therefore not be made available to the mission team.

The mission team requested summarised data on export, import and transit of livestock for recent periods, however, the latest data presented were for 1996.¹

¹ *In their response to the draft report, the CCA indicated that compiled data are available through the computer network at the Central Veterinary Institute but not at the BIPs (different access authorisation). The copies of the export, import and transit certificates must be retained for a year according to the Hungarian regulations.*

The results of the documentary checks are described in chapter 5.5 International Trade.

5.2. Animal Health Situation

5.2.1. Livestock population

The following data are estimates provided by the central competent authority for 1999:

cattle	930,000	including 405,000 cows
pigs	5,800,000	including 350,000 sows
ewes	750,000	
goats	50,000	
horses	80,000	

There are 46,860 cattle farms in the country 45,830 of which are owned by small holders.

5.2.2 List A diseases

For List A diseases a contingency plan and a manual of operations has been elaborated.

FMD: Hungary has been declared free from FMD since 1973. A serological surveillance programme is carried out in four East-Hungarian counties bordering Romania and Ukraine. No information about the criteria applied to sampling was available apart from the location of the animals in a 30 km border corridor. In 1998 6,005 cattle, i.e. 30 % of the local cattle population, and 4,120 sheep were examined. Positive titres were found in 31 cattle and 2 sheep and were attributed to vaccination which ceased between 1989 and 1991.

CSF: The last outbreak was reported in 1993 in an area close to the Romanian border. A serological monitoring programme is in operation which covers the same area as the FMD programme, and in 1998 20,240 pigs coming from a 10 to 15 km corridor along the borderline were tested with negative results. The sampling strategy requires that sampling is equally distributed among the whole herd. It was explained that in small herds 30 % of all animals are sampled, whereas in large herds the percentage is 10 %. It remained unclear whether or not additional risk factors, for example presence of wild boars in the area, movement of pigs or suspicion of clinical symptoms are considered part of the sampling policy.

In 1998 23,803 samples taken from wild boar all over Hungary were virologically examined using *the direct immuno-fluorescence test* and all results were negative. Official statistics estimate that in 1998 the total wild boar population of the country was 43,720 which means that more than half of the total population would thus have been examined.

The mission team was informed that each year around 25,000 wild boar carcasses undergo virological examination prior to export into the European Union.

No vaccination of pigs was said to be carried out in Hungary. *Vaccination against CSF has been prohibited since 1974, but emergency vaccine is kept in stock.*

Other list A diseases: Veterinary officials confirmed that SVD, bluetongue, African swine fever and fowl plague have never been recorded in the country, whereas contagious bovine

pleuropneumonia was last officially recorded in 1901, sheep and goat pox in 1957, and Newcastle disease in 1992.

In 1998 10,000 samples taken from pigs in the CSF monitoring area were also serologically screened for SVD. It was stated that all results were negative.

5.2.3. List B diseases

Dourine, Glanders and Equine Infectious Anemia have not been reported since 1952, 1956 and 1965 respectively. Breeding horses are surveyed once a year for these diseases.

Brucellosis: No outbreaks of bovine brucellosis have been reported since 1985. There is a *Br. melitensis* sero-surveillance programme and in 1998 19,293 samples from all over Hungary were examined with negative results.

Tuberculosis: ***Eradication started in 1963 and finished in 1980. Since that date the Hungarian cattle population has been free of bovine tuberculosis. Generally there are 1-2 cases per year and*** the last positive case dates back to September 1998.

Enzootic bovine leucosis (EBL): An eradication programme is in place which requires the mandatory testing of bovines older than 6 months at three year intervals. Although the percentage of animals responding to the milk screening test has decreased to 6,4 % during recent years the proportion of non-negative farms has remained at the same level of 4,7 %. This figure, as was explained, reflects the difficulties of eradication in small farms, despite the enforcement of stringent movement restrictions for non-free herds, which are partially due to the fact that no funds are provided to replace reactors by negative animals.

Infectious bovine rhinotracheitis (IBR): The disease is widely distributed. A marker vaccine is in use as part of a voluntary eradication programme. This programme is not progressing well, however, as there are no incentives for cattle owners to establish negative herds.

Aujeszky's disease: A national eradication programme was launched eight years ago and officials expressed hope that the country can be made free of the disease within the next three years. Surveys are carried out at six months intervals. However, 10 % of all pigs in Hungary kept in around 100,000 farms are still infected and the wild boar population where the disease is serologically prevalent in about 30 % of all animals tested is considered a natural reservoir.

Porcine brucellosis, leptospirosis and pig respiratory and reproductive syndrome (PRRS) are monitored at annual intervals.

5.2.4. Trichinellosis

There are no data available on the prevalence of the infection in horses in Hungary as there is no tradition in the country of slaughtering equidae for human consumption.

It is compulsory to examine every slaughtered pig for trichinosis. The digestion method is applied on meat samples taken from pig slaughtered in slaughterhouses and from game. Relevant statistical data were requested from the CCA but were not be available. The mission team was, however, informed that no case has been reported in the country for the last 40 years, neither in domestic pigs nor in wild boars.

5.3. Identification and Registration

Owners of livestock have to apply for a licence document at the local municipality to certify the right of ownership and the animal health status. This document which for practical reasons is provided by the county veterinary station also serves as an animal passport. For horses, *buffaloes, mules, donkeys* and cattle an individual passport is required. For pigs coming from herds with less than 35 animals, sheep, goat and wild cloven hoofed game reared in an enclosed area a group or herd passport has to be issued before the animals are permitted to permanently leave the holding or origin. For each passport a fee has to be paid which varies, depending on the species.

The Hungarian veterinary legislation stipulates the individual identification of registered breeding horses, bovines and buffaloes:

5.3.1. Horses

Registered horses have to be marked according to regulations of the breeding association. There is no obligation to mark other equidae². Thoroughbreds can also be tattooed with an identification mark. For English thoroughbreds a detailed description is also acceptable. The animals are first marked at the age of 4 to 9 months.

5.3.2. Ruminants

For cattle the 'Unified Registration and Identification System' (ENAR) based on the Dutch identification system has been introduced in October 1997. Every bovine must be identified within 15 days of birth by means of ear-tags which bear identical 10 digit codes and are placed in both ears to ensure a double security in case one is lost. In case of loss a new eartag has to be ordered. The first five digits of the ear-code refer to the herd number of the animal, digit six to nine to the individual number of the animal and the tenth digit serves as a control. The tags are centrally registered and distributed to the owners who are authorised to identify their animals. Data entered on the first section of the *animal* passport include the information about the animal and includes the breed, sex, date of birth and ear-tag number, and the owner's address. The system also includes the registration of each farm to which an individual registration number is attributed. The identification of the animals is controlled by the veterinary official in charge of the farm.

When an animal is moved to another herd the owner has to record the reason and the time of departure from the holding on the third section of the passport. The control section is then sent to the central database established at the Agricultural Quality Control Institute. As soon as the animal arrives at the new holding the new owner has to enter the herd code of the place of destination and the date of arrival on the second section of the passport. The document is then sent to the competent county veterinary station that then issue a new passport based on the up-dated information held in the central database.

At the time of the mission 96 % of the bovine *population* were covered by the new animal identification system. The CCA declared that it was planing to register all bovines by January 2000.

During the visit to a cattle farm all bovines were found to be properly identified.

² *In their response to the draft report, the CCA stated that all horses must be marked in a permanent manner.*

There are also plans to apply the ENAR system to small ruminants. During a visit to a sheep breeding farm the animals were found to be identified with ear-tags on which the herd and the individual animal number were written down allowing for obvious reading errors. In addition, the marker used did not appear to be waterproof.

5.3.3. Pigs

The mission team also visited a pig breeding and fattening farm. Identification of pigs on the farm is based on a system of cuts made to the ear as recommended by the national Hungarian pig breeding association. This system only allows for a number to be given to each animal without being able to make any reference to the herd. The mission team was informed that pigs selected for breeding receive an ear-tag after their first litter with a number on it, which together with a herd reference and any movement of the animal is recorded in the passport. The veterinary official in charge of this holding supervises these movements.³

In the case of fattening pigs a certificate is issued to accompany the movement of these animals, which also makes reference to the herd.

It should be noted that the system of cutting the ear can only be interpreted by a person familiar with this system and that this system allows for mis-readings. No tattoos on the flank of the animals or in the ear are in use to identify the animals.

There are plans to introduce a system of identification, similar to the one used for bovines in the coming years. Also a study is under way to find out which technique of earmarking could best be used in pigs.

5.4. Movement Control

The control of internal movements of livestock is based on a two-step procedure which involves both the veterinary practitioner and the official veterinarian in charge of the holding of origin.

First, the practitioner issues an animal health certificate. This document contains information about the identification of the animal or animals, which are going to be loaded, and about the holding. However, it was found, for example in sheep, that the individual ear-tag numbers of the animals were not mentioned on the animal health certificate and only the quantities of animals were entered. The veterinary surgeon also has to state that the animals were examined in compliance with animal health regulations, and were found healthy and fit for transportation. Moreover, details of the vaccination status, for example against IBR, are given.

The official veterinarian in charge of the farm must state by use of a second certificate that there are no movement restrictions which might be an obstacle to the planned transport. This movement certificate is understood as a second control and also as a control of the practitioner. However, on occasions it was found that the practitioner and the official veterinarian were in fact the same person. The certificate is valid for 24 hours from the time of issue.

³ *In their response to the draft report, the CCA stated that pigs have to be marked individually or as part of a group. Group marking shall only be applied if the swine kept in a large herd is directly transported to a slaughterhouse from its place of birth.*

The veterinary legislation in place requires that the loading of horses, asses, mules, cattle, buffaloes, sheep, goats, swine, rabbits and fur animals for transport shall be undertaken in the presence and with the permission of the official veterinarian.

Horses, which are moved from an area, for example to participate in a sporting event or to be used for breeding, must be tested for Glanders, Dourine and EIA. Several laboratories are approved to carry out these tests for internal movement purposes.

5.5. International Trade

5.5.1. Export into the European Union

Models of the relevant export documents are updated and issued by the CCA where they are given a reference number and sent out to the county veterinary stations and to the BIPs.

The mission team checked a number of export certificates which were made available at the farm of origin, at the BIPs and at central level. As a rule, only a few documents were provided at all levels.

Health certificates issued for breeding horses were found to be in compliance with Commission Decision 93/197/EEC. However, supporting documents to lead to the verification of guarantees were not available, as these documents were not available in the veterinary office where the certificates were issued.

Some health certificates indicate that horses for breeding and production exported to Austria had been tested at the CVI in Budapest although this laboratory is not officially approved by the competent Austrian authority.

A number of certificates used for the export of sheep were also checked and the mission team made the following observations:

- Sheep which were at the farm of origin reported to be destined for slaughter in Italy were sent accompanied by health certificates as required for fattening sheep. However, additional guarantees such as information about the health status of the herd of origin in relation to brucellosis were not given and no dates of the required tests were indicated in the documentation.
- Several certificates obtained at various levels showed that more ear-tags had been allocated to the consignments than there were animals on the transport. Thus it was not made clear on the certificates which animals were in fact transported.
- The CCA issued model certificates for sheep destined for breeding and production lacking whole sets of guarantees including the guarantee that the animals are free of scrapie. No such model was made available to the mission team on request. Scrapie is not listed as a notifiable disease in Act XCI on Animal Health promulgated 4.11.95. *However, the Minister of Agriculture and Regional Development may, on the basis of section 6 point 3 of the Hungarian Veterinary Act, temporarily order compulsory notification of other important diseases. Paragraph 5 of Article 498 of the Hungarian Zoosanitary Code prescribes that in the event of transmissible spongiform encephalopathy of other animals, for example scrapie, the relevant rules of BSE must be applied. The Hungarian veterinary authorities stress that the only case of scrapie in an import quarantine station among imported sheep occurred in 1964. Since destroying these animals no case of scrapie has occurred in Hungary.*

- Archiving of the export certificates at the BIPs visited was not structured and no complete sets of copies were kept for practical reasons.
- On some certificates the place of destination was not mentioned, instead the name of the trader was entered.
- It remained unclear in which way the export certificates are supported by the guarantees given in the internal movement permits as these documents bear no reference to the export certificates and no individual ear-tag numbers are entered on the permits.

Information was obtained at the CVI that since 01.07.96 around 25,000 samples taken from wild boar carcasses are examined per year for CSF virus prior to export to the E.U. The mission team did not, however, have the opportunity to check the relevant documentation.

5.5.2. Import into Hungary from other third countries

The CCA confirmed that in practice, standards comparable to the ones adopted in the European Union are applied on imports of live animals and animal products from other third countries into Hungary.

6. CONCLUSIONS

- There was a general inability of the veterinary services at all levels including the Central Veterinary Institute and the Border Inspections Posts visited to provide the mission team with the relevant documents on request. In some cases documents requested were apparently not available.
- Due to the high number of veterinary officials who work as private practitioners, and vice versa, the system of veterinary administration bears a considerable potential for a conflict of interest. There is an internal regulation which stipulates that officials signing export certificates should not treat livestock originating from the same farm. This rule is not, however, strictly enforced.
- At the Central Veterinary Institute only positive test results are communicated in writing and no summaries of test results are compiled. Virological testing of samples and wild boar carcasses for CSF, and in general, the reporting of test results are apparently not carried out in line with the principles of good laboratory practice as defined by internationally recognised standards.
- Border Inspection Posts only keep incomplete records of export certificates. Important documents like *animal* passports are handed out to customs and are not available on request.
- The surveillance plans for FMD and CSF are based on the serological control of a certain percentage of animals. The selection of the herds takes into account certain risk factors. In the absence of a complete description of a proper sampling strategy the plans however appear to better serve the purpose of simple monitoring rather than active surveillance.
- In general, there is no individual identification of small ruminants and pigs. The current methods used to identify breeding animals are troublesome from a technical point of view as they allow for misinterpretation of the identities of marked animals. Reference to the herd is only made in animals kept for breeding purposes. Identification and registration of small ruminants and pigs is not equivalent to the provisions of Council Directive 92/102/EEC.

- Internal movement control is not based on recording the transport of individually identified livestock, and it is only in cattle that the passport system guarantees traceability of animal movements.
- The whereas clauses of Commission Decision 97/232/EC of 3 March 1997 state that Hungary is approved for the export of sheep to the EU on the grounds of a confirmation given by the CCA that scrapie, among other list A diseases, is notifiable in the country. However, scrapie is not listed as a notifiable disease in the Hungarian Animal Health Act promulgated 4.11.95 thus raising concerns about the reliability of the information provided by the CCA.
- The issue of export certificates by official veterinarians in Hungary is not undertaken in accordance with Council Directive 96/93/EC.
- Certificates issued to accompany exports of livestock, in particular sheep, consistently show various non-compliances. Certification of sheep consignments is consistently in breach of the provisions in Commission Decision 93/198/EEC. Sheep reportedly destined for slaughter in Italy are sent accompanied by documents required for fattening sheep, without, however, the necessary guarantees on brucellosis. Generally, traceability is not assured and the identity of the animals transported is not clearly documented, as the number of ear-tags allocated to the shipment repeatedly exceeds the number of animals indicated on the certificates. The CCA issues model certificates for breeding sheep lacking any information about scrapie as scrapie is not given the status of a notifiable disease in Hungary, and it remains unclear how veterinary officials issuing export documents verify the guarantees given on the issued certificates as required by Commission Decision 93/198/EEC.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1. to the Hungarian Central Authorities

It is recommended that the national authorities

- provide the relevant documents requested by the mission team during the mission.
- strictly ensure that situations are avoided where there may be a conflict of interest for the veterinary officials.
- ensure that the laboratories, which are involved in the diagnosis of notifiable diseases of livestock, compile summaries of test results and communicate all test results in writing to the periphery and that a stringent quality control system is applied to the virological examination of samples for CSF taking into account internationally recognised quality standards for diagnostic laboratory procedures.
- ensure that Border Inspection Posts keep copies of documentation in a way which readily allows a trace back of animal movements and a check on the relevant guarantees.
- ensure that, where exports of livestock into the European Union are concerned, the guarantees supporting the relevant health certificates are based on information obtained from animals which are identified individually and for which there is movement control which guarantees traceability.
- amend the national veterinary legislation governing notifiable diseases, in particular scrapie in order to qualify for the criteria laid down in Commission Decision 97/232/EC

- rectify the consistent non-compliances found in health certificates issued for exports of livestock into the European Union and ensure that only consignments are dispatched for which certification is issued in a manner which is strictly in line with the provisions of the relevant EU legislation.

A plan describing the actions to be taken and the time-span needed should be submitted to the Commission within 25 working days of receipt of the final report.

7.2. to the Commission Services

It is recommended to the Commission Services

- to advise Member States, which import livestock from Hungary to ensure that checks are made at their Border Inspection Posts and that consignments are accompanied by certificates which comply with the relevant E.U. legislation.
- to ensure that the Member States which import livestock from Hungary take the above recommendation into account.
- to carry out an in depth follow-up of the mission in order to assess the progress made by the CCA in response to the recommendations given in this report.

ADDENDUM TO MISSION REPORT DG(SANCO)/1156/1999

COMPETENT AUTHORITY RESPONSE TO MISSION REPORT

1. The competent authority submitted comments on the draft report which were taken into consideration prior to the preparation of the final report.
2. In their comments to the draft report the Hungarian veterinary authorities pointed out that corrective actions have been taken to ensure that complete copies of certificates are kept at the Border Inspection Posts.