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FINAL REPORT OF A MISSION CARRIED OUT IN LITHUANIA
FROM 29 NOVEMBER TO 3 DECEMBER 2004 IN ORDER TO REVIEW
THE ACTION TAKEN BY THE COMPETENT AUTHORITIES
WITH REGARD TO THE UP-GRADING OF CERTAIN CLASSES
OF FOOD PROCESSING ESTABLISHMENTS, ANIMAL HEALTH CONTROLS
AND CONTROLS OVER CERTAIN PRODUCTS OF ANIMAL ORIGIN
INTENDED FOR HUMAN CONSUMPTION



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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Some of the recommendations made in relation to the earlier pre-accession missions were only partially implemented and some of the deadlines given in the action plan have been further delayed.

The organisation of the competent authorities (CA) has remained unchanged. The staff numbers of the central CA have increased slightly. Although a comprehensive training programme for officials was implemented this training has not always been well designed and not all officials have participated in training relevant to their official duties.

Council Directives 64/432/EEC and 91/68/EEC were transposed into national legislation in March and April 2004, respectively.

Animal health surveillance and control programmes were implemented according to the annual plan. Evidence of the implementation of the plan was available in the counties visited and districts. The testing programmes for bovine tuberculosis (Tb) and brucellosis do not fulfil the requirements of Council Directive 64/432/EEC for a Member State officially free of these diseases. Testing of bovines for TB is not always carried out as required by the national legislation. The contingency plans for foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) and Classical Swine Fever (CSF) have been approved by Commission Decisions 2004/431/EC¹ and 2004/435/EC², respectively. Rabies and Enzootic Bovine Leucosis (EBL) eradication programmes have qualified for a financial contribution from the Community in 2005 (Commission Decision 2004/695/EC³). The wildlife vaccination programme for rabies will start in Spring 2005. The number of bovines which tested positive for EBL has dropped significantly.

The registration of cleaning and disinfection premises for live animal transport vehicles has not yet been completed and not all slaughterhouses visited had these premises available. The sites seen had some deficiencies.

As a new development several animal markets and dealers operate in Lithuania. The authorisation of these activities and of live transporters, is in progress. Herd registers on the farms visited were well kept. The register of a bovine dealer visited lacked the details of the transport vehicle, the destination and arrival/departure times of the animals. Some progress has been achieved in relation to holding registration of livestock. However, the registration of pig holdings is not complete and the enforcement of the prohibition to move pigs from/to holdings without a holding number had been delayed.

Cattle and sheep examined on farm holdings and at slaughter establishments were generally correctly identified except for one bovine arriving at a slaughterhouse without any eartags. The central CA (CCA) has started to issue bovine passports but this process has been delayed and is not enforced. By now approximately 5 % of the bovine population is covered. The deadlines specified in Article 7 of Regulation (EC) No

¹ OJ No L 154, 30.04.2004, p. 41

² OJ NO L 154, 30.04.2004, p. 56

³ OJ No L 316, 15.10.2004, p. 87

1760/2000 for the notification of bovine births, movements and deaths are not always respected.

The PHARE project to develop new animal herd register software has been further delayed. The porcine database does not contain all of the information foreseen in Article 18 of Council Directive 64/432/EEC as amended by Directive 2000/15/EC of the European Parliament and the Council.

Commission Regulation (EC) No 494/98 concerning administrative sanctions in the framework of the system for the identification and registration of bovine animals is not fully implemented.

Establishment approvals were available in the plants visited but had often not been updated. A red meat establishment visited which had been upgraded with SAPARD funds had been granted EU approval although several Community requirements had not been fulfilled. The establishment database is only available to the CCA.

Several orders have been issued to take into account deficiencies noted previously in relation to food processing establishments.

However, the red meat and dairy establishments visited had deficiencies in relation to layout, structure, equipment and maintenance. The situation in relation to the dairies visited and the low capacity (LC) meat products plant was generally better than in the two combined red meat plants visited. The regional CA undertook immediate action in relation to the red meat plant granted a transitional period (TP) and withdrew its approval to produce minced meat and fresh meat for the national market.

Controls on the use of the national health mark on products originating from establishments which have been granted TPs were not effective. However, the CA took immediate action in relation to the incorrect use of an oval health mark in a red meat establishment granted a TP.

Deficiencies in relation to operational hygiene were seen in the establishments visited (especially in the red meat plants). The established HACCP principles and own check programmes were generally well documented. Not all established programmes were well designed or operated effectively.

The system in place in relation to plant supervision is principally well developed but has partly failed its target. Despite the earlier recommendations of the FVO, the Community animal welfare requirements in relation to stunning have not been enforced. Several deficiencies detected by the mission team in the plants visited had not been noted by the official inspectors. In one TP dairy plant the existence of one whole building where plant operations were carried out had been ignored by the CA. This building had not been included in the action plan of the plant. The HC red meat combined plant classified as fulfilling Community requirements had several deficiencies. The TP red meat plant visited was operating under conditions in which the safety of some parts of its production was at risk. However, the CA took immediate action to limit the activities of the plant. Controls on animal by-products, including specified risk material, were inadequate in the red meat establishments visited.

Records and husbandry on visited farms were generally adequate.

2. ABBREVIATIONS & SPECIAL TERMS

AH	Animal Health
AM	Ante Mortem
AIRBC	Agriculture Information and Rural Business Development Centre
CA	Competent Authority (Authorities)
CCA	Central Competent Authority (Authorities)
CDB	Central databases
CSF	Classical Swine Fever
CVO	Chief Veterinary Officer
DVO	District Veterinary Office (Offices)
EBL	Enzootic Bovine Leucosis
EU	European Union
FVAS	Food and Veterinary Audit Service
FVO	Food and Veterinary Office
FMD	Foot- and-mouth disease
HACCP	Hazard Analysis Critical Control Plan
HC	High capacity
LC	Low capacity
PM	Post Mortem
RCA	Regional (County) Competent Authority
SCC	Somatic Cell Count
SRM	Specified risk material
SFVS	State Food and Veterinary Services
TB	Bovine tuberculosis
TPC	Total Plate Count

3. INTRODUCTION

The mission took place in Lithuania from 29 November to 3 December 2004. The mission team comprised 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 part of the mission by a representative from the central competent authority, the State Food and Veterinary Services (SFVS).

An opening meeting was held on 29 November with SFVS. 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.

4. BACKGROUND TO THIS MISSION

This mission was the first FVO mission in the specified sectors since the accession of Lithuania to the EU. Prior to accession, the FVO carried out missions in the framework of the accession preparations of Lithuania, in order to assist and monitor progress with the adoption of the relevant EU requirements. Following these missions, recommendations were made with regard to the following points:

- To re-assess all establishments in Lithuania in order to detect deficiencies in relation to structure, layout and maintenance as identified by the mission team and to take the necessary action to ensure that deadlines for completion of outstanding deficiencies are realistic and provide the CCA with a clear picture of the situation,
- To provide the Commission Services with accurate lists of the establishments in operation in Lithuania including their status (A: in compliance, B: in compliance by accession and C: granted a transitional period) and capacity,
- To consider establishing a system with formal approval letters which clearly indicate the activities for which an establishment is approved as well as the detailed legal basis,
- To take urgent action in order to solve outstanding issues in relation to animal identification and holding registration in order to have a fully operational system in place at the date of accession,
- To take measures in order to solve outstanding issues in relation to the absence of cleansing and disinfection facilities at slaughterhouses for vehicles transporting animals and to inform the Commission Services (CS) of the corrective measures implemented, and
- To take measures in order to address the individual issues on animal welfare in all relevant establishments.

Following these missions the competent authority undertook to take the relevant corrective actions in response to recommendations made.

5. OBJECTIVES OF THE MISSION

The objective of the mission was to review the action taken by CA for the upgrading of certain classes of food-processing establishments and animal health controls in response to previous FVO missions and to evaluate the controls over certain products of animal origin intended for human consumption in the framework of the Community legislation listed in Annex 1.

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

COMPETENT AUTHORITY VISITS			Comments
Competent authority	Central	1	State Food and Veterinary Services
	Central	1	Agricultural Information and Rural Business Development Centre (AIRBC)
	Regional	3	County Veterinary Offices

LIVE ANIMAL CONTROL SITES			Comments
Farms		2	1 cattle and 1 pig farm
Animal Dealer		1	1 bovine dealer

The table below indicates the number of activities evaluated by the mission team in food processing establishments. One establishment can have more than one activity.

ACTIVITIES IN FOOD PROCESSING ESTABLISHMENTS		Activities in total			
		HC establishments		LC establishments	Total
		In compliance	Transitional period		
Slaughterhouses (red meat)		1	1		2
Cutting premises (red meat)		1	1		2
Meat product premises (red meat)			1	1	2
Minced meat and meat preparation premises			1		1
Milk processing premises		1	1		2
Total		3	5	1	9

6. MAIN FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

6.1. Competent authorities

Conclusions

The organisation of the CA has remained unchanged. The staff numbers of the CCA have increased slightly. Although a comprehensive training programme for officials was implemented this training has not always been well designed.

Findings

The Lithuanian CA, the SFVS, is a governmental institution implementing State policy in food and veterinary fields. It has a clear pyramidal structure and line of command. It consists of 7 departments and the administration. The Director is directly accountable to the Prime Minister. The 7 departments are: Animal Health, Food, International Affairs and Law, Information Systems and Information, Finances and Strategic Planning, Quality and Risk Assessment and General Department. In addition the following institutions are subordinate to SFVS: National Veterinary Laboratory, Border and Transport State Veterinary Service, State Inspection on Veterinary Preparations, Food and Veterinary Audit Service and State Food and Veterinary Services of 10 counties, 4 cities and 34 districts. More detailed information on the Lithuanian CA is available on the following website: <http://www.vet.lt/>.

The total number of staff is 1380, of which 75 are based at headquarters. Since the FVO mission in February 2004 the staff numbers of the CCA have increased slightly (4 new posts). The SFVS also employs contracted private veterinarians (authorised veterinarians) for routine animal health surveillance tasks and certain public tasks (for example, supervision of LC slaughterhouses).

Evidence of the implementation of the annual training programme for officials responsible for animal and public health and animal welfare, was seen both at CCA and district CA level. The programme for 2004 was extensive and included public and animal health and animal welfare topics. The draft public health training programme for 2005 was also available.

However, the training has not always been well designed. For example, training on stunning has been organised in a slaughterhouse visited by the FVO mission team where the equipment for stunning and the way stunning is carried out is not in compliance with the Community requirements. The official responsible for the regular supervision of a dairy plant had not received special training on related topics.

The CCA holds regular meetings with the regional CA (RCA), of which the minutes are published on the intranet. Evidence of these meetings was available.

6.2. Animal health controls

The Council Directives 64/432/EEC and 91/68/EEC were transposed into national legislation in March and April 2004, respectively.

Animal health surveillance and control programmes were implemented according to the annual plan. Evidence of the implementation of the plan was available in the counties and districts visited.

The testing programmes for bovine tuberculosis (TB) and brucellosis do not fulfil the requirements of Council Directive 64/432/EEC for a Member State officially free of these diseases.

The testing of bovines for TB is not always carried out as required by the national legislation.

The contingency plans for foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) and Classical Swine Fever (CSF) have been approved by Commission Decisions 2004/431/EC⁴ and 2004/435/EC⁵, respectively.

The rabies and EBL eradication programmes in Lithuania have qualified for a financial contribution from the Community in 2005 (Commission Decision 2004/695/EC⁶)

The wildlife vaccination programme for rabies will start in Spring 2005.

The number of bovines which tested positive for Enzootic Bovine Leucosis (EBL) has dropped significantly.

The registration of cleaning and disinfection premises for live animal transport vehicles has not yet been completed and not all slaughterhouses visited had these premises available. The sites seen had some deficiencies.

Findings

The following changes to animal health legislation were introduced during Spring 2004:

- The SFVS Order NO B1-208 on veterinary requirements on trade of sheep and goats was issued on 16 March 2004 (transposition of Council Directive 91/68/EC, in force since 26 March 2004), and
- The SFVS Order No B1-349 on veterinary requirements on trade of bovines and pigs was issued on 20 April 2004 (transposition of Council Directive 64/432/EEC, in force since 5 September 2004).

The animal health surveillance and control programme is conducted according to an annual plan. Sampling for most diseases is based on a

⁴ OJ No L 154, 30.04.2004, p.41

⁵ OJ NO L 154, 30.04.2004, p. 56

⁶ OJ No L 316, 15.10.2004, p. 87

presumed 5 % prevalence in the target population. The SFVS submits this plan to the counties, which develop the sampling plan and co-ordinate its implementation. Evidence that the plan has been followed was found in each of the counties/districts visited. The district/city CA report monthly via the county CA to the CCA.

The official/authorised veterinarians are using a checklist for holdings. Although the farms are required to keep records of medical treatments, on one large pig holding visited these records lacked the identification of the group of animals which had received the medication and also the withdrawal period.

Eradication programmes for TB, brucellosis and EBL

Lithuania has not yet applied to the Commission for officially free status for bovine brucellosis, TB and *Brucella melitensis* in sheep and goats. The following table shows the numbers of herds and animals tested and the number of positive cases for TB, brucellosis and EBL for the last three years (data based on information from the CCA):

Year	Tested herds	Tuberculosis		Brucellosis		Enzootic bovine Leucosis	
		Tested animals	Positive cases	Tested animals	Positive cases	Tested animals	Positive cases
2001	244812	468595	0	139849	0	532810	2251
2002	232690	599614	0	566102	0	606423	1509
2003	212898	546273	0	494614	0	547054	903
Total	690400	1614482	0	1200565	0	1686287	4663

The number of sheep and goats tested for *Brucella melitensis* in 2003 was 893. The number of animals positive for EBL has dropped significantly. According to the national legislation these animals have to be slaughtered within three days after the test result is available, followed by an intensive testing scheme in the respective holding.

In the sampling programme for 2004 testing for TB is confined to dairy cows, bulls and other bovines aged more than 24 months. However, in case of suspicion this frequency is increased and also covers animals older than 6 weeks. Intradermal testing was not always carried out correctly as no documentation of the measurements of skin-fold thickness was available.

The annual testing programme 2004 for bovine brucellosis requires testing of milking cows twice a year. According to the CCA this testing scheme for bovine brucellosis will be enhanced in 2005.

Monitoring programme for Classical Swine Fever (CSF)

The last reported outbreak of CSF in Lithuania occurred in 1992. The annual sampling programme for CSF covers both domestic and feral pigs. The sampling programme is based on a presumed 5 % prevalence and 95 % confidence intervals. For example in the counties visited (Vilnius and Panevezys) the numbers of domestic pigs examined serologically for CSF in 2004 were 752 and 997, and of wild boars 33 and 43, respectively. In 2003,

15911 domestic and 643 feral pigs were tested. No infected animals were found.

Contingency planning

The contingency plans for CSF and FMD have been approved by the Commission. Plans for other OIE list A diseases, have been drafted and should be finalised early in 2005. Contingency plans for FMD and CSF were available at regional level but not in the slaughterhouses visited.

Rabies and EBL eradication programme

The rabies and EBL eradication programmes in Lithuania have qualified for a financial contribution from the Community in 2005. The proposed amounts are 900 000 € for rabies and 200 000 € for EBL (both at 50% rate). The number of rabies cases detected annually is fluctuating, as demonstrated in the following table:

Year	Number of animals tested	Number of positive cases
2001	1631	677
2002	1639	933
2003	1989	1108
2004 (by 31.10.)	830	415

n.a. data not analysed

Annual vaccination of dogs and cats is compulsory but the owners have to pay for the vaccines. A special budget is received for vaccinations in case of an outbreak. The raccoon dog and fox are the main wildlife vectors. The last human case of rabies occurred in 2000.

An initial 3 year rabies wildlife vaccination programme will be launched in Spring 2005. The aerial distribution of the first set of baits is planned for Spring 2005. It will start in the western part of Lithuania covering an area of 30000 sq. km in the first year, and by extending to the whole territory of Lithuania from the second year onwards. Baits will be distributed twice annually. The total number of baits needed for the 3-year period is 6 million (ensuring bait density of 20 baits/km²). The tender for the baits has been launched and the decision should be taken in December 2004.

Cleaning and disinfection sites of trucks for live animal transport

Although the CCA stated that they have enforced the controls on cleaning and disinfection of trucks transporting live animals, not all slaughterhouses visited had these places yet in operation. According to the CCA 128 cleaning and disinfection sites for animal transport vehicles are in operation. At one site visited the trucks entered and left the site using the same road.

6.3. Holding registration, animal identification and movement controls

Conclusions

As a new development several animal markets and dealers operate in Lithuania. The authorisation of these activities and of live animal transporters is in progress.

Some progress has been achieved in relation to holding registration of livestock. However, the registration of pig holdings is not complete and the enforcement of the prohibition to move pigs from/to holdings without a holding number had been delayed. Herd registers on the farms visited were well kept. The register of a bovine dealer visited lacked the details of the transport vehicle and of the destination of the animals.

Cattle and sheep examined on farm holdings and at slaughter establishments were generally correctly identified except for one bovine arriving at a slaughterhouse without any eartags.

The CCA has started to issue bovine passports but this process has been delayed and is not enforced. By now approximately 5 % of the bovine population is covered.

The deadlines specified in Article 7 of Regulation (EC) No 1760/2000 for the notification of bovine births, movements and deaths are not always respected.

Findings

Animal markets, dealers and transporters

The Director of SFVS issued a new order No B1-560 on 10 June 2004, which requires all operators involved in live animal trade to be authorised. The following information was received in relation to the numbers of live animal markets, dealers, horse marshalling centres and transporters operating in Lithuania.

Type of operation	
Animal markets	10
Animal dealers	15 horse dealers, 9 cattle dealers, 18 cattle and pig dealers
Horse marshalling centres	13
Animal transporters	9

The CCA stated that the markets in operation have not yet been authorised but that this process would be completed by 1 April 2005. The CCA stated that no staging points or assembly centres operate in Lithuania. However, slaughter horses are transported from Byelorussia via Lithuania to Italy.

Information on the existence of these activities was not received during earlier FVO missions.

The mission team verified in the regions visited that a clear procedure has been set up for the authorisation of dealers but that this process is not yet complete. The bovine dealer visited kept a register of the animals on his holding, but had failed to register the destination of the animals and the times of arrival and departure.

Central register of holdings

Progress has been made to extend the coverage of the central register of livestock holdings. The CCA, AIRBC, stated that all bovine, sheep and goat holdings are now registered but some porcine keepers with only a few animals are not yet registered (the animals need to be identified only when moved from the farm). No derogations have been given to farmers with only a few animals. The number of herds, holdings and livestock population is given in the following table:

Species	Number of herds	Number of holdings	Number of animal keepers	Number of animals
Cattle	215478	215341	216114	1019035 based on holdings data 1019381 based on herd data
Sheep	2577	2565	n.a.	34530
Goats	3682	3681	n.a.	6882
Pigs	12676	143582	n.a.	567203

n.a. not analysed by the mission team

Some discrepancies were noted in the number of animals between the data based on the holding and herd numbers.

In order to speed up the registration of pig holdings, the SFVS had imposed an order to prohibit the movement of pigs from and to unregistered holdings. This prohibition was to take effect from 15 April 2004. However, the CCA had changed the date to 15 October 2004.

Holding registers

Holding registers on the cattle farm and pig farm visited were well-maintained and up-to-date. However, the sanitary register on the pig farm visited lacked the identification of the group of animals which had received medication and the withdrawal periods.

Animal identification

Cattle and pigs seen on the holdings and slaughterhouses were identified correctly, except for some bovines in a slaughterhouse visited. Pigs seen in the slaughterhouses were identified with slap marks. In one slaughterhouse visited one bovine arrived without any eartags and one arrived with only one

eartag. The bovine which had arrived without any eartags was accompanied with a separate explanatory note from the veterinarian who had filled in the pre-movement health certificate.

The CA controls the supply of replacement bovine ear tags to keepers. The new eartags are ordered via the local CA and CDB from the ear-tag supplier. The CA stated that replacement ear tags are marked in a manner to distinguish them from the originals.

Bovine passports

The AIRBC had started to issue bovine passports in May 2004. Up to 22 November 32308 passports had been issued (approximately 5 % of the bovine population). The passports are mandatory for animals destined for export and intra-community trade. No additional measures have been taken to speed up the process. On the bovine farm visited several calves had been born since May 2004 but none of them had been issued with passports.

Notifications of birth and movement

For all animals being moved between holdings or to a slaughterhouse a veterinary certificate (valid for 3 days) must be filled in by a private or official veterinarian before the movement takes place. These certificates were available on the sites visited.

For cattle, the system for the notification of births, deaths and movements is well understood and generally functions well. Notification of all events should take place in seven days and the notification of movements is based on double notification. However, notifications are frequently received after the deadlines. The following table categorises the notifications received by the middle of November 2004 for events that occurred in October according to the delay:

	0-3 days	4-7 days	8-20 days	21-27 days	>27 days	Total notifications received
Births	33%	14%	15%	4%	34%	2120
Deaths	37%	17%	29%	5%	12%	2147
Movements	27%	23%	25%	5%	20%	4356

Some small discrepancies were noted in the date of births given in the on-farm herd registers and the date of births given in the CDB.

6.4. Central databases and on-the-spot inspections

Conclusions

The PHARE project to develop new animal herd register software has been further delayed.

The porcine database does not contain all of the information foreseen in Article 18 of Council Directive 64/432/EEC.

Commission Regulation (EC) No 494/98 concerning administrative sanctions in the framework of the system for the identification and registration of bovine animals is not fully implemented.

Findings

Central database

Differences between the EU requirements concerning holding registration and controls on animal identification and the systems operating in Lithuania were identified before Accession. These differences were addressed within a PHARE project LT.01.05.01 under the title of Development of Animal Tracing and Veterinary Surveillance system. This project has been substantially delayed. According to the CCA this is due to difficulties with the contractors. Meanwhile the CCA decided to develop the CDB using their national intranet based system until the problems with the contractors have been solved. The plan for further improvement of the CDB was available. The last changes are due by the end of 2005.

A comprehensive list of errors was not available for the bovine CDB, as the system reviews the information after it has been entered in and reports any errors at a later stage. It was therefore not possible to verify the operation of the system on the spot. Officials in DVOs have access to real-time data in the CDBs by means of an intranet connection. Passwords had been given to 101 slaughterhouse operators, 237 private veterinarians, 60 live animal dealers (entry of live weight only) to enter notifications directly into the database

The porcine database includes information on the movement of pigs from holdings to slaughter establishments and movements between farm holdings. The porcine database does not include the geographical co-ordinates or any information on animal health. The maximum number of pigs that can be entered for one farm is limited to 9999 animals. Furthermore, the practicality of the database is limited, as it is not possible to have printouts.

On the spot inspections

On the spot inspections in relation to animal identification/herd registrations are carried out. A special checklist is in use. The number of bovine farms inspected between 1 January 2004 and 15 November 2004 was 10894 (5 %). The CCA stated they intended to reach the target of 10 % of inspected bovine holdings by the end of 2004 (an additional staff member has been delegated to this task in one county visited).

Shortcomings in relation to herd register, incorrect animal identification and notifications were noted in relation to 1620, 835 and 947 animal keepers, respectively.

Administrative sanctions

According to the information received from the CCA on movement restriction/sanctions applied from 1.1.2004 to 15.11.2004 no action has been

taken to destroy unidentified bovine animals where the keeper cannot prove their identity. Prohibitions to move animals were applied on 1065 animals, movement prohibitions comprising the holding in 174 cases, prohibitions to sell animal products in 19 cases and 81 financial fines were imposed.

6.5. Establishment approval

Conclusions

Establishment approvals were available in the plants visited but had often not been updated or correctly applied.

The establishment database is only available for the staff working at headquarters.

Findings

Approvals were available for all the establishments visited. All establishments had been inspected by the CA before granting approvals, However, they were not up to date. Not all activities were listed (e.g. in one plant, approval for the production of minced meat was missing, in another, goats and sheep were also slaughtered but this was missing in the approval). Furthermore, the approvals had not been updated separately since the EU accession but instead a list has been published which mentions all the plants in the different categories.

A red meat establishment visited which had been upgraded with SAPARD funds had been granted EU approval although several Community requirements had not been fulfilled.

The establishment database was available only at CCA level.

The lists of Lithuanian establishments approved for intra-community trade are available on the Website <http://www.vet.lt>.

6.6. Food safety controls

6.6.1. Legislation

Conclusions

Several orders have been issued to take into account deficiencies noted previously but the implementation of these orders has been only partly effective.

Findings

The following orders in relation to red meat and milk processing establishments had been issued in spring 2004 by the Director of the SFVS:

- Order No B1-118 of 5 February 2004 on the methodological order for evaluating maximum animal slaughtering in the slaughterhouses,

- Order No B1-178 of 5 March 2004 on the transfer of animal product processing establishments into the lists of EU compliant establishments,
- Order No B1-185 of 8 March 2004 on the evaluation of compliance with veterinary requirements and updating the lists of establishments,
- Order No B1-186 of 8 March 2004 on the inspection of animal product processing establishments,
- Order No B1-32 of 22 March 2004 on the documentary and physical inspection of animal product processing establishments from list A Order No B1-186,
- Order No B1-505 on 18 May 2004 on the ratification of the lists of animal product processing establishments, and
- Order No B1-135 on the use of the national health mark on 13 April 2004. This order specifies the format and use of the national health mark on carcasses, meat, meat products and preparations.

Evidence of the implementation of these orders was available in the districts visited. However, these orders often had not achieved their target (see following chapters).

6.6.2. *Food processing establishments - structure, layout and equipment*

Conclusions

The red meat and dairy establishments visited had deficiencies in relation to layout, structure, equipment and maintenance. The situation in relation to the dairies visited and the LC meat products plant was generally better than in the two combined red meat plants visited. These red meat plants had several shortcomings. The regional CA undertook immediate action in relation to the red meat plant granted a transitional period (TP) and withdrew its approval to produce minced meat and fresh meat for the national market.

Findings

Dairy establishments

The dairy visited classified by the CA as fulfilling the EU requirements had some maintenance and drainage problems. The TP dairy visited operated in two different buildings. The main building had been upgraded but the other building was in a dilapidated state and had not been included in the upgrading plan. Also in the main building some deficiencies were noted (e.g. some cross flows, milk intake area into plant not insect proof, use of old equipment not made of stainless steel, old milk storage tanks without thermometers, exposed open fermentation vats, quark cooler not easy to clean).

Slaughterhouses and red meat processing establishments

The mission team visited one HC combined slaughterhouse/cutting plant (SH/CP) which had been approved by the CA as fulfilling the Community requirements, one combined HC TP red meat plant and one LC meat products plant. The SH/CP had received SAPARD funds for its upgrading.

The TP red meat plant was under major reconstruction during the visit of the FVO mission team. The CA had, however, allowed it to continue its operation (at the time of the visit it was, for example, not possible to carry out a complete cleaning and disinfection of the slaughter hall (one wall was temporarily covered with plastic).

Several shortcomings were noted in both HC plants:

- Some cross flows,
- Lack of hand wash and disinfection facilities at three pre-de-hiding posts and lack of sterilisers for knife sharpeners in the SH/CP,
- Floors and walls not easy to clean and in need of maintenance in the cutting plant,
- Poor condition of bovine quarter chiller in one plant,
- One cutting department lacked automatic temperature registration,
- Rusty mincing equipment, cutting boards in poor condition,
- Mincing department under reconstruction in the TP plant but fully operational although, for example, hand wash facility not working, and
- Lack of sterilisers for knife-sharpeners.

6.6.3. *Eligibility of raw material, marking and labelling of final products*

Conclusions

According to the statistics received from the central raw milk laboratory, the TPC requirements of Annex A, Chapter IV, of Council Directive 92/46/EEC were not always fulfilled in 2004. Inhibitory substances were detected in 0.27-1,03 % of raw milk samples.

Controls on the use of the national health mark on products originating from establishments which have been granted TPs are not effective.

Findings

According to national raw milk statistics, 93,5-95,5 % of the milk collected during 2004 (January-October) fulfilled the somatic cell count (SCC) and 70,2-91,5% fulfilled the total plate count (TPC) requirements of Council Directive 92/46/EEC (the TPC values were exceeded especially during summertime). The percentage of milk tested positive for inhibitory substances during that period varied between 0,27-1,03. Testing of milk for chloramphenicol was foreseen in the national residue control programme for 2004 (60 samples). However, the results were not yet available. Evidence that this sampling was carried out was available in the regions visited. The raw milk results seen in the dairies and the on the farm visited generally

fulfilled the requirements of Council Directive 92/46/EEC in relation to SCC and TPC.

The following deficiencies regarding health marking of products were found:

- The LC meat products plant visited used an oval health mark although it received raw material from a LC slaughterhouse;
- The labelling of final products in a combined red meat establishment which had been granted a TP was incorrect. The old national oval health mark was used and the county CA had actually granted its used by the plant, and
- Livers were not health marked in the combined HC red meat plant.

In the TP dairy visited stickers with the rectangular national health mark were placed over the pre-printed oval health marks on wrappings and packaging material.

The RCA took immediate action in relation to the incorrect labelling of the final products in the TP red meat plant and ordered the incorrectly labelled wrapping and packing material to be destroyed under official supervision during the same week. The CCA took action by ordering checks on the use of health marks to be carried out in all TP plants immediately.

6.6.4. *Operational hygiene and associated own checks*

Conclusions

Deficiencies in relation to operational hygiene were seen in the establishments visited (especially in the red meat plants).

The established HACCP principles and own check programmes were generally well documented. However, one plant had not included the production of minced meat into its HACCP. Not all established programmes were well designed/operated effectively.

Findings

With regard to the hygienic conditions in the red meat processing establishments the following deficiencies were seen:

Poor slaughter technique in relation to bovine slaughter in the HC SH/CP plant:

- No two- knife technique used for bleeding of bovines,
- Inside rolling of bovine hides during de-hiding,
- Carcasses touching equipment/installations when being moved on the slaughter line, and
- Sternum saw not well sterilised between carcasses.

In addition some parts of the pig slaughter hall had not been well cleaned and there was evidence of staff smoking in the premises.

In the combined TP plant the following deficiencies were noted:

- Brushing of porcine carcasses with a brush placed on slaughter hall floor between carcasses,
- Poor cleaning of the axe used to split pig carcasses, and
- Very poor cleaning of metallic crates (by hand only, here also crossing flows).

In the cutting departments of both plants no checkpoints were established for incoming carcasses. In one of these departments the bone saw was cleaned only at the end of the day.

Deficiencies were also noted in other areas (e.g. exposed and packed products stored in the same freezer in the meat products plant, staff not wearing protective masks in the mince meat and meat preparation rooms, wrapping material kept in staff rest room, and rodent traps placed inside the processing area in one dairy visited). In the meat products plant visited exposed raw material was kept in the same chiller as wrapped products.

All establishments visited had documented HACCP and own control programmes in operation. However, not all established programmes were well designed or operated effectively. For example, deficiencies were noted in relation to the implementation of cleaning and disinfection and pest control.

6.6.5. *Animal by-products*

Conclusions

Controls on animal by-products, including SRM, are inadequate in red meat establishments.

Findings

The CA stated that all Category I and II wastes, including SRM collected from meat slaughter and processing establishments and carcasses of fallen animals are disposed of in a rendering plant.

However, on a bovine farm visited the owner stated that dead animals are sometimes buried on the farm. This farm did not have a contract with the rendering plant.

At the red meat combined plants visited no effective controls were in place for the removal, segregation and staining of SRM. The spinal cord had not been properly removed from some bovine carcasses which had already been health marked. In the other combined red meat establishment the SRM material in the container outside the plant had not been stained and the container had not been marked. In addition, in this plant the same crates were used for animal by-products destined for pet food and meat destined for human consumption.

6.7. **Animal welfare**

Conclusions

Despite the earlier recommendations of the FVO, the Community animal welfare requirements in relation to stunning have not been enforced.

Findings

Both slaughterhouses visited had severe shortcomings in relation to animal welfare:

- Lairage in both plants lacked permanent watering facilities for the animals,
- Inadequate restraining of bovine heads for stunning (pneumatic gun) in the HC SH/CP which made proper stunning very difficult to achieve (in one case, three attempts were needed to stun one of the animals),
- No proper restraining possibility for pigs, sheep, goats and calves,
- Electric stunning equipment used for pigs and small ruminants lacked a voltage indicator, and, in one plant, an alarm,
- In the TP plant animals not intended for immediate slaughter were kept together in the slaughter place, and in some cases electrical stunning equipment was used incorrectly for this purpose, and
- Less than 1.3 Amperes were applied for stunning of pigs in some cases.

6.8. Competent authority supervision

Conclusions

The system in place in relation to plant supervision is principally well developed but has partly failed its target.

Several deficiencies detected by the mission team in the plants visited, including animal welfare problems in relation to stunning, had not been noted by the official inspectors. In one TP dairy plant the existence of one whole building where plant operations were carried out had been totally ignored by the CA (see chapter 6.6.2). The HC red meat combined plant classified as fulfilling Community requirements had several deficiencies. The TP red meat plant was operating under conditions in which the safety of some parts of its production was at risk. However, the CA took immediate action to limit the activities of the plant.

Records and husbandry on visited farms were generally adequate.

Findings

Inspections of food processing plants and holdings

The FVAS had been ordered by orders No B1-186 and B1-32 (see Chapter 6.6.1.) to inspect the documentation of food processing establishments in list

A and B. These checks also included the random inspection of some of the plants. Evidence of these audits was available in the counties visited.

The official supervision of establishments and holdings was carried out according to plan and was as such well-documented, as also was the corrective actions taken by the plants. However, sometimes deadlines had not been respected or deadlines had not been given. In addition to the permanent supervision of the slaughterhouses, the district CA visited these plants four times annually and the RCA once annually.

However, several deficiencies noted by the inspection team had not been spotted by the CA responsible for the plant supervision and in some cases no proper action had been taken to eliminate the deficiencies.

In the slaughterhouses visited animal welfare problems in relation to stunning were evident, but no effective actions had been taken by the CA to enforce the Community animal welfare requirements.

In-plant supervision

The ante mortem (AM) and post mortem (PM) documentation was in general adequate. The AV carrying out the AM and PM inspection in one establishment did not palpate any intestinal lymph nodes nor did he cut the inner Masseter muscles of bovine heads.

In the dairy establishment visited the official veterinarian responsible for the plant was not at ease with the interpretation of the blue print of the plant.

7. OVERALL CONCLUSION

The CA has partly taken into account the recommendations made previously. However, the progress in the field of herd registration, animal identification and central databases (CDB) has been further delayed and no progress was seen in relation to enforcement of animal welfare rules at slaughter. The supervision of the use of the national health mark for products originating from establishments which have been granted transitional periods was not properly enforced. Although the control systems in place in relation to food processing establishments and animal health controls are principally well developed, compliance with Community legislation is incomplete in some areas and the systems for supervision of the plants have partly failed their target.

8. CLOSING MEETING

A closing meeting was held on 3 December 2004 with the CCA, the State Food and Veterinary Service. At this meeting, the main findings and conclusions of the mission were presented by the inspection team. The central CA stated they would forward by fax to the Commission Services the immediate measures to be taken in a combined red meat plant visited at the beginning of the following week (the fax was received in the Food and Veterinary Office on 6 December 2004).

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1. To the competent authorities of Lithuania

- 1) To further improve and enforce the system of official supervision in place for food processing establishments.
- 2) To ensure testing for TB is carried out as required in Annex B of Council Directive 64/432/EEC.
- 3) To speed up and complete the approval of cleaning and disinfection facilities for live animal transport vehicles, as required in Article 12, point b, of Council Directive 64/432/EEC.
- 4) To speed up and complete the authorisation of assembly centres, animal transporters and dealers and to ensure they fulfil the requirements of Articles 11, 12 and 13 of Council Directive 64/432/EEC, respectively.
- 5) To ensure all pig holdings are registered.
- 6) To enforce and complete the issuing of bovine passports and to inform the Commission Services of the timeframe for achieving this,
- 7) To further develop the porcine database to fulfil all requirements of Commission Decision 2000/678/EC.
- 8) To complete the PHARE project for the new animal herd register and to inform the Commission Services of the time frame for achieving this,
- 9) To take urgent action to enforce the animal welfare rules of Council Directive 93/119/EC on the protection of animals at the time of slaughter and killing.
- 10) To ensure red meat establishments approved for intra-community trade fulfil the Community requirements.
- 11) To ensure measures in relation to the use of a national health mark for products originating from establishments which have been granted a transitional period are fully enforced.
- 12) To enforce the requirements of Regulation (EC) No 1774/2002 on animal by-products.
- 13) To rectify deficiencies in areas noted during the mission.

The Lithuanian authorities should submit an action plan, detailing the actions taken and planned, and including deadlines for their implementation to address the above recommendations within one month of receiving the draft report.

10. ADDENDUM

The Lithuanian CA, by means of an email received from the State Food and Veterinary Service on 10.2.2005, provided an action plan to address the recommendations in the report.

11. ANNEX 1: LEGISLATION

LEGAL BASES FOR THE MISSION

European legislation	OJ	Title
Council Directive 64/432/EEC	L 121, 29.07.1964, p. 1977	Council Directive 64/432/EEC of 26 June 1964 on animal health problems affecting intra-Community trade in bovine animals and swine
Council Directive 64/433/EEC	L 121, 29.07.1964, p. 2012	Council Directive 64/433/EEC of 26 June 1964 on health conditions for the production and marketing of fresh meat
Council Directive 77/99/EEC	L 026, 31.01.1977, p. 85	Council Directive 77/99/EEC of 21 December 1976 on health problems affecting the production and marketing of meat products and certain other products of animal origin
Council Directive 91/495/EEC	L 268, 24.09.1991, p.41	Council Directive 91/495/EEC of 27 November 1990 concerning public health and animal health problems affecting the production and placing on the market of rabbit meat and farmed game meat
Council Directive 92/45/EEC	L 268, 14.09.1992, p. 35	Council Directive 92/45/EEC of 16 June 1992 on public health and animal health problems relating to the killing of wild game and the placing on the market of wild-game meat
Council Directive 92/46/EEC	L 268, 14.09.1992, p. 1	Council Directive 92/46/EEC of 16 June 1992 laying down the health rules for the production and placing on the market of raw milk, heat-treated milk and milk-based products
Council Directive 92/102/EEC	L 355, 05.12.1992, p. 32	Council Directive 92/102/EEC of 27 November 1992 on the identification and registration of animals
Council Directive 94/65/EC	L 368, 31.12.1994, p. 10	Council Directive 94/65/EC of 14 December 1994 laying down the requirements for the production and placing on the market of minced meat and meat preparations
Council Directive 97/78/EC	L 24, 30.01.98, p. 9	Council Directive of 18 December 1997 laying down the principles governing the organisation of veterinary checks on products entering the Community from third countries.
Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council (EC) No. 1760/2000	L 204 , 11.08.2000, p. 1	Regulation (EC) No. 1760/2000 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 July 2000 establishing a system for the identification and registration of bovine animals and regarding the labelling of beef and beef products and repealing Council Regulation EC No. 820/97
Council Directive 2001/89/EC	L 316 , 01.12.2001, p. 5	Council Directive 2001/89/EC of 23 October 2001 on Community measures for the control of classical swine fever
Council Directive 2003/85/EC	L 306, 22.11.2003, p.1	Council Directive 2003/85/EC of 29 September 2003 on Community measures for the control of foot-and-mouth disease repealing Directive 85/511/EEC and Decisions 89/531/EEC and 91/665/EEC and amending Directive 92/46/EEC
Commission Decision 98/139/EC	L 038, 12.02.1998, p. 10	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 Member States

RELEVANT COMMUNITY LEGISLATION IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THIS MISSION

European legislation	OJ	Title
Council Directive 72/461/EEC	L 302, 31.12.1972, p. 24	Council Directive 72/461/EEC of 12 December 1972 on health problems affecting intra-Community trade in fresh meat
Council Directive 77/96/EEC	L 026, 31.01.1977, p. 67	Council Directive 77/96/EEC of 21 December 1976 on the examination for trichinae (<i>Trichinella spiralis</i>) upon importation from third countries of fresh meat derived from domestic swine
Council Directive 77/391/EEC	L 145, 13.06.1977, p. 44	Council Directive 77/391/EEC of 17 May 1977 introducing Community measures for the eradication of brucellosis, tuberculosis and leucosis in cattle
Council Directive 80/215/EEC	L 047, 21.02.1988, p. 4	Council Directive 80/215/EEC of 22 January 1980 on animal health problems affecting intra-Community trade in meat products
Council Directive 89/397/EEC	L 186, 30.6.1989, p. 23	Council Directive 89/397/EEC of 14 June 1989 on the official control of foodstuffs
Council Directive 89/662/EEC	L 395, 30.12.1989, p. 13	Council Directive 89/662/EEC of 11 December 1989 concerning veterinary checks in intra-Community trade with a view to the completion of the internal market
Council Directive 90/423/EEC	L 224, 18.08.1990 p. 13	Council Directive 90/423/EEC of 26 June 1990 amending Directive 85/511/EEC introducing Community measures for the control of foot-and-mouth disease, Directive 64/432/EEC on animal health problems affecting intra-Community trade in bovine animals and swine and Directive 72/462/EEC on health and veterinary inspection problems upon importation of bovine animals and swine and fresh meat or meat products from third countries
Council Directive 91/68/EEC	L 046, 19.02.1991, p. 19	Council Directive 91/68/EEC of 28 January 1991 on animal health conditions governing intra-Community trade in ovine and caprine animals
Council Directive 92/118/EEC	L 062, 15.03.1993, p. 49	Council Directive 92/118/EEC of 17 December 1992 laying down animal health and public health requirements governing trade in and imports into the Community of products not subject to the said requirements laid down in specific Community rules referred to in Annex A (I) to Directive 89/662/EEC and, as regards pathogens, to Directive 90/425/EEC
Council Directive 93/99/EEC	L 290, 24.11.1993, p. 14	Council Directive 93/99/EEC of 29 October 1993 on the subject of additional measures concerning the official control of foodstuffs
Council Directive 93/119/EC	L 340, 31.12.1993, p. 21	Council Directive 93/119/EC of 22 December 1993 on the protection of animals at the time of slaughter or killing
Council Directive 96/22/EC	L 125, 23.05.1996, p. 3	Council Directive 96/22/EC of 29 April 1996 concerning the prohibition on the use in stockfarming of certain substances having a hormonal or thyrostatic action and of β -agonists, and repealing Directives 81/602/EEC, 88/146/EEC, 88/299/EEC

European legislation	OJ	Title
Council Directive 96/23/EC	L 125, 23.05.1996, p. 10	Council Directive 96/23/EC of 29 April 1996 on measures to monitor certain substances and residues thereof in live animals and animal products and repealing Directives 85/358/EEC and 86/469/EEC and Decisions 89/187/EEC and 91/664/EEC
Council Directive 96/93/EC	L 013, 16.01.1997, p. 28	Council Directive 96/93/EC of 17 December 1996 on the certification of animals and animal products
Council Directive 98/83/EC	L 330, 05.12.1998, p. 32	Council Directive 98/83/EC of 3 November 1998 on the quality of water intended for human consumption
Commission Regulation (EC) No 494/98	L 060, 28.02.1998, p. 78	Commission Regulation (EC) No 494/98 of 27 February 1998 laying down detailed rules for the implementation of Council Regulation (EC) No 820/97 as regards the application of minimum administrative sanctions in the framework of the system for the identification and registration of bovine animals
Commission Regulation (EC) No. 1825/2000	L 216, 26.08.2000, p. 8	Commission Regulation (EC) No 1825/2000 of 25 August 2000 laying down detailed rules for the application of Regulation (EC) No 1760/2000 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards the labelling of beef and beef products
Regulation (EC) No 178/2002	L31, 01.02.2002, p.1	Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 January 2002 laying down the general principles and requirements of food law, establishing the European Food Safety Authority and laying down procedures in matters of food safety.
Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council (EC) No 1774/2002	L 273, 10.10.2002, p. 1	Regulation (EC) No 1774/2002 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 3 October 2002 laying down health rules concerning animal by-products not intended for human consumption
Commission Regulation (EC) No 1082/2003	L 156, 25.06.2003, p. 9	Commission Regulation (EC) No 1082/2003 of 23 June 2003 laying down detailed rules for the implementation of Regulation (EC) No 1760/2000 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards the minimum level of controls to be carried out in the framework of the system for the identification and registration of bovine animals
Commission Regulation (EC) No 911/2004	L 163, 30.04.2004, p. 65	Commission Regulation (EC) No 911/2004 of 29 April 2004 implementing Regulation (EC) No 1760/2000 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards eartags, passports and holding registers
Council Decision 90/424/EEC	L 224 , 18.08.1990, p. 19	Council Decision 90/424/EEC of 26 June 1990 on expenditure in the veterinary field

European legislation	OJ	Title
Council Decision 90/638/EEC	L 347, 12.12.1990, p. 27	Council Decision 90/638/EEC of 27 November 1990 laying down Community criteria for the eradication and monitoring of certain animal diseases
Commission Decision 91/42/EEC	L 023, 29.01.1991 p. 29	Commission Decision 91/42/EEC of 8 January 1991 laying down the criteria to be applied when drawing up contingency plans for the control of FMD, in application of Article 5 of Council Directive 90/423/EEC
Commission Decision 2001/471/EC	L165, 21.06.2001, p.48	Commission Decision of 8 June 2001 laying down rules for the regular checks on the general hygiene carried out by the operators in establishments according to Directive 64/433/EEC on health conditions for the production and marketing of fresh meat and Directive 71/118/EEC on health problems affecting the production and placing on the market of fresh poultry meat
Transitional measures specified in the relevant Annex to the Act of the Accession of the country		