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DG(SANCO)/7231/2004 – MR Final

FINAL REPORT OF A MISSION
CARRIED OUT IN FRANCE
FROM 22 TO 26 MARCH 2004
REGARDING ANIMAL WELFARE
ON HOLDINGS WITH LAYING HENS
AND DURING LONG DISTANCE TRANSPORT

Please note that clarifications provided by the French Authorities in response to a draft version of this report are given as footnotes, in bold, italic, type to the relevant part of the report



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ABBREVIATIONS & SPECIAL TERMS USED IN THE REPORT

ANIMO	Animal Movement System adopted following Commission Decision 91/398/EEC of 19 July 1991, OJ L 221 of 9.8.1991, p. 30
CA	Competent Authority
CCA	Central Competent Authority
DDAF	Agriculture and Forestry Departmental Directorate (<i>Direction départementale de l'agriculture et de la forêt</i>)
DDCCRF	Departmental Directorates for Competition, Consumers and the suppression of Fraud (<i>Directions départementales de la Concurrence, de la Consommation et de la Répression des Fraudes</i>)
DDSV	Departmental Directorate for the Veterinary Services (<i>Direction départementale des Services Vétérinaires</i>)
EC	European Community
EDE	<i>Etablissement départemental de l'élevage</i>
EEC	European Economic Community
EU	European Union
FVO	Food and Veterinary Office
MAAPAR	Ministry of Agriculture, Food, Fishery and Rural Affairs (<i>Ministère de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation, de la Pêche et des Affaires Rurales</i>)
MINEFI	Ministry of Economy and Finance (<i>Ministère de l'Economie et des Finances</i>)

1. INTRODUCTION

The mission took place in France from 22 to 26 March 2004, as part of the planned mission programme of the Food and Veterinary Office (FVO). The inspection team comprised two inspectors from the FVO and one Member State expert.

An opening meeting was held on 9 February 2004 with representatives of the central competent authority (CCA), the Ministry of Agriculture, Food, Fisheries and Rural Affairs, (*Ministère de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation, de la Pêche et des Affaires Rurales*, MAAPAR), and the Ministry of Economy and Finance (*Ministère de l'Economie et des Finances*, MINEFI). At this meeting, the objectives of, and itinerary for the mission were confirmed, and additional information required for the satisfactory completion of the mission requested by the mission team.

Throughout the mission, the mission team was accompanied by a representative of MAAPAR.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE MISSION

The primary objective of the mission was to evaluate the measures put in place, and their application giving effect to:

- 1) Council Directive 1999/74/EC^{1,2} on the protection of laying hens;
- 2) Commission Directive 2002/4/EC³ which establishes a system for registering every production sites in relation to the method of production;
- 3) Commission Decision 2000/50/EC⁴, which establishes a system for reporting the results of inspections.

The second objective of the mission was to evaluate controls of route plans for long distance transport of animals.

In pursuit of these objectives, the following meetings were held and sites visited:

CA meetings		Comments
Central	2	Opening and closing meetings
Local	2	Departmental Directorate for the Veterinary Services (<i>Direction départementale des Services Vétérinaires</i> , hereafter DDSV) of Le Mans in Sarthe (72) and of Rennes in Ille-et-Vilaine (35)
Live animal sites		Comments
Holdings with laying hens	4	Two farms with cage system (unenriched cages) and two farms with alternative systems (free range).

¹ Legal acts quoted in this report refer, where applicable, to the last amended version.

² Council Directive 1999/74/EC of 19 July 1999, laying down minimum standards for the protection of laying hens, OJ L 203, 3.8.1999, P.53 (hereafter: Directive 99/74/EC).

³ Commission Directive 2002/4/EC of 30 January 2002 on the registration of establishments keeping laying hens, covered by Council Directive 1999/74/EC, OJ L 30, 31.1.2002, p.44 (hereafter: Directive 2002/4/EC).

⁴ Commission Decision 2000/50/EC of 17 December 1999 concerning minimum requirements for the inspection of holdings on which animals are kept for farming purposes, OJ L 19, 25.01.2000, p. 51 (hereafter: Decision 2000/50/EC)

3. LEGAL BASIS OF THE MISSION

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

- Article 9 of Directive 1999/74/EC;
- Article 10 of Council Directive 91/628/EEC of 19 November 1991 on the protection of animals during transport and amending Directives 90/425/EEC and 91/496/EEC (hereafter: Directive 91/628/EEC)⁵;
- Commission Decision 98/139/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 the Member States⁶.

4. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

This was the first FVO mission to France to evaluate checks of laying hens. However, the following previous FVO missions are relevant: animal welfare on farm (pigs and calves only), DG(SANCO)1263/2000; animal welfare during transport and at slaughter, DG(SANCO)8554/2002; eggs and egg products, DG(SANCO)3432/2001 (hereafter: reports 1263/2000, 8554/2002 and 3432/2001). In particular concerning route plans, which are also covered in the scope of the current mission, report 8554/2002 concluded that they were generally inadequately controlled.

The reports of these missions are available under their reference number on the DG Health and Consumer Protection website:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/food/fs/inspections/vi/reports/france/index_en.html

5. MAIN FINDINGS

5.1. Competent authority

The structure of the competent authority for animal welfare is described in report 1263/2000, with additional information in reports 3432/2001 and 8554/2002.

Regarding tasks relevant to the laying hen sector, the Agriculture and Forestry Directorate (*Direction départementale de l'agriculture et de la forêt*, DDAF), has an agency responsible for farm registration in the *départements* (*Etablissement départemental de l'élevage*, EDE).

Both MAAPAR and MINEFI are responsible for the implementation of Regulation (EC) No. 2295/2003⁷. Controls at local level are carried out by the local services of MINEFI, the Departmental Directorates for Competition, Consumers and the suppression of Fraud (*Directions*

⁵ OJ L 340 of 11.12.1991, p. 17

⁶ OJ L 38 of 12.02.1998, p. 10

⁷ Commission Regulation (EC) No. 2295/2003 of 23 December 2003 introducing detailed rules for implementing Council Regulation (EEC) No. 1907/90 on certain marketing standards for eggs, OJ L 24.12.2003, p. 16.

départementales de la Concurrence, de la Consommation et de la Répression des Fraudes, DDCCRF).

5.2. Legislation

The requirements of Directive 1999/74/EC have been transposed into French legislation (*Arrêté du 1.02.2002 établissant les normes minimales relatives à la protection des poules pondeuses*), which entered into force on 7.2.2002.

Directive 2002/04/EC set a deadline of 31.03.2003 to bring the provisions into force through national legislation. The FVO mission team noted that:

- Directive 2002/4/EC was partly transposed into French legislation (*Décret 2003-1275 du 23 décembre 2003 relatif à l'identification des établissements d'élevage de poules pondeuses*), which entered into force on 29 December 2003.
- Farm registration (part 1 of the Annex part of Directive 2002/04/EC) was already covered by the national legislation on the prophylaxis of *Salmonella enteritidis* and *S. typhimurium* in laying hens⁸.
- French legislation (*Décret 2003-1275*) also indicated that a ministerial order would detail the provisions for creating a national database, but this was not yet published at the time of the FVO mission.
- The CCA issued an instruction (*Ordre de Service*) on 12.12.2003 to the DDSVs and to the DDAFs regarding the allocation of the identification code as set in part 2 of the Annex to the Directive. This sought to fill the legislative gap due to the incomplete transposition of Directive 2002/4/EC.

5.3. Measures supplementary to checks

An Animal Welfare Committee, convening representatives from the DDSV and other relevant CAs, police, animal welfare associations, and professional associations had been established in each *département* on the basis of national Decree No. 2002-229⁹ of 2002. In Sarthe, this Committee had a sub-group on livestock, which had the task of facilitating the implementation of animal welfare policies on farm, at slaughter and during transport. To date it had been more concerned with the interaction of the various bodies in the decision-making process in cases where there was a total breakdown of management on a farm. In Ille-et-Vilaine, although a Committee had been established, so far, it had not met.

In Sarthe, the Environment Service (*Service Protection de la Nature et Installations classées*), responsible for the authorisation of new buildings and extension of livestock establishments, consults the Animal Health and

⁸ Article 4 de l'arrêté 26.10.1998 relatif à la lutte contre les infections à *Salmonella enteritidis* ou *Salmonella typhimurium* dans les troupeaux de l'espèce *Gallus gallus* en filière ponte d'œufs de consommations (as amended).

⁹ Décret n. 2002-229 du 20 février 2002 relatif à l'instauration d'un comité départemental de la protection animale et aux manifestations de vente d'animaux.

Welfare Service regarding the respect of health and welfare requirements, before giving its approval.

In Ille-et-Vilaine a special form (*fiche de liaison*) is used to report and exchange information between Services.

The instruction of January 2003 regarding the new requirements for laying hens issued by the CCA to the DDSVs had also been sent to professional associations. The farmers met had received information on the legislative requirements through their professional associations.

5.4. Marketing standards

EU marketing requirements provide a means whereby the consumer is informed of the farming method for all purchases of eggs. From 1.1.2004 eggs must be stamped with a code identifying the farming method and the farm of origin. The farming method must be indicated also on the packages. It was noted that an internal instruction from MINEFI of 16.02.2004 pointed out that due to the delay in registering farms, no demands or sanctions should be made for failure to comply with this requirement of Commission Regulation (EC) No. 2295/2003.

5.5. Registration of farms

Directive 2002/04/EC establishes that all laying hen holdings covered by the scope of Directive 1999/74/EC are registered and identified by a unique number, including a distinguishing number indicating the farming method. The Directive set a deadline of 31.05.2003 for completing this registration.

The instruction of 12.12.2003 sent from MAPAAR to DDSVs and to DDAFs indicates that:

- EDE sends a form (produced by the CCA) to the laying hen keepers, on the basis of a list produced by DDSVs, to be completed by keepers under their responsibility and returned to EDE. This declaration includes the details of the establishment and of the keeper and owner, as set in part 1 of the Annex to Directive 2002/4/EC.
- EDE provides a distinguishing number to each establishment, on the basis of the keeper's declaration, indicating the farming method, the Country code and the identification of the establishment (as laid down in part 2 of the Annex to Directive 2002/4/EC). The form completed with this code is sent both to the keeper and to DDSV.
- EDE keeps a register of these establishments.

The CCA confirmed that the allocation of the distinguishing number and the registration of farms according to Directive 2002/4/EC was not yet completed. During the mission the inspection team noted that:

- The allocation of codes was not yet completed in both *départements*.
- Two of the four farmers visited had received the new distinguishing number a few days before the FVO inspection.

5.6. System of inspections

5.6.1. Training and guidance

The CCA explained that the inspectors of the DDSVs (veterinarians and technicians) receive an initial training and each year a refresher course on different subjects, including animal welfare. However, documentation regarding specific training on laying hens welfare was not provided. A representative of the CCA indicated that this training was primarily to inform inspectors of legal requirements and to provide a degree of knowledge of the scientific basis, in particular regarding animal behaviour¹⁰.

Instructions have been issued and comprehensive checklists have been drawn up for carrying out inspections of the different systems. The DDSVs elaborated and adapted the checklists issued by the CCA.

5.6.2. Selection of farms

An instruction from the CCA of 5.12.2001 provides guidelines (checklists) for the animal welfare inspections at farms and indicates a target of 5%, with a minimum of five establishments, in each *département*.

The mission team noted that:

- The instruction does not provide criteria for the selection of the farms, which are usually carried out as part of a visit for other purposes.
- In Sarthe the technician had made the selection of farms for inspections in 2002 and 2003. 12 inspections were carried out in 2002 (13.5%) and 17 in 2003 (17.9%). One holding with cages was inspected in the last two years. In this *département*, 93.7% of holdings operate alternative systems and participate to a quality assurance scheme. A representative of the DDSV indicated that the additional checks performed by two quality assurance control bodies ensure better compliance, thus facilitating their job.
- In Ille-et-Vilaine the selection of farms in the last two years was both random and targeted. The results of previous inspections as well as information from other services were taken into consideration. Another criterion was the number of animals declared when a new flock was introduced, which was systematically checked against the maximum number of hens permitted for that building. This declaration and the commitment to comply with certain health rules are necessary to get the health charter (*charte sanitaire*). This is a national agreement between the farmer and the CA in the framework of the prevention of Salmonella infections and which permits financial compensation by the State if stamping out of the animals is needed. The maximum number of hens had been established for all caged units after an extensive survey carried out in 1996.

¹⁰ *In their response to the draft report, the French CA noted that training for certain technical details for this sort of inspection is on-the-job.*

- In Ille-et-Vilaine, three farms had been inspected in 2003 out of the five planned, and five in 2002, of which one alternative system. In this *département* cage systems are prevalent (57.9%).
- A new instruction updated with the amended legislation is being prepared by the CCA.

5.6.3. *Inspections of farms*

An instruction of 17.01.2003 provides interpretation of some technical requirements of the legislation, in particular regarding:

- The deadlines for the application of the different requirements;
- The usable area in alternative systems;
- The calculation of the area in unenriched cages.

In relation to requirements common to all production systems, the inspection team noted that:

- In Sarthe each technician is dedicated and specialised in both health and welfare aspects. The technician performs the inspections alone, and a second inspector is available as a backup. An overall high level of inspection expertise is available through this system, but when certain criteria were not considered of importance by this inspector they were not sufficiently addressed.
- In Ille-et-Vilaine one technician specialised in animal welfare in all sectors and a second technician specialised in health requirements in the poultry sector, carry out the inspections together. The inspector for animal welfare was relatively new to this field and a representative from the DDSV pointed out that there was high turnover of technical staff and therefore there were difficulties in maintaining the necessary staff to accomplish checks with two inspectors. The two inspectors working together did not always have the same level of expertise in making the practical checks as the inspector in Sarthe, but were consistent in ensuring that all criteria were addressed¹¹.
- The checklists used covered the requirements of Directive 1999/74/EC, providing additional guidance for the calculation of stocking densities, feeding and watering minimum requirements, nest and littered areas.
- The lack of an alarm system (point 13 of the Annex to Directive 98/58/EC) was highlighted by the technician during the FVO inspection but never raised in his previous inspection reports of this farm. An instruction from DDSV from 1982 included this as a requirement.

¹¹ *In their response to the draft report, the French CA noted that the inspector normally responsible was on leave at the time of the FVO mission and that it was therefore the back-up arrangement which was seen by the inspection team.*

- Insufficient light levels in two caged systems and the interruption of the period of darkness in an alternative system, were not identified as deficiencies in the farms visited (point 3 of the Annex to Directive 1999/74/EC). The checklists prompt inspectors to verify these details but on the spot these criteria were not adequately checked. The CA considered the low light level necessary to prevent feather pecking.

Cage systems

In relation to checks of traditional cages, it was noted that:

- Five farms in one *département* brought into service unenriched cages after 1.1.2003, which is forbidden by Article 5(2) of Directive 1999/74/EC. Representatives from the DDSV stated that the supplier was not able to complete the installation before that date because of the high number of requests for such work. The DDSV had considered that it was sufficient to have ordered these before 31.12.2002. However, in the farm visited, although the new cages had been ordered in May 2002, the producer had only allowed a minimal time to complete the work, as the hens were removed on 13.10.2002, at the end of the laying period. The refurbishment started on 16.01.2003 and was completed after three months, when the new flock was introduced (19.4.2003). On this farm two cages had been set up with some of the features of an enriched cage (Article 6 of Directive 1999/74/EC) as an experiment by the farmer.
- In one *département* the inspector had difficulties in taking the measurements of the cages, in particular the slope of the floor, but paid attention to exclude the feed troughs and the non-waste deflection plates in the calculation of the area (Article 5(1)(1) of Directive 1999/74/EC). Previous checks carried out in this *département* indicated that excess stocking densities were detected. In one case where 25% overstocking was detected the farmer had been given three months to take remedial action.
- The inspectors did not indicate that the equipment the keeper should use to inspect the higher tier of cages was either not used daily or was inadequate for that purpose (points 1 and 6 of the Annex to Directive 1999/74/EC)¹².

Alternative system

- In one alternative system, blinkers (“spectacles”) had been applied to the beak with a plastic pin perforating the nasal septum. The private veterinarian prescribed this device as a means to solve the problem of cannibalism, after other attempts such as installing high density feed blocks to distract the birds proved ineffective. EU and national legislation forbids all mutilations, apart from debeaking (Chapter C(12) of the *Arrêté* of 01.02.2002 and point 8 of the Annex to Directive 1999/74/EC). A recommendation of the Council of Europe, adopted on 28.11.1995 by the Standing Committee of the European Convention on the Protection of Animals kept for Farming Purposes, forbids

¹² *In their response to the draft report, the French CA did not consider the mobile equipment inadequate and noted that it is difficult to judge on the actual frequency of its use.*

the use of blinkers involving the penetration or other mutilations of the nasal septum (points 1 and 6 of Article 22)¹³.

- In Sarthe, which is a *département* with a high percentage of farms with alternative systems, the experienced technician had no difficulties in taking the necessary measurements and making his conclusions. In Ille-et-Vilaine, due to lack of experience regarding this system, the inspection was mainly carried out by a veterinary inspector and not by the technicians who are normally responsible for such inspections¹⁴.

5.6.4. Reporting system

Decision 2000/50/EC requires a report to the Commission every two years on the results of inspections, including checks of holdings with laying hens. The CCA submitted a report of checks performed in 2000 and 2001. The deadline for the submission on the outcome of controls made in 2002 and 2003, which include for the first time those on the basis of Directive 1999/74/EC, is April 2004. The inspection team noted that:

- 44 out of 100 DDSV had submitted to the CCA the results of the inspections performed in 2002 on laying hen farms.
- At the time of the FVO inspection, a low percentage of DDSVs had submitted the results of the inspections for 2003, which were due by the end of February 2004. The CCA issued a reminder to the DDSVs on this regard on 11.03.04¹⁵.

Concerning the results in the two *départements* visited:

- In Sarthe no irregularities had been detected in 2002-2003.
- In Ille-et-Vilaine, in 2003, irregularities had been detected in three farms (overstocking, lack of alarm and lack of registers) and one written warning issued. In 2002 irregularities had been detected in four farms, and one written warning issued.
- In neither *départements* visited had any sanctioning been initiated. In a farm where multiple deficiencies regarding health and welfare requirements had been noted, the DDSV refused to sign the health charter until shortcomings had been addressed. The CCA, in the summary of inspections for 2002, highlighted to DDSVs that certain multiple and serious deficiencies only received a written warning.

¹³ http://www.coe.int/T/E/Legal_affairs/Legal_co-operation/Biological_safety,_use_of_animals/Farming/P76_4027

¹⁴ *In their response to the draft report, the French CA noted that the inspector normally responsible was on leave at the time of the FVO mission.*

¹⁵ *In their response to the draft report, the French CA noted that two thirds of French départements responded to the annual survey.*

5.7. Control of route plans

Report 8554/2002 recommended “that a system is developed for the control of route plans so that they are approved only after they have been correctly completed and are returned after the journey (Article 5(d)(ii) of Directive 91/628/EEC)”. This recommendation had not been specifically addressed by the CCA. A representative from the CCA pointed out that previous instructions from 1998 and 2000 required the DDSVs to check how route plans have been drawn up.

The FVO team selected a random sample of consignments at the DDSV offices and noted that:

- In Ille-et-Vilaine, four route plans out of five consignments selected had been approved although important details such as a complete itinerary, the estimated duration of the journey and the place of destination, were missing. The itinerary for a consignment of bovines to Lebanon, which would be eligible for a payment of export refunds¹⁶, did not include the details of the journey after the port of Sète in France. In relation to checks at exit points, a representative of the CCA indicated that inspectors have to seek the permission of the captain to go on board the ship, but that such checks had become easier to carry out since the new regulation entered into force (paragraph 2(b) of Article 2 of Regulation (EC) No. 639/2003).
- In Sarthe six route plans for six consignments selected at random had been approved although they lacked important details. Representatives from the DDSV stated that it was not mandatory to verify the feasibility of the journeys and that the only legal obligation was to ensure the presence of a route plan. Article 3(1)(aa) of Directive 91/628/EC requires Member States to ensure that journey times, which should be indicated on all route plans, are met.
- In both *départements* most route plans had not been returned after the journey. There was no procedure in place to ensure that transporters comply with this obligation.

6. CONCLUSIONS

6.1. Legislation

The delayed transposition of Directive 2002/4/EC, and consequently its delayed implementation, means that a system for tracing eggs for human consumption to the method of production is not yet in place.

6.2. Measures supplementary to inspections

- 1) Measures such as the circulation of CCA instructions have ensured an adequate level of knowledge and distribution of information. The involvement of professional associations in Animal Welfare Committees of the *départements* is potentially useful in further disseminating information to the laying hen sector.

¹⁶ Commission Regulation (EC) No 639/2003 of 9.4.2003 laying down detailed rules pursuant to Council Regulation (EC) No 1254/1999 as regards requirements for the granting of export refunds related to the welfare of live bovine animals during transport, OJ L93 of 10.4.2003 (as amended)

- 2) The exchange of information between environmental and animal health and welfare services represents an additional measure to ensure that requirements are respected.

6.3. Registration of farms

Although registration of farms was being completed in the *départements* visited, not all farmers had received their allocated code as a result of the delays in legislation and consequent implementation.

6.4. System of inspections

- 1) Although the checklists provided by the CCA and adapted by the DDSVs represent a good support for inspectors, training has been insufficient to ensure that practical checks were adequate for all requirements.
- 2) The target set by the CCA for number of farms inspected had been exceeded in one *département* but not reached in the other. The reason for the slight under-performance in this *département* was the turnover of suitably qualified staff. The use of information on farms supplied for other purposes represents a good method of targeting farms for inspection.
- 3) Both systems of inspection, whereby a technician either covers all related work in the poultry sector or specialises in animal welfare in all sectors, have their strengths. There was insufficient exchange of information between DDSVs on the practicalities of inspection and thus experience and expertise is not sufficiently shared.
- 4) Although deficiencies were generally detected, subsequent action was not always dissuasive and in some cases, the lack of deadlines for remedial action allowed certain problems to persist. The CA refusal to sign the health charter in the event of deficiencies, although more for reasons of health than animal welfare, represents an effective indirect sanction.
- 5) An excessive tolerance has been shown by the CA towards farmers who brought unenriched cages into service after the deadline of 31.12.2002 (Article 7 of *Arrêté* 01.02.2002). Such systems should have been enriched to meet the requirement of Article 6 of Directive 1999/74/EC.
- 6) The application of blinkers (“spectacles”), which penetrate the nasal septum is a form of mutilation and is therefore prohibited by French and EU legislation (Chapter C(12) of *Arrêté* of 01.02.2002 and point 8 of the Annex to Directive 1999/74/EC), but this was not accepted as such by the CA.
- 7) The lack of timely and adequate reporting of the results of inspections by half of all *départements* means that the CCA is not aware if inspections to

ensure the requirements of Directive 1999/74/EC have been carried out on half of the national territory¹⁷.

6.5. Control of route plans

The DDSVs had not sufficiently controlled route plans because the CCA had not made it explicitly clear, in addressing the recommendations in report 8554/2202, that verification of the itinerary and the indicated journey times was necessary.

6.6. Overall conclusion

Regarding the protection of laying hens, the CCA have put in place acceptable measures. At local level, although the system to detect deficiencies was generally good, follow-up was not always adequate and the acceptance of unenriched cages after the deadline of 1.1.2003 represents a major non-compliance. The failure of half of all *départements* to indicate what inspections have taken place is also unsatisfactory. Regarding long distance transport, controls of route plans continue to be inadequate.

7. CLOSING MEETING

A closing meeting was held on 26 March 2004 with the CCA. At this meeting, the CCA representatives noted the main findings and conclusions of the mission presented by the inspection team and provided some further clarifications. The CCA agreed with the deadlines regarding unenriched cages, but were sympathetic regarding the circumstances which led to such cages being brought into service after the deadline. Regarding the control of route plans, the CCA did not agree that route plans had to include details of the itinerary outside EU boundaries.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

The competent authority should ensure that:

Regarding animal welfare in holding with laying hens

- 1) Training on the specific technical provisions of Directive 1999/74/EC is provided to inspectors through the available central and regional frameworks.
- 2) Cage systems brought into service after 1.1.2003 meet the requirements of Article 8 of *Arrêté* 01.02.2002 and of Article 6 of Directive 1999/74/EC.
- 3) Blinkers which penetrate the nasal septum are not permitted (Chapter C(12) of the Annex to *Arrêté* 01.02.2002 and point 8 of the Annex to Directive 1999/74/EC).

¹⁷ *In their response to the draft report, the French CA noted that as the keeping of laying hens is not evenly spread throughout the territory, the shortcomings noted with respect to the flow of information must be interpreted with care.*

- 4) When deficiencies are detected, adequate timely corrective measures and follow-up actions are taken and sanctioning proceedings are initiated, as necessary.
- 5) Inspections are taking place throughout the national territory and the results are reported as required by Articles 1 and 2 of Decision 2000/50/EC.

Regarding control of route plans:

- 6) Adequate controls on route plans are performed to ensure compliance with Article 5(A)(2) of Directive 91/628/EEC, and effective measures are taken to ensure their return.

9. ADDENDUM TO MISSION REPORT DG(SANCO)/7231/2004

In their initial reaction to the recommendations, the central competent authority indicated that:

In relation to recommendation (1) that exchange of information is already taking place, both formally and informally and is encouraged. Training will be organised at regional and inter-regional levels, in particular to standardise the practises used by field officials on certain complex technical points.

In relation to recommendation (2), that they agreed with the DDSV concerned, who considered that it would not be appropriate to block the installation of cages where works were in progress on 1.1.2003. The regulations on the protection of laying hens are currently applied and monitored.

In relation to recommendation (3), that the application of blinkers is not authorised in national and Community regulations. However, this method was only used on veterinary prescriptions after the failure of other attempts intended to prevent cannibalism.

In relation to recommendation (4), a note reminding DDSVs to react to all deficiencies detected was issued on 18.3.04 (i.e. shortly before the mission).

In relation to recommendation (5), that a computerised system will be set up to facilitate the collection of inspection results.

In relation to recommendation (6), the DDSV will be reminded that the itinerary and duration of the journey must be verified before departure of the consignment.