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HEALTH & CONSUMER PROTECTION DIRECTORATE-GENERAL

Directorate F - Food and Veterinary Office

DG(SANCO)/1239/2000 – MR final

FINAL REPORT OF A MISSION
CARRIED OUT IN DENMARK
FROM 13th DECEMBER TO 15th DECEMBER 2000

IN ORDER TO ASSESS CERTIFICATION IN RESPECT OF THE MOVEMENT OF
LIVE ANIMALS AND THE OPERATION OF THE ANIMO SYSTEM

Please note that factual errors have been corrected in the text in bold, italic type whilst clarification given by the Danish Authorities is included as a footnote to the report in bold, italic type



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ABBREVIATIONS & SPECIAL TERMS USED IN THE REPORT

BSE Bovine spongiform encephalopathy

1. INTRODUCTION

The mission took place in Denmark from 13th December to 15th December 2000. The mission team consisted of two inspectors from the Food and Veterinary Office (FVO).

The mission was undertaken as part of the FVO's planned mission programme.

The inspection team was accompanied during the entire mission by a representative of the Veterinary Services of the Department of Agriculture, the central competent authority.

An opening meeting was held on 13th April 2000 at the headquarters of the Veterinary Services under the chairmanship of the Chief Veterinary Officer. At this meeting, the objectives of, and itinerary for, the mission were confirmed by the inspection team.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE MISSION

The objectives of the mission were to assess the certification of live animals for intra-Community trade and to assess the operation of the ANIMO system in the framework of Council Directives 96/93/EC, 64/432/EEC, 91/68/EEC and 90/426/EEC concerning certification and Council Directive 90/425/EEC concerning ANIMO. This was the first mission undertaken to Denmark for this purpose. It formed part of a series of missions to all Member States evaluating control systems and operational standards in this sector.

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

COMPETENT AUTHORITY VISITS			Comments
Competent authority	Central	1	
	Regional	2	
	Local	0	The structure of the veterinary services in Denmark does not include local offices

LIVE ANIMAL AND ANIMAL PRODUCT CONTROL SITES		
Animal & animal product movements		Comments
Assembly centres	2	
Farms	1	

3. LEGAL BASIS FOR THE MISSION

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

- Council Directive 96/93/EC of 17 December 1996¹ on the certification of animals and animal products,

¹ Official Journal L 13, 16/01/1997 p. 18-30

- Council Directive 64/432/EEC of 26 June 1964² on animal health problems affecting intra-Community trade in bovine animals and swine,
- Council Directive 91/68/EEC of 28 January 1991³ on animal health conditions governing intra-Community trade in ovine and caprine animals,
- Council Directive 90/426/EEC of 26 June 1990⁴ on animal health conditions governing the movement and import from third countries of equidae,
- Commission Decision 98/139/EC of 4 February 1998⁵ laying down certain detailed rules concerning on-the-spot checks carried out in the veterinary field by Commission experts in the Member States.

4. BACKGROUND

The current mission was undertaken as the third of a series, which will include all Member States, to assess the manner in which Member States ensure that the provisions of Council Directive 96/93/EC on the certification of animals and animal products are met when live animals are being certified for intra-Community movements under Council Directives 64/432/EEC for cattle and swine, 91/68/EEC for sheep and goats, and 90/426/EEC for equidae. In addition, the mission looked at the operation of the “ANIMO” system, set up under Article 20 of Council Directive 90/425/EEC⁶.

The Veterinary Services in Denmark are, *at the time when this report is being prepared*, under reorganisation to create a single authority with “stable to table” responsibility. The country is divided into eleven regions, in each of which there is (*or will shortly be*⁷) an office containing the animal and public health services and food analysis laboratories. The total number of veterinary officers in the regional offices is currently 80 but recruitment during 2001 will increase this to 119. At the same time, the effective strength of the headquarters veterinary staff is to be increased from 50 to 69.

5. MAIN FINDINGS

5.1. Animal health controls

5.1.1. Transposition of directives

The mission team was provided with documentation indicating that all the directives relevant to this mission have been transposed into national law.

² Official Journal 121, 29/07/1964 p. 1977-2012

³ Official Journal L 46, 19/02/1991 p. 19-36

⁴ Official Journal L 224, 18/08/1990 p. 42-54

⁵ Official Journal L 38, 12/02/1998 p. 10-13

⁶ Official Journal L 224, 18/08/1990 p. 29-41

⁷ *The Danish Authorities indicated, in a letter dated 13th March 2001, that the reorganisation has been completed and the changes referred to now apply.*

5.1.2. General

Certification of cattle and pigs in intra-Community trade is currently carried out using the models contained in the annexes to Directive 64/432/EEC subsequent to its modification by 97/12/EC. However, the bovine certificate has not been updated to incorporate the requirements of Article 1.1. of Council Directive 2000/20/EC.

For equidae the certificates are those annexed to Council Directive 90/426/EEC

For sheep and goats the export certificates are those required by Council Directives 91/68/EEC. There is little or no export trade in these species.

Virtually all export certification is carried out by whole-time, salaried veterinary officers. This was not always the case, however, and certificates issued in one assembly centre for live animals are still signed by a practitioner. The mission team understands that this will end during 2001.

Article 4.3. of Council Directive 96/93/EEC requires the competent authority to ensure that a copy of all certificates issued is available for a period to be determined by it.

5.1.3. Guidelines

Written guidelines (“Vejledning”) dealing with aspects of export certification are issued by the competent authority to the regional offices. Veterinary officers in the two regional offices visited were fully aware of the necessity to avoid a situation in which an official might certify animals in which he or she has a financial interest, but the headquarters instructions do not deal specifically with how this should be implemented.

5.1.4. Export certification of bovines

Danish cattle are specifically excluded from the requirement for testing for bovine tuberculosis, brucellosis or enzootic bovine leucosis under the terms of Commission Decisions 99/467/EC, 99/466/EC and 99/465/EC respectively.

Any herd-owner wishing to export cattle for breeding or production must arrange for a health visit to the holding by a veterinary practitioner not more than 35 days prior to the date of export. The regional office, once notified of the satisfactory result of this visit, issues a form to the herd-owner on which he or she makes a declaration of herd health to cover the period between the practitioner’s visit and the export inspection carried out by the official veterinarian.

The mission team visited a dairy farm from which male calves surplus to breeding requirements are regularly exported. All animals seen were double-tagged in accordance with Council Regulation (EC) 1760/2000⁸.

8 Official Journal L 204, 11/08/2000 p. 01-10

All animals for certification were inspected by the official veterinarian and the certificate completed on the spot.

5.1.5. Export certification of pigs

Two assembly centres for pigs were visited by the mission teams. In each case the animals seen were identified by herd of origin. Individual identification is not compulsory but was seen in some animals, particularly culled breeding stock, evidently as a result of management decisions rather than of official requirements.

With few exceptions, pig exports are permitted only from assembly centres to avoid visits to farms by vehicles engaged in the international transport of livestock.

The system of practitioner's certificate and owner's declaration, as described for cattle, is in place for breeding and production animals.

The mission team was informed that, where the export to Switzerland of specific-pathogen-free piglets is concerned, the consignment is supplied, in addition to the certificate required by the importing Third Country, with an intra-Community certificate addressed to the Veterinary Authority of Germany (the only Member State of transit) confirming that the pigs meet at least the slaughter requirements for intra-Community trade.

5.1.6. Export certification of equines

Export certification of equines is carried out on the holding of origin by official veterinarians.

The certificate is completed on the basis of an owner's declaration to cover the fifteen days referred to in point 5. of the health information.

In the case of the periods of time and diseases referred to in point 4. of the certificate, the certifying veterinarian is left to assume that the animal meets the requirements unless there is positive evidence that it has been in a country where one or more of the relevant diseases are found. The guidance given by headquarters does not provide adequate instructions on how to deal with this situation.

Denmark already has a limited "no certification" protocol in place with Finland for horses moving between the two countries for sporting purposes and is currently in negotiation with Sweden and Norway to extend this to cover the four countries. The derogation under discussion is permitted by Article 6 of Council Directive 90/426/EEC as far as Member States are concerned.

5.1.7. Inspection of regional office files

Files relating to cattle, pig and horse exports were examined and found to be complete and to contain all relevant material. The mission team was informed that files are never discarded, although no guideline was available indicating a minimum period for which they should be kept.

Written guidelines dealing with certification matters were available for inspection.

The certificates seen were not serially-numbered, although there was space for the manual insertion of an identification code.

5.2. ANIMO messaging system

In both the regional offices visited, the ANIMO system appeared to be working well. The officials responsible for operating the system were competent and had no problems other than occasional difficulties with destination addresses, related to the receipt of inadequate information from the exporter.

No delays in the transmission of messages were identified and no significant delays were apparent in the arrival of incoming messages.

6. CONCLUSIONS

6.1. Animal health controls

The identification of the bovine animals seen was in conformity with European Union rules and the verification carried out in the assembly centre visited was satisfactory.

In general, official veterinarians are provided, through the use of written guidelines, with the information necessary to ensure that certification is carried out in accordance with Council Directive 96/93/EC.

However, Article 4.1.(a) requires that competent authorities take all necessary steps to ensure that certifying veterinary officers “have no direct commercial interest in the animals or products being certified or in the holdings or establishments in which they originate”. There is need for central authority guidelines indicating how this should be achieved at regional level.

The modifications introduced by Council Directive 2000/20/EC in regard to the completion of the certificate annexed to Council Directive 64/432/EEC relating to intra-Community trade in bovines are not, in fact, relevant to Denmark because they concern the carrying out of tests from which Denmark has official derogations. Nevertheless, the certificate does not conform to the model currently required in the consolidated directive.

The dual certification of SPF piglets intended for export to Switzerland is in compliance with the requirements of Commission Decision 93/444/EEC.

The procedures followed in respect of the certification of equidae are in general in conformity with the requirements of Council Directives 96/93/EC and 90/426/EEC. However, the lack of guidance from headquarters on the subject means that certifying officers tend to make certain assumptions as to the health history of the animals concerned.

The legal situation regarding an agreement on equine certification which includes a non-Member State (Norway) requires clarification.

The use of serially-numbered certificates would act as a safeguard against fraudulent misuse.

The failure of the competent authority to indicate a minimum period for the keeping of copy certificates is contrary to the requirements of Council Directive 96/93/EEC.

6.2. ANIMO messaging system

The ANIMO system was well-implemented in both the regional offices visited and officers appeared to be fully-trained in its operation.

7. CLOSING MEETING

The final meeting was held on 15th December 2000 at the headquarters of the Veterinary Services under the chairmanship of the Chief Veterinary Officer. At this meeting the main findings and conclusions of the mission were presented by the mission team.

The competent authority accepted the findings and conclusions as presented by the mission team and undertook to improve the guidelines to take account of the points raised.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1. To the competent authority of Denmark

- 8.1.1. To issue guidelines to ensure that certifying veterinary officers are aware of the need and the means to avoid the possibility of direct commercial interest;
- 8.1.2. To issue guidelines to ensure that certifying veterinary officers are in a position to ascertain the health status of equine holdings;
- 8.1.3. To bring the format of export certificates fully in line with the provisions of Council Directive 64/432/EEC as modified;
- 8.1.4. To consider the introduction of serially-numbered certificates;

- 8.1.5. To establish a minimum period during which copies of certificates should be retained.

The competent authority should indicate in writing to the Commission services within one month of receipt of the final report what action has been taken to address the above recommendation, including the deadline by which this action will be completed.

8.2. To the Commission Services

- 8.2.1. To clarify to the Competent Authority of Denmark the situation regarding the conclusion of a “non-certification” agreement on equine movements with a non-Member State.

ADDENDUM TO MISSION REPORT DG(SANCO)/1239/2000

Competent Authority response to the recommendations in the report

The Danish Authorities have responded to the recommendations in the draft report as follows:

- indicated that relevant guidelines will be issued to certifying veterinary officers within eight weeks;
- indicated that a statement is to be required from the owner that the animal has been kept in Denmark, or listing the countries which it has visited, during the six months prior to certification and that guidelines will be issued to certifying veterinary officers that they should make themselves aware of the animal health status of any country listed before issuing the certificate. These measures will be in place within eight weeks;
- indicated that the bovine export certificate will be adjusted to comply fully with Council Directive 64/432/EEC within eight weeks;
- do not consider it feasible to introduce serially-numbered certificates on a national basis but will consider their application in each of the eleven regions;
- indicated that they will introduce a rule within eight weeks requiring that copies of certificates are retained for a minimum of five years.