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FINAL REPORT OF A MISSION

CARRIED OUT IN THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC

FROM 15 TO 19 JULY 2002

CONCERNING THE ANIMAL HEALTH SITUATION, WITH SPECIAL
REFERENCE TO CLASSICAL SWINE FEVER

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Abbreviations and special terms used in this report

BIP	Border Inspection Post
CA	Competent Authority
CCA	Central Competent Authority
CSF	Classical Swine Fever
CVO	Chief Veterinary Officer
DVFA	District Veterinary and Food Administration
ELISA	Enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay
FVO	Food and Veterinary Office
NRL	National Reference Laboratory
OIE	<i>Office International des Epizooties</i>
PPaLH	Department of Land, Agriculture and Forestry Economy
PRRS	Porcine Reproductive and Respiratory Syndrome
SBI	State Breeding Institute (<i>Štátny Plemenársky Ústav Slovenskej Republiky</i>)
SKK	Slovak currency
SNAS	Slovak National Accreditation Service
SR	Slovak Republic
SVFA	State Veterinary and Food Administration
SZ	Surveillance Zone
PZ	Protection Zone
TAIEX	Technical Assistance Information Exchange Office

1. INTRODUCTION

The mission took place in the Slovak Republic from 15 to 19 July 2002. The mission team comprised three inspectors from the Food and Veterinary Office (FVO), and one Member State expert. The mission was undertaken at the request of the country.

The inspection team was accompanied during the whole mission by a representative from the central competent authority, the State Veterinary and Food Administration (CCA). An opening meeting was held on 15 July 2002 with the central competent authority. At this meeting, the objectives of, and itinerary for, the mission were confirmed by the inspection team, and additional information required for the satisfactory completion of the mission was requested.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE MISSION.

The objectives of the mission were to assess the CCA in respect of animal health controls, with special reference to the CSF situation.

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

Sites visited		Number
Competent authority offices	Central	1
	Regional	1
	Local	2
Laboratory service	NRL	1
Farms		3
Slaughterhouse		1

3. LEGAL BASIS FOR THE MISSION

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

- Council Directive 64/432/EEC¹ of 26 June 1964 on animal health problems affecting intra-Community trade in bovine animals and swine (as amended).
- Council Directive 72/462/EEC² 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 (as amended).
- Commission Decision 98/140/EC³ 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.

¹ OJ L 121, 29/07/1964 p. 1977 - 2012

² OJ L 302, 31/12/1972 p. 28 - 54

³ OJ L 38, 12/02/1998 p. 14 - 16

4. BACKGROUND

4.1. Background to present mission

On the 25 February 2002 the State Veterinary and Food Administration of the Slovak Republic made an application to the Commission Services to be recognised as a country free from classical swine fever in domestic pigs and requested its placing on the list of third countries from which it is permitted to export live pigs and pig-meat to the European Union. Following a review of the application and submission of further data by the SR, a mission was required to evaluate the health situation on-the-spot.

4.2. Animal Health Situation

The animal health situation (CSF) has previously been reported in June 2001 (see mission report DG(SANCO)/3202/2001)⁴. The last reported outbreak of CSF in domestic pigs was on 3 July 2001 in the district of Partizánske, Trenčín province. Diagnosis was made on clinical signs and laboratory confirmation (30 June, 2001) at the State Veterinary Institute, Zvolen. Only one positive case was found in 2000 (confirmed virologically).

Wild boar are widely distributed in certain regions of the Slovak Republic and there are at present, two endemic areas (CSF) in the centre of the country. In the period January to June 2002 there have been 11 reported cases of CSF in wild boar. Wild boar play a significant role as a source of infection for domestic pigs in affected regions, as CSF virus can spread from infected wild boar to domestic pigs via direct or indirect contacts.

A compulsory mass vaccination campaign was re-introduced in March 1998 due to the epidemic in wild boar. Vaccination was stopped in December 2000.

4.3. Production information

The domestic pig population of the Slovak Republic in 2001 is 1,495,880, distributed over all 8 regions (40 veterinary districts) and 1,618 holdings. The estimated number of wild boar in 2001 (spring data) was 24,941 distributed over all 8 regions. Of these, 18,192 were hunted and 549 were found dead.

5. FINDINGS

5.1. Transposition of EU legislation and national legislation.

Council Directive 80/217/EEC⁵ introducing Community measures for the control of classical swine fever, has been transposed by Decree N^o 467/2001-100. The new Veterinary Framework Act required for full transposition of the veterinary acquis into Slovak legislation was adopted on 19 June 2002. It is to be signed by the

⁴ The reports of the missions to Slovakia by the FVO are available under the reference number on the Directorate General (Health and Consumer Protection) internet site at: http://europa.eu.int/comm/food/fs/inspections/index_en.html

⁵ OJ L 47, 21/02/1980 p. 11 - 23

President and is due to enter into force on 1 January 2003. Council Directive 2001/89/EC⁶ of 23 October 2001 on Community measures for the control of classical swine fever is to be transposed by an Approximation Government Ordinance. This secondary legislation is with the government and has not yet been approved. Measures against classical swine fever in wild boar are published annually.

5.2. Competent authority control system

5.2.1. Management structure and responsibilities

The management structure of the State Veterinary and Food Administration in the Slovak Republic can be found in recent reports and a detailed description of their veterinary responsibilities in mission report VI/5911/95.

The SVFA administers 40 District Veterinary Offices in the eight regions of the Slovak Republic. The regional office has a limited administrative role, and the chain of command for operational purposes is direct from the SVFA to the DVFA. The SR is made up of 79 government administrative areas, with one or more (but never part) falling under the responsibility of a DVFA.

The Animal Health Section is the main department dealing with CSF, with input from the informatics and veterinary database administration division, and for legal issues, the European integration, legislation and foreign affairs department.

5.2.2. Resources

The overall SVFA budget for 2002 is 600 million SKK. Approximately 50% of this budget is related to the eradication of List A diseases. There is no specific fund set aside for disease emergencies and these costs would have to be met from the general budget.

5.2.3. Personnel

There are 1006 veterinary and food inspectors in the SVFA. In addition there are 771 contracts with private veterinarians to perform certain official duties.

5.2.4. Recruitment and training

Recruitment is ongoing, and new official veterinarians must complete the two-year training course within a 3-year period. This course includes 180 – 200 hours of instruction, which is followed by a written/oral exam (first attestation). Specialisation (animal health/food hygiene) takes place at the start of the course. Training for private veterinarians is arranged by the Chamber of Veterinary Surgeons. Training courses/activities are assigned points on the basis of their significance/duration. Participation by the veterinarian allows points to be acquired, which when totalled, should equal or exceed the annual target set by the Chamber.

⁶ OJ L 316, 01/12/2001 p. 5 - 35

5.2.5. Legal/enforcement powers

Under the Act on Veterinary Care (N° 337/1998), the SVFA can implement emergency measures in the event that there is confirmation/suspicion of CSF (in domestic pigs or wild boar). These measures include preventive vaccination, isolation of animals, movement restrictions and emergency slaughter.

5.2.6. Prioritisation of controls

An annual plan for the forthcoming year, describing all activities, is prepared by the SVFA. The main priority is the trade in live animal and animal products. The SVFA responds (e.g. the development of the CSF monitoring programme in wild and domestic pigs) to the various requirements laid down in EU and third country certification.

5.2.7. Documentation of controls

Monthly reports are to be submitted by the DVFA to the central administration. These are to be submitted via the “VET PROF” system, either “on-line” or by diskette. Once every 2 years the performance of the DVFA is checked by the CCA (examples were provided) and other “thematic” controls are made as required.

5.2.8. Laboratory service (general)

The State Veterinary Institute at Zvolen is the National Reference Laboratory for CSF. It performs the diagnostic tests in case of a suspect case and performs routine serology and virology for the domestic pig and wild boar monitoring programmes. Pre-movement serology can be performed in the testing laboratory in Bratislava. In one case (observed while checking recent serological tests performed on a 500 sow farm), a delay was incurred re-testing a positive serological result in a domestic boar when the samples were forwarded to the NRL.

5.2.9. Import controls

Animals, meat and meat products are only allowed to be imported if they come from countries/establishments listed by the EU. Prior to import, the importer has to submit a request to the SVFA and receive permission (a permit) giving specific requirements. Only live pigs for breeding and fattening are allowed and pigs destined for slaughter are prohibited. Each BIP (18) is approved by the CCA for the import of live animals and products of animal origin. At the time of the mission there had been 73 consignments of live swine imported in 2002. Most pigs came from the Czech Republic (85 %).

Documentary and identification checks are carried out at the BIP. The physical checks of the imported live pigs are undertaken at approved quarantine stations, where animals are kept for 6 weeks. The health certificate required by the SVFA must give guarantees about the health status of the country of origin (no occurrence of list A disease) and the animals (freedom from Tuberculosis, Brucellosis, Aujeszky's disease and Atrophic Rhinitis).

5.3. Farm registration

5.3.1. Description of system

There is no central database of pig holdings in the Slovak Republic at present. It is planned to introduce a central database, which will be operated by the State Breeding Institute (*Štátny Plemenársky Ústav Slovenskej Republiky*, SBI), which currently operates the national cattle database. It is hoped to start work on the central registration of pig holdings in the last quarter of 2002.

Under current Slovak legislation, operators of commercial farms are required to register with their local DVFA. 'Private keepers', persons keeping small numbers of pigs for production for themselves and their family, are not required to register with the DVFA and hence the veterinary services do not have complete information on the number and location of these holdings. Private keepers are required to register with their local village or municipal authority. The planned new central database for pig holdings will also include private keepers. The DVFA can request information on private keepers from local authorities in the event of disease outbreaks.

5.3.2. Operation of system

The mission team was able to see the register of commercial farms, as kept on computer on the SVA-SR's 'VET PROF' system, at the District offices visited. Lists of private keepers based on information obtained from village/municipal authorities were also seen at the District offices.

In one example seen of emergency vaccination within a protection zone, it was found that the number of private keepers, each having between one and three pigs, was very large (there was one sheet/village, and in some of the examples examined there were over 15 such private keepers/village).

5.4. Animal identification

5.4.1. Description of the system

In the case of pigs, individual animal identification is currently only required for breeding animals. It is applied and controlled by the SBI and is used to control pedigree animals. The identification numbers used do not identify the holding of origin.

Pigs moving to slaughter are not required to bear any identification mark. Slap marks or other methods of temporary identification are not used.

Pigs vaccinated against CSF during the 1998 to 2000 vaccination campaign are identified by a notch cut in the right ear.

5.4.2. Operation of the system

During farm visits, the mission team saw that breeding pigs were individually identified and that many of these pigs had notched right ears, indicating that they had been vaccinated against CSF.

It was noted at the slaughterhouse visited that fattening pigs bore no mark that would allow the holding of origin to be identified, although “lots” of pigs were accompanied by a veterinary certificate (see below).

5.5. Movement controls

5.5.1. Description of the system

A system of movement controls, based on veterinary certification, is in place for all movements, except movements between herds in the same ownership within the same municipality.

The veterinary certificates are provided either by official veterinarians working in the DVFAs or by private veterinarians working on a contract basis for the DVFA. A copy is retained by the DVFA of origin and the original is archived by the official services at the DVFA or slaughterhouse of destination.

Farmers are not required to keep records of movements on and off their holdings, although they are required to have a record of the number of animals actually present in their farms.

In the case of movement of breeding pigs, a number of serological tests are required for the veterinary certificate, including tests for Aujeszky’s Disease, brucellosis and, depending on the epidemiological situation, *Leptospira* and PRRS. Checks are done for Atrophic Rhinitis. A tuberculin test may be required. Details of vaccination and worming are included on the certificate. Previously a serological examination for CSF was required as part of the national monitoring programme, but this has not been obligatory since June 2002, although the DVFA can still decide to require testing. All veterinary certificates for the movement of breeding pigs issued by private veterinarians must be counter-signed by the DVFA. Following movement, breeding animals must be quarantined for 28 days prior to introduction into the new herd.

Similar testing requirements are imposed on home-reared replacement gilts, before they enter the breeding herd.

5.5.2. Operation of the system

The mission team saw examples of veterinary certificates at the slaughterhouse and farms visited. In one example seen at the slaughterhouse, which related to the movement of emergency vaccinated pigs, the number of pigs moved had been altered in pencil from 122 to 120. It was explained that this had been done at the slaughterhouse as fewer pigs than expected were moved.

At one farm visited, it was found that there was an undue delay in obtaining results of a re-test of a bought-in boar that had given a positive result to a serological test for CSF. In addition, no documentation was available to demonstrate that the boar had remained in quarantine until after the negative result was obtained.

5.6. Disease controls (CSF)

5.6.1. Wild boar

The strategy of the SVFA for the eradication of CSF has been to reduce the wild boar population in the endemic areas by increasing hunting activities⁷. (e.g. all year shooting of wild boar). The objective is to bring the density below the critical point of 0.7 per km² at which the reproduction ratio R_0 falls below 1 which should, according to the SVFA, eventually lead to the infection dying out.

The hunting association, represented by 57 local organisations, co-ordinates activities in the 1500 hunting areas (wild boar areas). In co-operation with the DVFA they estimate the number of animals per 1 km² based on a spring census and hunting data. A hunting plan is then drawn up in advance of the hunting season which is approved by the district office of the PPaLH. Detailed hunting plans were provided to the mission team. However, data was not available to show progress in reaching boar density targets.

Assessment of current disease status by district

Most serologically positive animals (identified by land registry unit and district) are found in a diagonal belt across the country with an axis running from Trenčín to Lučenec. The CA recognise two endemic areas within this belt and provided data on the total area⁸ containing all virologically positive cases. In January 2002 this area had increased slightly to 3100 km² (from 2600 km² in 2001).

Measures against CSF

On the basis of hunting data, and laboratory data provided by the NRL since 1993 (see below), the SR has adopted revised measures against CSF in wild boar from 1 February 2002 until January 2003. These are based on the measures to be applied by all users of hunting grounds in four categories of district⁹, namely a) “outbreak” districts where there was CSF in wild boar in 2001 and has been detected in 2002, b) “threatened” districts bordering “outbreak” districts, c) districts neighbouring Hungary and d) the districts in the remaining 75% of the country. Specific measures are also implemented by the SVFA in a PZ (15 km radius around a confirmed case of CSF in wild

⁷ Financial rewards are payable through the Slovak Hunting Association to the user of the hunting ground for a) each boar killed in “outbreak” or “endangered” districts, b) each killed virologically positive boar regardless of age and weight (throughout SR) and c) boars “found dead”(applicable also to non hunting land).

⁸ Straight lines are drawn between the outermost positive cases and the area of the resulting polygon is described in km².

⁹ Except for specific measures taken within the PZ, the monitoring programme is based on areas with administrative boundaries defined by the government administrative area (district). The size of these areas (79 in total) vary considerably, but are in general small (on average 630 km²).

boar). Broadly, the measures can be divided into those concerned with disease monitoring or disease control:

a) CSF monitoring programmes (wild boar)

The sampling design requires that all hunted wild boars in the districts categorised “a” –“c” above, are subject to virological analyses. In most cases a serological analysis is also performed, although samples are not always submitted. A derogation is applied to certain districts in category “d” (from February 2002), whereby virological sampling can be reduced to 20%. In 2001, of the 12,601 virological investigations performed, 43 (0.3%) were found positive. Of the 8899 serological investigations performed 485 (5.5%) were found positive. Similar results have been recorded in the first 6 months of 2002. However, this analysis is based upon a quarter of the total annual submissions as most hunting activities (excluding the measures in “outbreak” or “threatened” districts) take place from July through to December during the official hunting season.

In the event of a positive virological result, the monitoring programme has to be intensified in the affected areas. As most animals are already tested, this means the additional samples must come from an intensified hunting campaign.

b) Disease control

General measures include the all-year shooting of wild boar and destruction of all dead boars. Killed game is identified by a uniquely numbered tag issued by the PPaLH and transported in water-proof bags to the collection centre. Carcasses are accompanied by a declaration¹⁰ and only subject to release to a processing establishment by the DVFA following a negative virological test. The DVFA maintained a register, which was examined by the mission team. Movements of game in/out of the collection centre and the results of the post-mortem inspection were recorded and all wild boar had laboratory results (negative for CSF and trichinella) available prior to the issue of a movement certificate. It was noted that samples (e.g. tonsil, spleen and clotted blood) were transported to the DVFA in small plastic bags, which would be difficult to seal and could be readily perforated.

Where a wild boar was found to be virologically positive (either killed or perished) the DVFA imposes emergency measures. A protection zone is established (15 km radius) around the land register where the case was identified. All villages and hunting grounds are listed. An intensified hunting campaign is initiated and conducted in such a way that animals are not dispersed. All boar shot in the land register where the positive case was identified are to be destroyed (either by burial or rendering). In the district visited (Trenčín), in response to the detection of CSF in a wild boar in February 2002, over 200 boar had been shot and tested. Emergency measures are not lifted until 6 months have elapsed since the official confirmation of the initial positive case.

¹⁰ The hunter’s declaration provides details about the animal (including behaviour before killing), the animal origin (i.e. the hunting ground/district), tag number and certain commercial information.

Distinct emergency measures also impose movement restrictions on all domestic pigs in the PZ. This is communicated directly to commercial producers listed on the “VET PROF” system and to local mayors. In practice, movement restrictions are mainly accomplished by stopping the issue of certificates. Although some movement is permitted with the approval of the DVFA, no exceptions had been considered in the case examined.

It is the responsibility of the municipal authorities to relay the emergency measures to non-commercial pig keepers within their jurisdiction. The DVFA then carries out a census on all categories of pig holding (using information provided by the municipal administrations and their contract veterinary staff) and requires the introduction of bio-security measures (e.g. isolation from feral pigs, introduction of appropriate means of disinfection etc).

The DVFA does not clearly define or present graphically an “infected area” following cases of CSF in wild boar. However, it was explained that such an area was effectively the PZ excluding any territory (e.g. mountainous regions) which are uninhabited by wild boar.

Emergency measures in domestic pigs can be lifted after 3 weeks (as was the case in Trenčín), subject to satisfactory findings following the visits to the commercial and non-commercial pig holdings.

5.6.2. CSF control (domestic pigs)

Monitoring programme for domestic pigs

The aim of the monitoring programme is to detect latent outbreaks of CSF after the completion of vaccination in the SR in December 2000. Prior to July 2001, the CSF monitoring took place within the PZ established following the identification of CSF in wild boar. After this date the monitoring was extended to the national territory and included the testing of a) non-vaccinated breeding animals when moved or used as replacements and b) 5 samples twice/year (slaughter weight pigs) from farms supplying pigs to a slaughterhouse. The regime was changed again in June 2002 and now requires as a minimum, the testing of 5 pigs every 3 months on all commercial farms. The testing of breeding stock is now at the discretion of the DVFA, and while such testing was performed on the farms visited, the situation nationally could not be ascertained.

The NRL provided the results of serological monitoring from January to May 2002. The information was presented as District code, herd code (“VET PROF”), positive results by serology (ELISA test) and number of samples taken. To May 2002, of the 13,623 samples analysed, 139 (1.02%) were positive from 20 administrative areas. Where deemed necessary (a table was provided describing the reason for the further investigation for each sample), positive serological results were followed up with virus cultivation. Of the 219 samples tested none were positive for CSF.

In imported swine, 701 CSF ELISA tests were undertaken on 17 farms in 4 *Krajina* (Regions). All results were negative.

Disease outbreak in Domestic pigs

Classical swine fever is a notifiable disease in the SR. Measures to be taken by the DVFA in case of suspicion and occurrence of this disease are carried out according to Act N^o 337/1998 on veterinary care and the Decree of the Ministry of Agriculture of the Slovak Republic of 26 March 2001 N^o 467/2001 laying down detailed requirements for animal health protection. The mission team examined the file for the last CSF outbreak in domestic pigs in June 2001. Emergency measures were promptly imposed in response to suspicion of CSF disease and further restrictions were put in place (including 3 km PZ and 10 km SZ) following official disease confirmation on 2 July 2001 by the NRL at Zvolen. The infected “slaughter” pigs on the holding were immediately killed (“stamped out”), however, the breeding animals in the adjacent buildings were spared, as they were regarded as having adequate immunity to CSF following the cessation of routine vaccination the previous year. Piglets over 4 weeks of age and growers were vaccinated and the emergency vaccination was extended to all farms (commercial and non-commercial holdings) within the PZ. All primary vaccinations were completed by 3 July and all booster vaccinations by 17 July 2001. Tracing of animal/people movements into and out of the infected holding was documented. The epidemiological enquiry could not determine the route by which infection was introduced, however, the farm is near a wooded area where wild boar have been seen and this is regarded as the most likely source. Since the outbreak, new fences have been constructed and the wheat fields have been converted to pasture to discourage wild boar approaching the farm.

Final cleaning and disinfection was undertaken on the 26 July 2001 by the Civil Defence Unit and a declaration was provided to confirm this. On 10 August 2001, the CA notified the OIE that all restrictions had been lifted in accordance with national legislation. The CA acknowledged, however, that restrictions had remained in place requiring slaughter of vaccinated animals under the control of the DVFA and subsequent processing and heat treatment of the meat. These restrictions were finally lifted on 4 July 2002, when all vaccinated animals had been slaughtered.

5.6.3. Swill feeding

To date, the CA has approved only 2 swill processing premises. Bolied kitchen waste originating on a non-commercial holding can, however, be fed to “fattening” pigs if destined for own consumption. Compliance on commercial holdings is checked by the relevant inspectors of the DVFA and so far no infringements have been detected.

The SVFA has prepared and submitted to the government the proposal for the “approximation regulation” on the measures for the control of CSF, transposing Council Directive 2001/89/EC and includes the provision by which the feeding of swill is prohibited. The approximation regulation is expected to come into force on 1 January 2003.

5.6.4. Slaughterhouse controls

The slaughterhouse visited maintained comprehensive records detailing the intake of pigs, ante-mortem inspection and their archives contained all movement permits and certificates (e.g. for emergency vaccinated animals).

Procedures were in place to deal with suspect cases of CSF detected either at ante or post mortem inspection. There were also well documented procedures for the segregation of emergency vaccinated pigs and the subsequent heat treatment of meat and processing into meat products. There were no specific measures in place to stop meat from cull sows (vaccinated prior to December 2000) being used for meat products which may not receive a heat treatment.

There were documented cleaning procedures. However, the disinfectant in use did not list CSF and contact times were not respected. The satisfactory cleaning of vehicles is confirmed by nominated staff from the establishment, but is not under direct veterinary supervision.

5.6.5. The FMD and CSF contingency plans

A contingency plan for Classical Swine Fever was prepared by the CCA in co-operation with TAIEX. It was completed and came into force at the beginning of 2002, although elaboration began in December 2000.

In general it follows the headings provided in the Guidelines for Preparing Contingency Plans for Epidemic Diseases produced by the European Commission services (ref. VI/5211/95). Not all of the details mentioned in the guidelines are covered in the national plan, and one heading in the guidelines (“Resources required for disease emergencies” (equipment and facilities)) is omitted. However, District Veterinary Officers are responsible for adapting the contingency plan established at central level for the local level and examples seen in the DVFAs included the missing details.

The plan is supplemented by a Manual of Instructions and a Contingency Plan for Emergency Vaccination.

The measures currently foreseen do not conform fully to EU requirements, since the payment of compensation by the State is voluntary. The new Draft Veterinary Act includes provision for full compensation. The contingency plan does not reflect the current arrangements but anticipates the changes that will occur under the New Veterinary Act.

In addition, one of the training actions mentioned in the contingency plan (twice-yearly training on epidemiology and clinical signs of CSF for government workers) has not yet been implemented.

Disease awareness promotion actions aimed at farmers and the associated industries were not specified in detail in the national or local plans seen. Promotion of disease awareness is left to the initiative of the DVFA. The mission team saw no examples of formal actions, such as records of

meetings with farmers/associated industry representatives or publicity leaflets. However, a system of bi-annual visits to farms to check bio-security measures in place was introduced last year in the context of concerns about foot-and-mouth disease. Examples of reports of these visits were seen by the mission team.

A simulation exercise for foot-and-mouth disease was recently held in co-operation with TAIEX. In addition two simulation exercises were held in 2001, in co-operation with the Civil Defence Unit. It is planned to hold annual exercises in the future.

5.6.6. *Slaughter and rendering*

The SVFA has a 'liquidation unit' for the slaughter of pigs in the event of a disease outbreak. It consists of a mobile slaughtering unit, with its own generator. This unit can slaughter up to 1000 pigs per day. There are specific employees trained in the operation of the unit.

There are three rendering plants in the Slovak Republic. The largest has a daily capacity of 250 tonnes, the two smaller have capacities of 120 tonnes each. One of the smaller plants renders high risk material. If necessary, one of the others could be converted to high risk rendering, on a temporary basis. High risk material is incinerated after rendering.

The veterinary legislation imposes an obligation on the renderers to accept carcasses etc. for rendering in the event of a disease outbreak.

Rendering is the normal method for carcase disposal. Burial can be used but is considered to be a last resort.

5.6.7. *Diagnostic laboratories*

Since 1993 the State Veterinary Institute at Zvolen has undertaken CSF diagnostic work. From 1995 it has participated in ring tests organised by the Community Reference Laboratory in Hannover and it was formally authorised as the NRL for CSF¹¹ at that time.

The CSF section of the NRL has been subject to considerable renovation and is nearing completion. Most of the laboratory equipment has been replaced in the last few years. Preparations are in hand to seek accreditation from SNAS for the upgraded CSF laboratory at the end of 2003.

The NRL described the epidemiological situation and occurrence of CSF in wild boar and domestic swine (including vaccination campaigns) in Slovakia over the last 9 years¹². They also provided summary data showing a) wild boar population and geographical distribution, b) number and location (using the land register number) of serological and virological investigations in

¹¹ The most recent ring test was completed in March 2002 with satisfactory results.

¹² An overview covering the period December 1993 - April 2001 is available in the report on the annual meeting of the national swine fever laboratories, Lindholm, Denmark (17-18 May 2001). SANCO/3948/2001.

wild boar with results, including phenotyping (see also mission report DG(SANCO/3202/2001), c) the results of the national serological monitoring programme for domestic swine, and the follow-up (with negative results) for those initially positive on serology.

The Institute has more than 20 staff in the virology section with the necessary skills to undertake CSF diagnostic work. At present they have the capacity to undertake 500 virological examinations/day and between 2000-4000 serological tests/day. Positive results are announced immediately to the relevant DVFA and the SVFA.

5.7. Certification

In the Slovak Republic there is a control system in place for export and import of live animals and products of animal origin, based on veterinary certification. After a consignment arrives in the SR, a copy of the required certificate has to be sent to competent DVFA by the official veterinarian within 7 days, so that it can be archived.

For exports, the DVFA must send a certified copy of the completed certificate to the SVFA within one day. The SVFA transmits the relevant coded message to the ANIMO system. On 1 July 2002 Slovakia joined the ANIMO system on a voluntary basis. At the time of the mission 4 units (3 BIPs and the SVFA, Bratislava) are working with the ANIMO system.

The mission team was told that models of the relevant certificates are now available on the SVFA Intranet site. A call is made from the DVFA to the SVFA to obtain a unique certificate number.

6. CLOSING MEETING

A closing meeting was held on 19 July with the central CA. At this meeting the main findings and conclusions of the mission were presented by the inspection team. The CCA generally agreed with the findings and conclusions of the mission, and made a number of comments which are summarised below:

- They regarded their weakest point as being the lack of individual identification of pigs.
- Complete diagnostic services are to be provided in 2 institutes. Consideration will be given to increasing the level of sampling (CSF serology) required on large farms¹³.
- With respect to the contingency plan, farmer compensation following compulsory slaughter will be addressed from 2003 on the basis of new legislation. They accepted the need to implement training as outlined in the plan.

¹³ Previously, all gilt replacements (home produced or bought in) were tested in addition to the 5 “slaughter weight” pigs tested every 6 months. The new regime (see chapter 5.6.2) may significantly reduce the proportion of animals tested, particularly on large farms.

- The use of disinfectant is to be reviewed and they gave assurances that supervision by the CA will be implemented.

7. CONCLUSIONS

7.1. Transposition of EU legislation and national legislation.

National legislation does not prohibit the feeding of swill to pigs, although an authorisation is required if fed to pigs on a commercial holding. An approximation regulation due to come into force on 1 Jan 2003 (transposing Council Directive 2001/89/EC) will ban all swill feeding.

7.2. Competent authority control system

The CCA has a clear structure and direct chain of command. Controls were adequately documented in the sector evaluated.

7.3. Farm registration, animal identification and movement control

Farm registration

The SVFA has access to a list of registered commercial farms and can obtain details of small holdings from municipal authorities when required. Work on implementing central holding registration with the State Breeding Institute for pig holdings has not yet begun, and new legislation is required to introduce this requirement.

Animal identification

The current identification system for pigs is only for breeding purposes and does not meet EU requirements. It was stated that an animal identification system meeting EU requirements would be introduced, but no detailed plans were presented to the mission team.

Movement control

A movement control system based on veterinary certificates is in place. On-farm records of movements on and off holdings are currently not required. The veterinary certification system for movement control is to be retained and the requirements for on-farm records of movements, births and deaths are to be introduced in 2003. In addition, the pig movement control database (as required by Article 18 of Council Directive 64/432/EEC) has yet to be introduced.

7.4. Disease controls (CSF)

Disease control programmes

There are nation-wide disease surveillance programmes for both domestic pigs and wild boar. These programmes provide detailed information on the disease situation at local level. However, wild boar “infected areas” are not defined as foreseen in Council Directive 80/217/EEC.

Wild boar control programmes have been implemented. However, further (ongoing) analysis of the data is required to confirm that targets (wild boar/km²) are being achieved.

Disease control in the past has included emergency vaccination and partial “stamping out” on affected premises.

Slaughterhouse controls

Slaughterhouse controls permit the separate slaughter/processing of pigs (e.g. those subject to emergency vaccination). However, this cannot be readily verified in the absence of individual identification. At present, fresh meat (albeit destined for meat products/preparations) can be produced from animals vaccinated prior to December 2000. Supervision and operational procedures need to be improved to ensure the satisfactory disinfection of livestock vehicles.

Contingency plans

A national contingency plan for CSF has been developed and local plans based on it have been developed at DVFA level. The plans are generally satisfactory although some inaccuracies were noted.

National Reference Laboratory (Zvolen)

The National Reference Laboratory at Zvolen has participated successfully in ring tests organised by the Community Reference Laboratory and has an adequate number of trained staff to undertake both routine screening and testing in response to one or more outbreaks of CSF.

8. OVERVIEW

The SR has developed comprehensive monitoring and control strategies for CSF in wild boar and domestic pigs, supported by a dedicated virology section at the NRL (Zvolen). There is a need to clarify how “infected” areas are defined so that the best use can be made of the data already available to the SR. Nonetheless, the last outbreak of CSF in domestic pigs occurred over 1 year ago and laboratory data indicates that there is no CSF virus currently circulating in commercial herds.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1. To the Slovak authorities:

- 9.1.1 Introduce a programme for the implementation of the provisions of Council Directive 2001/89/EC, including a ban on swill feeding.
- 9.1.2 Introduce a system for the identification for pigs which respects the relevant provisions of Council Directive 92/102/EEC¹⁴ and requires that movements on/off farms are recorded.

¹⁴ Council Directive 92/102/EEC of 27 November 1992 on the identification and registration of animals. OJ L 355, 05/12/1992 p. 32 - 36

- 9.1.3 Define clearly wild boar “infected areas” as foreseen in Council Directive 80/217/EEC.
- 9.1.4 Introduce a system to monitor progress in reaching the boar density targets set by the SVFA.
- 9.1.5 Clarify the “stamping out” procedures to be adopted on infected holdings.
- 9.1.6 Ensure that meat from all vaccinated animals (i.e. including cull sows/boars) is identified and subject to an approved heat treatment.
- 9.1.7 Update the contingency plan in light of this mission’s findings and conclusions.

To submit, within two months of receiving the final report, an action plan indicating the action proposed or already taken by the Competent Authorities to address the conclusions and recommendations of this report. This plan should include deadlines by which the proposed action will be completed.

9.2. To the Commission Services:

- 9.2.1 To consider recognising the Slovak Republic as free of CSF in domestic pigs and its placing on the list of third countries from which it is permitted to export pig-meat to the European Union, subject to receipt of a satisfactory action plan, as foreseen above.

ADDENDUM

Competent authority’s response to the draft report

In a letter dated 26 September 2002 responding to the draft report, the Slovak Authorities described the actions that have been/will be taken in response to the above recommendations:

- 9.1.1. A proposed timetable of activities:
 - The new Veterinary Framework Act was approved in the National Council of the Slovak Republic on 19 June 2001. The Act will come into force on 1 January 2003. The new Act allows the harmonisation of the veterinary legislation of the Slovak Republic with the “acquis” of the European Union in the veterinary field.
 - The full transposition of the Council Directive 2001/89/EC, including a ban of swill feeding will be achieved by the end of 2002 through the Governmental Order. It will enter into force on 1 January 2003.
- 9.1.2. The Competent Authority stated that, in co-operation with the Ministry of Agriculture of the Slovak Republic and the State Breeding Institute of the Slovak Republic, they have developed a project which will allow the:

- Implementation of harmonised legislation in the field of animal identification and registration.
- Establishment of a database serving as a register of pig holdings, based on experience gained during the development of the cattle register.
- Establishment of an animal registration system in individual pig holdings.
- Establishment of animal marking and animal identification system, including the monitoring of their movements.
- Establishment of the new veterinary information system in compliance with the identification and registration system.

Plan for the implementation of the project:

- Duration of project: 6 months “Twinning Light Facility”, 4 months “Service Supply”.
- Anticipated beginning date: Fourth quarter of the year 2002.
- Anticipated completion of the project: Fourth quarter of the year 2003.

9.1.3. The Competent Authority defined the “infected area” as one where the virus of classical swine fever circulates in wild boars. The size of the infected area is based on:

- Results of epizootological examination and geographical distribution of the disease.
- Occurrence of wild boar population in the area.
- Existence of natural or artificial barriers to wild boar movements.

At present, the infected area includes the territory of districts:

- With CSF in the wild boar population in 2001 - Piešťany, Bánovce nad Bebravou, Nové Mesto nad Váhom, Partizánske, Trenčín, Nitra, Topoľčany, Zlaté Moravce, Žarnovica and, where CSF has been recorded in the wild boar population in 2002 - Zvolen;
- At risk of CSF – Galanta, Hlohovec, Trnava, Ilava, Myjava, Prievidza, Levice, Nové Zámky, Šaľa, Banská Štiavnica, Žiar nad Hronom – neighbouring to districts with CSF occurrence.

9.1.4 The Competent Authority stated that, by the end of November 2002, it will prepare a method by which the reduction in the wild boar population density can be monitored, based on the co-operation of respective District Veterinary and Food Administrations (DVFA) and PPaLH. The basis of the method will be the re-evaluation of breeding plans and the hunting of the wild boar population in infected areas, leading to an increased hunting

effort which will reduce the population density to 0.7 wild boar/km². The operation of the hunting plan will be regularly controlled (monthly) at the meeting between representatives of DVFA and PPaLH.

- 9.1.5. The Competent Authority stated that, in future outbreaks of classical swine fever, “stamping out” will be performed in compliance with Council Directive 2001/89/EC.
- 9.1.6. The Competent Authority stated that they had developed an instruction (16/9/2002), which was sent to the Regional Veterinary and Food Administrations (RVFAs) and District Veterinary and Food Administrations (DVFAs). This introduced the isolation procedures for all animals vaccinated against classical swine fever, including culled sows/boars at a slaughterhouse, and subsequent heat-treatment of the meat obtained from these animals and its processing into meat products, in a manner equivalent to that performed for emergency vaccinated pigs in a protection zone. The above mentioned Instruction is to be implemented by the RVFA and DVFA SR on 1/11/2002.
- 9.1.7. The Competent Authority stated that, from 3 – 5 September 2002, meetings were held between the SVFA of SR, RVFAs and DVFAs in which the SVFA of SR provided a report based on the FVO mission. All participants received a translation of this report. The SVFA is to update the contingency plans at central and local level (December 2002). The adoption of a new Veterinary Act and the Government Order of the Slovak Republic by which the transposition of Council Directive 2001/89/EC will be performed, requires the updating of the respective parts of the contingency plan. An update will be also be performed on the section governing compensation for damages.

There is also to be an update of plans of postgraduate studies of official veterinarians (September 2002). Training in epidemiology and clinical disease signs will be included. Training will be planned for the spring and autumn period. The first training is to be performed in October-November 2002.