



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
HEALTH AND CONSUMERS DIRECTORATE-GENERAL
Directorate F - Food and Veterinary Office

DG(SANCO) 2010-8826 - MR FINAL

FINAL REPORT OF A MISSION

CARRIED OUT IN

CROATIA

FROM 20 TO 24 SEPTEMBER 2010

IN ORDER TO ASSESS THE ANIMAL HEALTH SITUATION REGARDING CLASSICAL SWINE FEVER AND DISEASE CONTROL MEASURES, WITH A VIEW TO THE POSSIBLE AUTHORISATION OF IMPORTS INTO THE EU OF LIVE PIGS AND CERTAIN PIG PRODUCTS FROM CROATIA

In response to information provided by the Competent Authority, any factual error noted in the draft report has been corrected; any clarification appears in the form of a footnote.

Executive Summary

The present report concerns the outcome of a mission which the Food and Veterinary Office carried out in Croatia from 20 to 24 September 2010 in order to assess the animal health situation regarding classical swine fever (CSF) and disease control measures, with a view to the possible authorisation of imports into the EU of live pigs and certain pig products from Croatia.

The outcome of the mission was that Croatia has a broadly effective animal health control system in place. This is on account of the veterinary presence on the ground, the relevant EU legislation transposed in the framework of the "Acquis Communautaire" transposition for Candidate Countries, the existence of a complex but operational identification and registration system for pigs and pig farms as well as for pig movements and the implementation of active and passive surveillance programmes for CSF. However, the mission team identified some weaknesses in the system, such as some inadequate assessment of compliance with biosecurity standards in pig farms and the existence of small scale pig markets without restrictions to their catchment areas.

In addition, in spite of in depth investigations on the epidemiology and an extensive CSF surveillance programme, the presence of CSF virus in the wild boar population in some regions cannot be ruled out completely. In spite of this situation, acknowledged by the CA, there are no movement restrictions of domestic pigs from those regions towards the rest of the country.

The report includes recommendations to the CAs addressing areas in which further improvements are required.

Table of Contents

1	<u>INTRODUCTION</u>	1
2	<u>OBJECTIVES OF THE MISSION</u>	1
3	<u>LEGAL BASIS FOR THE MISSION</u>	2
4	<u>BACKGROUND</u>	2
4.1	<u>PIG INDUSTRY</u>	2
4.2	<u>OVERVIEW OF THE CSF SITUATION</u>	3
4.2.1	<u>CSF IN DOMESTIC PIGS</u>	3
4.2.2	<u>CSF IN WILD BOARS</u>	6
5	<u>FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS</u>	6
5.1	<u>CROATIAN LEGISLATION</u>	6
5.1.1	<u>LEGAL REQUIREMENTS</u>	6
5.1.2	<u>FINDINGS</u>	7
5.1.3	<u>CONCLUSION</u>	7
5.2	<u>COMPETENT AUTHORITY</u>	7
5.2.1	<u>MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE</u>	7
5.2.2	<u>LEGAL/ENFORCEMENT POWERS</u>	8
5.2.3	<u>CA RESOURCES</u>	9
5.2.4	<u>SUPERVISION AND AUDITING OF CA'S PERFORMANCE</u>	9
5.3	<u>CSF SITUATION AND SURVEILLANCE</u>	10
5.3.1	<u>LEGAL REQUIREMENTS</u>	10
5.3.2	<u>FINDINGS</u>	10
5.3.3	<u>CONCLUSION</u>	12
5.4	<u>IDENTIFICATION AND REGISTRATION, MOVEMENT CONTROLS AND TRACEABILITY</u>	12
5.4.1	<u>LEGAL REQUIREMENTS</u>	12
5.4.2	<u>DESCRIPTION OF THE SYSTEM IN PLACE</u>	12
5.4.3	<u>FINDINGS</u>	14
5.4.4	<u>CONCLUSIONS</u>	15
5.5	<u>CSF CONTROL MEASURES</u>	16
5.5.1	<u>LEGAL REQUIREMENTS</u>	16
5.5.2	<u>FINDINGS</u>	16
5.5.3	<u>CONCLUSIONS</u>	21
5.6	<u>CATERING WASTE FEEDING</u>	21
5.6.1	<u>LEGAL REQUIREMENTS</u>	21
5.6.2	<u>FINDINGS</u>	21
5.6.3	<u>CONCLUSION</u>	22
5.7	<u>TRADE</u>	22
5.7.1	<u>LEGAL REQUIREMENTS</u>	22
5.7.2	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>	22
5.7.3	<u>FINDINGS/OBSERVATIONS</u>	23
5.7.4	<u>CONCLUSION</u>	23
6	<u>OVERALL CONCLUSIONS</u>	24
7	<u>CLOSING MEETING</u>	24
8	<u>RECOMMENDATIONS</u>	24
	<u>ANNEX 1 - LEGAL REFERENCES</u>	26

ABBREVIATIONS AND DEFINITIONS USED IN THIS REPORT

Abbreviation	Explanation
<i>Acquis</i>	Short for <i>Acquis communautaire</i> , i.e. the Union Law which a Candidate Country has to transpose into its national legislation in the framework of the accession process
AV(s)	Authorised Veterinarian(s)
AVO(s)	Authorised Veterinary Organisation(s)
CAA	Croatian Agricultural Agency
CA(s)	Competent Authority (ies)
CCA	Central Competent Authority
CSF	Classical swine fever
CVI	Croatian Veterinary Institute
DCC	Disease Control Centre
DG SANCO	The Health and Consumers Directorate-General of the European Commission
EC	European Commission
EFSA	European Food Safety Authority
ELISA	Enzyme Linked Immunosorbent Assay
EU	European Union
FBO(s)	Food Business Operator(s)
FIC	Farm Identification Card
FR	Farm Register
FVO	Food and Veterinary Office
GIS	Geographical Information System
HR	(ISO code for) Croatia
HRN EN ISO/IEC	Croatian norm for ISO and International Electrotechnical Commission standards
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
LDCC	Local Disease Control Centre
MAFRD	Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Rural Development
NDCC	National Disease Control Centre
NRL	National Reference Laboratory
OG	Official Gazette
OIE	<i>Office International des Epizooties</i> (World Organisation for Animal Health)
Outbreak	Unless otherwise defined, an outbreak of CSF

OV(s)	Official Veterinarian(s)
POR	Certificate "POR" in Annex II to Regulation (EU) No 206/2010
RT-PCR	Reverse Transcription Polymerase Chain Reaction
SVI	State Veterinary Inspector
TAIEX	Technical Assistance Information Exchange Unit
UINF	Unique Identification Number of the Farm
UPR	Unique Pig Register
URDA	Unique Register of Domestic Animals
VD	Veterinary Directorate
VID	Veterinary Inspection Directorate

1 INTRODUCTION

This mission took place in Croatia from 20 to 24 September 2010. The mission was undertaken following an application from Croatia to be approved for certain imports into the European Union (EU). It was the first mission undertaken in Croatia on this subject after a general animal health mission was carried out in 1999 (Reference DG(SANCO)/1158/1999, available on DG SANCO's website ¹).

The mission team comprised two inspectors from the Food and Veterinary Office (FVO) and an observer from the Health and Consumers Directorate-General of the European Commission (DG SANCO) in Brussels. The mission team was accompanied throughout the mission by representatives of the Central Competent Authority (CCA).

An opening meeting was held on 20 September 2010 with representatives of the CAs from central and regional levels. At this meeting, the mission team confirmed the scope of, and the itinerary for, the mission and received additional information from the representatives of the CAs.

2 OBJECTIVES OF THE MISSION

The objective of the mission was to assess the animal health situation in Croatia regarding classical swine fever (CSF), including in wild boars, and the disease control measures taken by the Croatian CA with a view to possibly authorising imports from Croatia into the EU of live pigs and pig products, such as fresh pork and pork products.

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

Site		Number	Remarks
CA at central level		2	Opening and final meetings
CA at regional/local level		3	Different CAs met during on-the-spot visits, both from the regional branches as from the district offices and authorised veterinary organisations.
Disease Control Centres (DCC)		2	Store (private company) for supplying equipment to the NDCC and to LDCCs, and one LDCC
Veterinary Stations		1	Main veterinary station of an Authorised Veterinary Organisation (AVO)
Laboratories		1	Croatian Veterinary Institute
FBOs	Pig farms	3	Two commercial farms and one non-commercial holding
	Pig slaughter plants	1	
	Pork processing plants	(1)	Part of the above mentioned slaughter plant
	Pig markets	1	Small scale market for cattle and pigs
	Pig dealers	1	Rather a person who buys pigs on behalf of a processing company.
	Game assembly centres	2	One registered centre and a small size game holding refrigerator used for the hunters' own consumption

1 http://ec.europa.eu/food/fvo/ir_search_en.cfm

Other	Vehicle cleaning and disinfection installation	2	One in above mentioned slaughterhouse (used only for vehicles delivering pigs to the plant), a second one in the Veterinary Station visited Croatian Agricultural Agency (CAA)
	Control body dealing with pig Identification and Farm registration	1	

3 LEGAL BASIS FOR THE MISSION

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

- Article 46 of Regulation (EC) No 882/2004 of the European Parliament and the Council of 29 April 2004 on official controls performed to ensure the verification of compliance with feed and food law, animal health and animal welfare rules.
- Article 10 of Council Directive 2002/99/EC of 16 December 2002 laying down the animal health rules governing the production, processing, distribution and introduction of products of animal origin for human consumption.

EU legislation cited in this report is listed in the Annex. References to legal acts refer to the latest amended version unless otherwise specified.

4 BACKGROUND

4.1 PIG INDUSTRY

According to information received from the CA before the mission, the pig industry consists of a relatively small number of large commercial holdings while many families in rural areas keep a small number of pigs in their backyards.

Commercial pig holdings are mainly present around the capital and in the east of the country, while coastal areas have few such holdings.

Table: Number of pigs and holdings ranked on the basis of the number of the size of the holding - Figures 2009

Number of pigs per holding	Number of pigs	Number of holdings	% of pigs	% of holdings
1	2,192	2,192	0.14	2.30
2 - 10	273,075	64,374	17.89	67.67
11 - 50	504,704	25,956	33.06	27.28
51 - 100	99,469	1,448	6.52	1.52
101 - 200	80,408	567	5.27	0.60
201 - 500	126,314	419	8.27	0.44
501 - 1000	65,929	98	4.32	0.10
1001 - 2000	63,901	45	4.19	0.05

2001 - 5000	53,428	18	3.50	0.02
5001 -10000	58,645	9	3.84	0.01
> 10000	198,627	10	13.01	0.01
TOTAL	1,526,692	95,136	---	---

Source : annual veterinary inspections of holdings from year 2009 , carried out by authorised veterinarians (AVs) from AVOs .

The table shows that the majority of holdings are small or very small (almost 70% of holdings have 1 to 10 pigs, while almost 30% have from 11 to 50 pigs). Compared to figures provided in 2007 to a TAIEX ² mission team, figures are in strong decline as then about 1.8 million pigs were kept in some 204 000 holdings.

From additional information, it appears that about 80% of the holdings are mixed holdings, i.e. keep both pigs and other livestock.

During the mission, figures were also provided regarding the number of pigs slaughtered and on imports of pigs. From 01.08.2009 to 31.08.2009, 1 107 509 pigs were slaughtered, the large majority (about 50%) in slaughterhouses located in the area under the supervision of the Zagreb regional branch of the VID. More than 10% (184 2088) of the pigs slaughtered were piglets. In 2009, 40 208 slaughter pigs and 604 424 fattening piglets were imported, only from EU Member States.

There are nine approved livestock markets on which pigs are traded, five of them dealing also with other species of livestock. 24 registered livestock dealers trade also with pigs, while there are four dealers registered exclusively dealing in pigs.

According to information received during the mission, breeding farms which do not have their own boars need to apply artificial insemination using semen from an approved insemination centre.

4.2 OVERVIEW OF THE CSF SITUATION

Based on data received before and during the mission and retrieved from notifications to the OIE ³ , the following sections provide an overview of the CSF situation in domestic pigs and in wild boars as well as of surveillance results.

4.2.1 CSF in domestic pigs

As in some other countries in the region, CSF created certain problems for the Croatian pig industry with many outbreaks recorded up to 2002. Following some efforts to control the disease, the clinical situation improved considerably as no outbreaks were recorded between 2003 and July 2006. Until 1 January 2005, CSF control was based on vaccination and on stamping out in the event of an outbreak of the disease. This policy kept the incidence of the disease relatively low, most cases being located in back-yard holdings, some of them being infected by the use of catering waste for the feeding of the pigs.

From 1 January 2005, the strategy changed as CSF vaccination was prohibited from that date and control measures in line with those in the relevant EU legislation, in particular Council Directive

² TAIEX = Technical Assistance Information Exchange Unit

³ OIE = *Office International des Epizooties* (World Organisation for Animal Health)

2001/89/EC, were introduced. The relevant Croatian legislation is laid down in the Ordinance on measures for detection, control and eradication of CSF (OG ⁴ 187/04) and the Ordinance on the diagnostic manual for CSF (OG 16/2005 as amended). More information on legislation is provided in section 5.1 of this report.

As far as catering waste feeding is concerned, however, a complete ban as in the EU provisions was not put in place by the 2004 Ordinance. According to another Ordinance (OG 187/2005), until membership in the EU is achieved, feeding with catering waste was only prohibited on farms holding ten or more pigs, while heat-treated catering waste (minimum 60 minutes at 90C) was permitted to be fed to pigs on holdings with fewer than ten pigs. However, following the first outbreak of CSF in July 2006, catering waste feeding became prohibited in the infected zone, and the prohibition was later extended to the whole territory (as from 28 November 2006 – Order, OG 126/07).

Following a significant reappearance of the disease in domestic pigs from July 2006 (14 outbreaks in five different counties were reported in domestic pigs in 2006 and 108 in nine counties and the City of Zagreb in 2007), an Action Plan was published in January 2008. This Action Plan was based upon five main elements: a) a contingency plan, b) the registration of pig holdings, c) diagnostic capacity, d) an intensified control of illegal movement of pigs and e) a surveillance programme for CSF in wild boars.

Following the introduction of this plan, the situation improved dramatically (with only three outbreaks in domestic pigs recorded in 2008 in small holdings, the last outbreak of CSF in domestic pigs of this episode being notified to the OIE in March 2008 in the Medjimurje county).

Surveillance:

In order to provide for an early detection of CSF infection/disease as well as to provide evidence that there are no CSF seropositive animals due to possible use of illegal vaccination, a structured CSF surveillance programme is in place.

The objectives of the 2010 CSF Surveillance Programme will be achieved through the implementation of the several surveillance strategies, including:

- Daily inspection of pigs by pig keepers and prompt reporting to a veterinarian of any disease or death.
- Post-mortem examination of pigs that died or were killed for diagnostic purposes upon suspicion of CSF, including the mandatory taking of tonsil and spleen or kidney samples for virological testing to rule out CSF;
- Virological testing (for the purpose of ruling out CSF) of:
 - Submitted samples (at least the tonsils, spleen or kidneys) taken from pigs that died or were killed for diagnostic purposes, and, where necessary, of blood samples;
 - virological testing of organs of pigs in which signs leading to the suspicion of CSF were observed during the ante-mortem or post-mortem examination;
 - virological testing of blood samples taken from pigs in pig farms where antibacterial treatment failed to lower the body temperature and improve the health state of pigs in five days (or resulted only in a temporary drop in the body temperature of the pig(s),

4 OG = Official Gazette

after which it increased again);

- Serological testing of pigs (see table below for sample category and site);
- Control of the implementation of biosecurity measures (using the Questionnaire prepared in accordance with item V of the Order on measures to protect animals from infectious and parasitic diseases and the financing thereof).

Farms to be sampled are selected by the CCA and listed in the programme according to the categories (“type of examination”) mentioned in the table.

T able: Surveillance testing for CSF in pigs in 2010

Code	Type of examination	Target group	Sampling site	Sampling frequency
1TK	Serological examination of fattening pigs originating in farms that keep 50 or more pigs	pigs for slaughter	slaughterhouse	once a year
2RF	serological examination of breeding pigs farrowed after 1 January 2005 and over 6 months of age, on farms that keep 10 or more breeding pigs	unvaccinated sows, boars, and gilts	farm	once a year (blood for serological examination for CSF must be taken at the same time as blood for testing for porcine brucellosis, in accordance with the annual Order)
3NBF	mixed farms (sows, gilts, boars, fattening pigs and piglets) keeping 20 or more pigs, in which the implementation of biosecurity measures has been assessed as unsatisfactory	pigs over 4 months of age and unvaccinated sows and boars	farm	once a year (when possible, blood for serological examination for CSF must be taken at the same time as blood for testing for porcine brucellosis, in accordance with the annual Order)
4VSKF	In Vukovar-Srijem County and Sisak-Moslavina County, pigs in some localities (listed) where there is an increased risk of a CSF outbreak due to the presence of CSF in wild boar in that area	pigs over 4 months of age and unvaccinated sows and boars	farm or slaughterhouse	all farms keeping 5 to 50 pigs, twice a year, with an interval of at least 3 months between samplings
5SD	a) in Sisak-Moslavina County, pigs in some localities (listed) b) in Brod-Posavina-County, pigs in one locality (named) c) in Osijek-Baranja County, pigs in some localities (listed); d) in the Vukovar-Srijem County, pigs in some localities (listed)	pigs over 4 months of age and unvaccinated sows and boars	farm	all farms keeping 5 to 50 pigs, three times a year in the localities in the counties listed under (a) and (b), In the localities in the counties listed under (c) and (d), 29 farms in each, selected by the AV and the OV on the basis of the risk assessment taking into account data on (illegal swill) feeding to pigs, frequency of movement of pigs off the holding and in particular data about illegal trade in pigs and the implementation of biosecurity measures.

Source : The 2010 Surveillance Programme for Classical Swine Fever in Domestic Pigs (VD)

4.2.2 CSF in wild boars

Surveillance carried out in the wild boar population between 2005 and 2007 indicated that the virus was present in one hunting area, while seropositivity was noted in several areas, which was explained by previous vaccination campaigns in domestic pigs and contacts between such vaccinated pigs and wild boar (oral vaccination was never carried out in wild boars in Croatia⁵). In view of the results of this action, the CA had decided to continue the efforts regarding surveillance in wild boars and implemented a programme for the whole territory. This surveillance programme is revised annually and its annual implementation and interpretation of the results takes into account the hunting season.

During the episode described above (July 2006 to March 2008) four CSF outbreaks were reported, while an additional case was found and reported to the OIE in November 2008. The latter concerned two out of 17 animals hunted in Sisak-Moslavina County, close to the border with Bosnia-Herzegovina. The confirmation of that case was done on the basis of virological (only the RT-PCR⁶ being positive) and serological (Antibody-ELISA⁵) tests. Earlier, in April 2008, a wild boar had been found positive in another hunting ground, in Vukovar-Srijem County. In that case, not only the RT-PCR was positive, but also the Antigen- ELISA.

Based on the results of serological and virological testing of samples obtained from wild pigs all over the country, only a few areas (one in the southern part of Sisak-Moslavina, one in Karlovac and one in Vukovar-Srijem Counties) are currently considered to be an area of risk of possible CSF infection in wild pigs because of a higher percentage of seropositive animals. Therefore, some additional measures (see section 5.5.2.8 of this report) are in place in those counties.

The surveillance programme 2009-2010 defines the hunting grounds and the number of samples to be taken. Numbers and nature of samples (blood for serology and, in some areas, following a risk analysis, organs for virological analysis) are determined in the programme and a list of hunting grounds to be sampled is attached to it.

5 FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 CROATIAN LEGISLATION

5.1.1 Legal requirements

Article 8, 1), 2nd sub-paragraph, (a), of Directive 2002/99/EC requires the Commission to take particular account of, amongst other criteria, the legislation of the third country when drawing up or updating approved lists of third countries approved for imports of certain commodities into the EU.

Similarly, Article 4, (b), of Directive 2004/68/EC requires the Commission to take particular account of, amongst other criteria, the legislation of the third country when drawing up or updating approved lists of third countries approved for imports of live ungulates.

5 In their response to the draft report, the Croatian CA stated that in many hunting grounds, it used to be a voluntary practice to vaccinate wild pigs caught and kept in fenced areas within the hunting grounds, against CSF and that this is why vaccination is a possible explanation for findings of seropositive wild boars in some parts of the country.

6 RT-PCR = Reverse Transcription Polymerase Chain Reaction; ELISA = Enzyme Linked Immunosorbent Assay

5.1.2 Findings

The mission team received copies of, or information on, the relevant Croatian legislation:

- Veterinary Act (OG 41/07);
- Ordinance on measures for detection, control and eradication of classical swine fever (OG 187/04, 123/08) (transposition of Council Directive 2001/89/EC);
- Ordinance on the diagnostic manual for CSF (OG 16/05, 62/08) (transposition of Commission Decision 2002/106/EC);
- Order on measures to prevent the appearance and spread of classical swine fever in the territory of the Republic of Croatia (OG 32/09);
- Order on measures to protect animals from infectious and parasitic diseases and the financing thereof in 2010 (OG 7/10);
- Instructions regarding the implementation of the above mentioned Order (OG 14/10);
- Ordinance on the notification of animal diseases (OG 31/09);
- Ordinance on the compulsory identification and registration of pigs, transposing Council Regulation (EC) No 21/2004 and Commission Decision 2000/678/EC (OG 51/07);
- Ordinance on veterinary conditions for the movement of bovine and porcine animals (OG 154/08);
- Ordinance on the certification of animals and animal products in international trade (OG 137/08) transposing Council Directive 96/93/EC.

The annual programme for 2010, established by the Order mentioned in the 5th indent above also establishes biosecurity criteria for pig farms. It was explained to the mission team that this was a consequence of the fact that the Veterinary Act did not provide a sufficient base to allow for the direct implementation of penal provisions on such measures.

5.1.3 Conclusion

In general, the Croatian animal health legislation, which is transposing the *Acquis Communautaire*, hereafter called the “*acquis*”, is in line with the different pieces of EU legislation relevant for this mission. However, biosecurity measures cannot be imposed directly in an efficient way on farms in accordance with provisions in the Veterinary Act. The inclusion of such measures in the annual disease control and surveillance programmes, based upon this Act, is an indirect way to overcome this legal gap in a satisfactory way.

Therefore, the relevant conditions of Directives 2002/99/EC and 2004/68/EC are considered to be complied with.

5.2 COMPETENT AUTHORITY

5.2.1 Management Structure

5.2.1.1 Legal requirements

Article 8, 1), 2nd sub-paragraph,(b), of Directive 2002/99/EC and Article 4, (c) of Directive 2004/68/EC require the Commission to take particular account of the organisation of the CA and its inspection services, when drawing up or updating lists of third countries.

Point II.2.3, (d) in the POR certificate laid down in Annex II to Regulation (EC) No 206/2010

(hereafter referred to as “POR”) requires that the pigs whose meat is intended for export to the EU come from holdings which are subject to official controls.

5.2.1.2 Findings

The Croatian CAs for AH issues are constituted by two Directorates under the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Rural Development (MAFRD):

- The Veterinary Directorate (VD) with its Animal Health Sector for policy making, which consists of three departments (both the one for epidemiology and the one for Field Veterinary Services, and Identification and Registration being relevant for this mission);
- The Veterinary Inspection Directorate (VID), with two sectors: a) the Veterinary Inspection Sector, and b) the sector dealing with imports and international trade. This Directorate has six regional offices, responsible for the supervision of the 65 branch offices.

There was no indication during the mission that there was a lack of coordination or collaboration between the two Directorates. The VID is responsible for carrying out the work in the field and has an internal pyramidal supervision on its lower levels. Its State Veterinary Inspectors (SVIs) are implementing the national legislation and disease control programmes, assisted by the work of the authorised veterinarians (AVs) working in authorised veterinary organisations (AVOs). In addition to the AV, approved veterinarians can be appointed by the VD for certification.

The VD has delegated the task of the practical operation of the pig identification and registration database, including the monitoring of purchases of ear tags, to a control body, the Croatian Agricultural Agency (CAA). Although there is a close collaboration between the VD and the CAA, no real audit on the latter's work has taken place in so far.

5.2.2 Legal/enforcement powers

5.2.2.1 Legal requirements

Article 8, 1), 2nd sub-paragraph, (b), of Directive 2002/99/EC requires the Commission also to take particular account of the powers of the CA's inspection services. A similar requirement is foreseen in Article 4, (c) of Directive 2004/68/EC.

5.2.2.2 Findings

The Veterinary Act foresees in its Article 8, paragraph 3 that a veterinary inspector must take the necessary measures regarding movement restrictions in the event of the notification of an outbreak of a notifiable disease. In addition, Article 11 of the same Act grants the Director of the VD a large number of powers to control infectious and parasitic diseases, while the following articles define the powers and obligations for veterinary inspectors and AVs.

During the discussion on a previous CSF outbreak in a district office, it became clear that measures for protective and surveillance zones could not be imposed directly at that level but required a decision from the Minister. In order to obtain an immediate stand still in those zones, however, the local official veterinarian (OV) had requested the AVs to withdraw all movement certificates issued for those zones, pending the adoption of the decision at central level.

5.2.3 CA resources

5.2.3.1 Legal requirements

Article 8, 1), 2nd sub-paragraph, (b), of Directive 2002/99/EC and Article 4, (c) of Directive 2004/68/EC requires the Commission to take also particular account of the means at the disposal of the CA and its inspection services, including staff capacity, to apply their legislation effectively.

5.2.3.2 Findings

In general, the CAs have sufficient manpower and resources. In one branch, however, it was noted that there was only one OV, responsible for a large area. However, through the use of AVs, coverage for the practical work was generally ensured.

The team did not raise the issue of the possible conflict of interest for AVs when carrying out official work in farms in which they are also carrying out private veterinary practice work as from information received, the VID is currently in the process of replacing some of the AVs by OVs.

The team noted that at local level, there was not always the expected level of knowledge and initiative, in spite of training having been carried out.

Generally, there were no indications that there was insufficient equipment at the disposal of the CAs. However, in spite of legal obligations (in accordance with the Ministerial Instructions for the implementation of the disease control programmes 2010, section 14, obliging veterinarians to wear protective clothing and footwear when visiting pig farms (see section 5.5.2.8 of this report), the mission team was not offered such clothing for their visits other than in food producing establishments. It was not clear whether this was due to a lack of the availability of such equipment or because it was not considered necessary as the mission team did not come in close contact with live animals, except during the market visit.

The issue of the supply of materials and equipment to disease control centres is dealt with under the relevant section 5.5.2.3 of this report. However, veterinary inspectors have a toolbox for first line intervention in the event of a suspicion of a contagious disease, such as CSF. This box contains, in particular, sampling material and protective clothing.

5.2.4 Supervision and Auditing of CA's performance

5.2.4.1 Legal requirements

Article 8, 1), 2nd sub-paragraph,(b), of Directive 2002/99/EC requires the Commission to take also particular account of the supervision to which the CA and its inspection services are subject.

5.2.4.2 Findings

As explained above, the VID carries out effective supervision on the lower levels, i.e. the branch offices being supervised by the relevant regional one. At least once a year, such supervision in the branches is carried out with the participation of the central department of the VID.

The Audit Department of the MAFRD, directly under the responsibility of the Minister, carries out regular audits of specific fields of activity of the different Departments in this Ministry, including

the VD and VID. Their staff consists only of three persons, of which one is a trained auditor. Several audits have been carried out in recent years on animal welfare, feedstuffs, approval of FBOs and imports and apparently these audits were carried out in line with the relevant provisions of Article 4.6 of Regulation (EC) No 882/2004. According to information received, an audit on the performance of the CAs regarding animal health is planned for the first half of 2011.

Conclusions on Competent Authorities

Through the Veterinary Act, the CAs have in general sufficient powers regarding animal health, in particular to impose restrictive measures on farms and animals, to sample farms and/or animals in the event of a suspicion of disease, to order the killing and destruction and to prepare and implement disease control, surveillance and eradication programmes. However, for certain aspects of the emergency work, direct powers are insufficient necessitating the use of indirect powers to achieve standstill measures in certain areas.

Although their structures are somewhat complex, the collaboration between the VD and the VID appears to function well. In general, the CAs have sufficient manpower as some of the activities are carried out by AVOs. A chain of command is in place and appears to be generally effective but audits of the animal health services have not taken place.

5.3 CSF SITUATION AND SURVEILLANCE

5.3.1 Legal requirements

Article 8, 1), 2nd sub-paragraph, (g) of Directive 2002/99/EC requires the Commission to take also particular account of the health status of livestock, other domestic animals and wildlife in the third country, with particular regard to exotic animal diseases and any aspects of the general health situation in the country which might pose a risk to public or animal health in the Community. Point (i) of the same sub-paragraph indicates the rules on the prevention and control of infectious or contagious animal diseases in force and their implementation, including rules on imports from other countries as another criteria to be taken into account.

Article 14 of Commission Regulation (EU) No 206/2010 prescribes that fresh pork needs to comply with the requirements of the POR certificate in Annex II to that Regulation. In accordance with Point II.2.1 the country of origin in which the fresh pork was obtained needs to be free from CSF for 12 months and may not have vaccinated against CSF during the last 12 months.

5.3.2 Findings

Before and during the mission, the mission team received detailed information regarding the epidemiological situation for CSF and its evolution in recent years. A summary of this information is described in section 4.2 of this report.

Although the last outbreak in domestic pigs was eradicated in March 2008, a number of questions remain unanswered, in particular the origin of the different primary outbreaks. As a matter of fact, while the spread within the different clusters could be reasonably well explained by local personal contacts, common use of equipment and some illegal local trade, it was not clear why the disease occurred in a relatively short period in different spots which were not linked to a particular cluster. While it is thought that the original index case in 2006 was caused by illegal trade, it is not completely clear from where the virus was introduced and how the disease could continue to spread

in the pig population for a relatively long period.

However, the post-infection screening carried out in 2008 and 2009 seems to demonstrate that there are no remaining pockets of CSF virus in domestic pigs left in the country.

Figures were provided regarding the number of virological tests carried out either because of a clinical or epidemiological suspicion of CSF or for other reasons:

Table: Numbers of holdings with a CSF suspicion (application measures of Article 4 of the Ordinance on measures for detection, control and eradication of CSF) Reference period 2007 to 2010 (January to August)

Year	Number of holdings with CSF suspicions	Number of confirmed CSF outbreaks	Number of CSF suspicions ruled out
2007	209	128	81
2008	9	3	6
2009	4	0	4
2010	11	0	11

Table: Other pig holdings from which samples were tested for CSF (without application measures of the above mentioned Article 4) ⁷

Year	Number of holdings where CSF was ruled out	Number of CSF positive findings
2008	46	0
2009	14	0
2010	29	0

In different sites visited, evidence was available of the serological surveillance results.

The CSF situation in wild boars is less clear in view of remaining positive serology which cannot be explained through maternal antibodies or potential historic contacts with the virus, in view of the age of the wild boars tested. Nevertheless, no virus has been isolated for almost two years. In addition, the unclear serological results occur only in two hunting grounds in two different counties, one of them (Sisak-Moslavaka) with a low density of pigs.

The team saw documentation on the sampling of wild boar carcasses demonstrating the actual implementation of the programme.

⁷ E.g. due to dead/sick pigs or pigs not responding to antibiotic treatment. On these holdings no relevant epidemiological factors or other information indicating possible introduction of CSF virus were found, so official CSF suspicion was not considered by OV or AV.

5.3.3 Conclusion

The CSF situation in Croatia has improved significantly in recent years as there have been no outbreaks in domestic pigs since March 2008. In addition, figures provided regarding testing either in the framework of a clinical or epidemiological suspicion, or for other reasons underline this improvement.

Nevertheless, the situation in wild boars is less clear, in particular in certain hunting grounds in two counties in the East and Centre of the country. Even though some additional measures have been taken by the CA to mitigate the risk of introduction of CSF virus possibly present in the wild boar population to domestic pigs (see section 5.5.2.8 of this report), this situation remains a possible threat for re-appearance of CSF outbreaks.

5.4 IDENTIFICATION AND REGISTRATION, MOVEMENT CONTROLS AND TRACEABILITY

5.4.1 Legal requirements

Article 8, Paragraph 1 of Council Directive 2002/99/EC requires the Commission to take particular account of the rules on the prevention and control of these diseases and their implementation when drawing up or updating the lists of countries approved to export to the EU. Indirectly, a reliable system of registration of holdings, identification of animals and registration of movements is a *conditio sine qua non* to control efficiently certain diseases.

Although there are no explicit requirements in the animal health statement of the POR certificate regarding registration of pig holdings, identification of pigs, movement controls and traceability, indirectly the under-signing OV has to rely on an adequate system for these issues in order to be able to guarantee that the conditions on the live pigs and on the farm of origin (statements under II.2.2 and II.2.3 of POR) are complied with. In addition, point II.2.4, (b) of POR requires that pigs have been transported from the holding to the slaughterhouse in vehicles which have been cleaned and disinfected before loading.

5.4.2 Description of the system in place

5.4.2.1 Registration of holdings and central database

The CA provided the mission team with full details of the recently introduced comprehensive system for farm registration, pig identification and movement registration.

In the past, pig identification was carried out by AVOs in accordance with legislation dating from 1993 and farms were registered by the same organisations.

As from June 2007, a new system was started based upon the Ordinance on the compulsory identification and registration of pigs (OG 51/07). The VD has delegated the practical implementation of this new system to the CAA which runs the database containing information on registered pig holdings and on identification and movements of pigs.

The new system is consisting of several elements: the Unique Register of Domestic Animals (URDA), comprising the Farm Register (FR), the Farm Identification Card (FIC) and, as far as pig identification and movement registration are concerned, the Unique Pig Register (UPR). All these data are recorded in the database kept by the CAA.

Registration in the FR (designed for all species of livestock) is compulsory for all pig farms, except for farms with one pig only, which have to be registered by the relevant AVO. A hard copy has to be kept on the farm and updated continuously by recording movements of pigs, as well as births and deaths.

In the FR, the holdings have a unique identification number of the farm (UINF), consisting of the ISO ⁸ code for Croatia (HR) followed by a numeric code of 8 digits. This UINF is used for the identification of the pigs (except for farms authorised to use tattooing).

The FR contains also the geographic coordinates of the farms allowing GIS (Geographic Information System) mapping.

In addition, registered farms receive a FIC, which should be shown during checks and for applying movement documents. Apart from the UINF and possible tattoo code, it carries a serial card number.

Data in the farm are checked by the AVs during their pre-movement visits and, where necessary, updated. The system foresees also an annual supervisory visit from the competent AVO during which the numbers of animals in the different categories have to be checked. In addition, the keeper of the pigs has to declare annually on 1 December the number of the pigs present at the farm to the CAA using a census form.

5.4.2.2 Identification of pigs

The database mentions also the special number granted to holdings which are allowed to use tattoo numbers. This number consist of HR followed by 5 digits, the three first ones being 000 (which do not need to be used for the tattooing).

According to the information received, all pigs leaving the farm of origin for a movement to another farm, to a market, assembly centre or slaughterhouse, need to be identified. This can be done either by an ear tag supplied to the pig keeper by a company approved for this purpose by the VD or by tattoo. The supply of the ear tags is monitored by the CAA. A description on the numbering system is provided in the previous section.

Ear tags can be placed either by the pig keeper, provided he holds a certificate for this issued by the CAA, an AV or by a CAA agent.

5.4.2.3 Movement controls, including measures in place for cleaning and disinfection of vehicles used for animal movements

According to Croatian legislation, all pig movements need to be accompanied by:

- A health certificate issued by an AV after a visit to the farm of origin and after he or she has checked the health status of the holding and the identification of the pigs as well as the records kept on the farm. The visit to the farm is not necessary for issuing health certificates regarding consecutive movements within 30 days of a previous farm visit.
- A movement document issued by the keeper of the pigs, mentioning the FR and FIC numbers and the ear tags or tattoo numbers used to identify the pigs, as well as the holding

8 ISO = International Organization for Standardization

of destination and information regarding the transport. While the original, blue form accompanies the pigs to destination, a yellow copy must be provided to the AVO within three days (the latter has, in turn, three days to download the information into the database) and the (green) stub remains at the farm of origin.

As far as cleaning and disinfection of transport vehicles are concerned, this is compulsory for all vehicles used for the commercial transport of pigs before a new consignment is loaded.

5.4.2.4 Traceability

In the slaughter and processing plant visited, a system was in place which allowed the FBO to trace back to the day of production but not to the individual farm of origin of the live pigs if pigs from more than one farm were slaughtered on a given day.

Carcasses of hunted wild boar get a tag with a unique number referring to the hunting season, the hunter and the species. This system is run by the Department of Forestry. It allows traceability, including to the area in which the animal was shot.

5.4.3 Findings

In all farms visited, the FR was available and kept reasonably well updated. The farms had also the green FIC.

In one mixed farm visited, the fattening part of it was separate from the breeding part and located at the other side of the village, at some 500m distance. In spite of some possible epidemiological consequences, this farm was registered with one number and, according to the information received, the coordinates referred to a central point in between, so not to the real sites.

In different sites visited, the mission team could observe the input of the information from movement documents into the database. No problems were noted.

The mission team verified during the visits in different sites certain aspects of the system and found the following:

- In the slaughter plant visited, all pigs in the lairages were identified either by tattoo in one ear or by a plastic ear tag, the latter being either the Croatian one which had been described to the team at the opening meeting or a tag used in the EU member State of origin at the time the pigs had been imported into Croatia (as piglet). However, not all tattoo numbers (i.e. HR + two digits) were complete (in a few cases part of the second digit was missing because the tattoo had been put too close of the edge of the ear) and some were not easy to read on live pigs.
- In the Veterinary Station visited, the AV mentioned that farmers would normally use three digits for tattoos rather than two. This statement contradicts the observations made in the slaughterhouse (see below).
- In this context, it is useful to note that if the tattoo number remains restricted to two digits, the system can only be used for 99 farms. If the full number of five digits were to be used, allowing up to 99 999 holdings to use tattoos, there is a risk that the numbers will become too small to remain easily legible.
- According to the case, the movement documents accompanying the pigs to the

slaughterhouse mentioned the tattoo or ear tag number referring to the farm number but not necessarily the serial number.

- On checking tattoo numbers (recorded in the slaughterhouse) in the database at the CAA, they led to the breeding farm, but through the movement records it was possible to trace also back to the fattening farm which had supplied the pigs to the slaughterhouse.
- The ear tag numbers checked in the database led to the fattening farms concerned as indicated in the accompanying documents.
- At the market, all pigs seen were ear tagged and the movement documents mentioned the numbers of these ear tags.

During the various visits, the mission team noted that all documents required for the movements checked were available and that they were generally well completed. Visits of the AVs to issue the certificates were generally recorded in the visitors' register kept in the farm.

The mission team could see documentation on operations for cleaning and disinfection of pig transport vehicles both at the slaughter plant and at the veterinary station visited. In both cases, staff from the relevant AVO were supervising and documenting the operations. However, there is no obligation for pig keepers to clean and disinfect the vehicles they use for transporting their own pigs.

The mission team checked briefly the accuracy of the traceability system in the slaughter and processing plant visited and found that it enabled one to find the relevant movement documents for a given batch of produce.

In the game cold store visited, the two available wild board carcasses were tagged. The forms checked afterwards for the sampling mentioned the tag numbers.

5.4.4 Conclusions

A complex, but sophisticated system is in place for pig farm registration, pig identification and pig movement registration. All relevant information is recorded in a performing database. In spite of the fact that the system has been introduced only a few years ago, the system appears to be adequately implemented throughout the pig industry, including backyard holdings.

A few weaknesses were seen, such as the fact that the claim that pigs are individually identifiable cannot be fully substantiated as farms using a tattoo number do not necessarily use serial numbers and serial numbers of ear tags are not always mentioned in accompanying movement documents. In addition, without those documents, it is not possible to find intermediate farms if the pigs have been identified as a piglet in the breeding farm.

The systems in place regarding identification of pigs, registration of their movements and of farms, movement controls and traceability are such that they enable the CA to complete the relevant statements of the import certificate POR laid down in the Annex II to Regulation (EC) No 206/2010. While the cleaning and disinfection system of vehicles is generally adequate to provide the guarantees needed, an exemption exists for farmers moving their own animals.

5.5 CSF CONTROL MEASURES

5.5.1 Legal requirements

Article 8, Paragraph 1 of Council Directive 2002/99/EC requires the Commission to take particular account of the regularity, speed and accuracy with which third countries supply information on the existence of infectious or contagious animal diseases on their territories, as well as of the rules on the prevention and control of these diseases and their implementation when drawing up or updating the lists of countries approved to export to the EU. Access to reliable laboratory facilities is a technical prerequisite for eligibility.

According to point II.2.1 in the POR certificate, the certifying officer has to state that the animals come from a territory which has been free for 12 months from CSF.

5.5.2 Findings

5.5.2.1 Contingency Plan for CSF

The mission team found that a contingency plan was in place, namely the latest revision, dated February 2010. It was available in the district offices visited and had the necessary regional and local additional information. The plan was structured in a way to cover the different relevant provisions of Council Directive 2001/89/EC.

In the instruction on how to kill pigs in the framework of the control and eradication of CSF, attached to the contingency plan, one of the methods prescribed is a lethal injection of a certain product, which is known to paralyse respiratory muscles while leaving the animal fully conscious.

This product was also available in the store of the private company, which has a contract with the VD to supply certain equipment and products to the LDCCs in the framework of the contingency plan. In an EFSA⁹ opinion of 2004, it is recommended not to use this product for killing conscious animals¹⁰

5.5.2.2 Legal powers, including for emergency situations

The mission team was informed that the provisions of the Veterinary Act do not allow the regional or local OVAs to delineate a protection or surveillance zone around an outbreak of CSF, as this is a responsibility of the NDCC and the Minister. For the 2007 outbreaks, discussed during one of the visits, it was explained by the regional and local OVAs that to overcome this legal problem, the local CA had immediately reacted by requiring the relevant AVOs to withdraw all issued health certificates for all holdings located in the 3 and 10 kilometre zone around a confirmed outbreak, thus obtaining a *de facto* stand-still in those zones. When zones are drawn by the central level, they include whole villages even if only a part of them were to fall into the zone.

There are no apparent legal reasons preventing the local CA from imposing animal health restrictions on a farm in which CSF is suspected to occur or has been confirmed.

9 EFSA = European Food Safety Authority

10 Opinion of the Scientific Panel on Animal Health and Welfare on a request from the Commission related to welfare aspects of the main systems of stunning and killing the main commercial species of animals, *The EFSA Journal* (2004), 45, 1-29 (Question N° EFSA-Q-2003-093) - Adopted on the 15th of June 2004 (http://www.efsa.europa.eu/EFSA/efsa_locale-1178620753812_1178620775454.htm)

5.5.2.3 Organisation and chain of command

5.5.2.3.1 National Disease Control Centre (NDCC)

According to information in the CSF contingency plan, the National Disease Control Centre for the control and eradication of classical swine fever has been established by the Decision of the Minister, CLASS: 322-01/05-01/399 Reg. No.: 525-6-05-1, pursuant to the Veterinary Act, Article 18, paragraph 3. The plan defines its functions and staffing arrangements. It indicates also that the NDCC shall be activated as soon as a CSF suspicion occurs in the country, but it does not prescribe the mechanism to do so.

The team noted that there is no specific premises reserved to act as an NDCC. In the event of an outbreak of any major contagious disease, the VD headquarters are serving as the NDCC.

5.5.2.3.2 Local Disease Control Centre

While the contingency plan describes the establishment of the LDCCS, their functioning, staffing and equipment, it does not prescribe the procedure for activating them.

In peace time, officials who are nominated to be part of the LDCC, have regular meetings to discuss problems which could occur, such as availability of supplies, updating of contact lists etc. However, the LDCC is only formally activated upon.

In the district (county) office visited where this issue was discussed, the LDCC had two sub-centres, located in designated AVOs. Such sub-centres can be headed either by AVs or OVs, while the LDCC has to be headed by the SVI. The LDCC itself had no dedicated premises and no maps were available of the area. However, maps could be obtained from the CCA/NDCC through the GIS system linked to the URDA database. In addition, the team was explained that an arrangement was in place with the relevant services to avail of detailed maps without delay when needed.

As far as other equipment and material is concerned, the mission team visited the company who won the tender for keeping certain material and equipment available to the LDCCs. The contract for this concluded with the VD did not provide for used materials to be replaced. A stock-list was available as well as records on the supplies delivered.

For urgent investigations, e.g. in the event of a new suspicion, each OV has at his/her disposal a crate with some material for entering farms (protective clothing and disinfectant) and sampling animals.

5.5.2.4 Provision of resources

The Veterinary Act and the CSF contingency plan provide for additional staff to be made available from other districts when this is needed for the control of a significant outbreak in a region. The plan also provides for the financial aspects linked to CSF control and eradication.

There was no information available that problems with resources would have delayed the eradication of the disease during previous epidemics.

5.5.2.5 Epidemiological capacity

5.5.2.5.1 Disease investigation

Different forms are available to the OVs and AVS to carry out their epidemiological inquiries. Information from these forms was analysed at central level by the expert group, lead by a trained epidemiologist. A detailed report on this analysis was available and the mission team received an overview of its headlines.

5.5.2.5.2 Diagnostic laboratories and methods

According to the veterinary Act, the Croatian Veterinary Institute (CVI), an Institute under the MAFRD, is responsible for testing samples for CSF, either in the framework of disease suspicion or for surveillance purposes. For the latter, one of its branches, Vinkovci, carries out serological testing (antibody ELISA).

The CVI is accredited for CSF testing in accordance with the HRN EN ISO/IEC 17025:2005¹¹ standards. It participates in inter-laboratory proficiency testing organised by the Community Reference Laboratory for CSF and the mission team could observe that the results were satisfactory. In turn, it organised the national proficiency testing for its branch laboratory.

Information was also available to the team regarding the capacity calculation both in peace time and in the event of a major outbreak. A laboratory contingency plan was available. A protocol for the procedure to follow when unfit samples are received was available and its application documented. Figures on unsuitable samples were provided to the team.

Testing methods are those laid down in Commission Decision 2002/106/EC as this is integrally transposed into Croatian Law.

5.5.2.6 Awareness programmes

In the information received before the mission, the different leaflets used to raise awareness amongst pig keepers and hunters have been provided. It was also stated that one of those leaflets had been distributed to all farmers during the annual supervisory visit from the AVO.

In one of the farms visited, the farmer stated that he had not received such a leaflet but he appeared to be informed through the website of the VD and the CAA on his obligations regarding notification of CSF suspicion and regarding the identification of his pigs, as well as on the requirements regarding the keeping and updating of the FR and the use of the movement documents.

¹¹ HRN EN ISO/IEC = Croatian norm for ISO and International Electrotechnical Commission standards

5.5.2.7 Training and simulation exercises

5.5.2.7.1 Staff training in relation to CSF

The mission team received information before the mission on training organised in relation to CSF control. In general, OV's and most AV's met were well aware of their duties and about the official controls to be carried out. One of the OV's, however, had some doubts on the significance of the presence of CSF-seropositive wild boars in the territory she was responsible for.

5.5.2.7.2 Simulation / scenarios

The CA informed the mission team before the mission that no simulation exercises had been organised for CSF, in particular as the experience in recent disease control was properly evaluated in a real situation.

5.5.2.8 Additional disease control measures

Different additional measures have been taken by the Croatian CA to mitigate the risk of introduction of CSF and spread of CSF if introduction were to occur. It concerns:

1. Temporary additional restriction measures in certain areas related to the situation in wild boars (Order on measures to prevent the appearance and spread of CSF in the territory of the Republic of Croatia - OG 32/09).
 - Generally applicable measures such as
 - A complete ban on feeding catering waste to pigs: findings with regard this ban are reported upon in section 5.6 of this report,
 - A prohibition of natural servicing with animals not belonging to the herd,
 - A ban on pasturing of pigs,
 - An obligation to disinfect markets,
 - An obligation to report dead pigs and wild boar and to sample them for CSF testing,
 - An obligation to sample pigs if a five days antibiotic treatment fails to lead to the expected improvement.
 - Measures regarding areas in which CSF in wild boars is not completely excluded in view of the results of surveillance. It concerns described areas in Vukovar-Srijem County in which an infected zone and a surveillance zone are determined.

Measures concern in particular:

- In the whole county, measures to avoid contact between wild boar and domestic pigs including through persons working in the forest and through equipment.

- In the infected zone, the compulsory virological (and, if possible, serological) testing of hunted wild boars for CSF,
 - The obligation to wait for the result of that testing before using the carcass,
 - The putting on the market for further processing only of the carcasses for which a negative result was obtained.
2. A number of Resolutions issued by the SVI responsible for the areas in which hunting grounds in Sisak-Moslavina County are located for which additional measures apply. These Resolutions, dated in November-December 2008, some of them updated in December 2009 and based upon Articles 18 and 138 of the Veterinary Act and Article 212 of the General Administrative Procedures Act (OG No. 53/91), define mainly measures regarding wild boars. These measures are similar to the ones described above for Vukovar-Srijem County.
 3. Similar Resolutions for Karlovac County are located for which additional measures apply (dated in 2010).
 4. The Order defining the 2010 programme for certain diseases (OG 7/10):
 - Its chapter VI on zoo-sanitary measures defines biosecurity standards, in particular for pig farms. These standards are dependant of farm size and concern rodent control, fencing, removal of dead animals, disinfection of vehicles, visitor access, etc. Findings with regard these provisions are reported upon in section 5.5.2.9 of this report,
 - In Chapter III, section 15 on diagnosis for CSF, the annual Surveillance programmes for CSF in domestic pigs and wild boars respectively and their financing, through the State Budget are established,
 - The same section provides for the obligation, for the AV to ensure individual identification of pigs sampled in the framework of CSF control or surveillance programmes,
 - In addition, in the instructions on the implementation of this Order (OG 14/10), section 14, prescribes the hygiene measures to be taken into account by veterinarians when visiting pig farms, such as use of protective clothing and footwear.

5.5.2.9 *Holdings*

As described under section 5.5.2.8, additional measures apply regarding biosecurity aspects for pig farms, depending on their size. The mission team noted that some of the farms visited had a satisfactory to high level of biosecurity measures in place.

However, in two farms visited, the criteria of the Order mentioned in section 5.5.2.8, point 2 were not respected: important features such as fences, surfaced unloading area, disinfection barrier for vehicles, were missing. Recent inspection reports on those two farms were available: in one of them, concerning a very small farm, a missing feature was indicated with a note that in view of the size of the farm the OV granted a “tolerance”, even though this possibility is not foreseen in the relevant Order. This Order already takes into account the size of the farm for defining the nature of

minimum requirements to be respected, including backyard farms. In the larger farm, the inspection report issued on 15.03.2010, mentioned that there were no shortcomings regarding biosecurity, but nevertheless suggested to the owner of the farm to surface the access road.¹² That inspection report did not use the checklist which the CCA had foreseen for this kind of assessment. This farm did not only fatten its own piglets but was also used to re-distribute part of the consignments of imported piglets after an observation period, to other fattening farms.

5.5.3 Conclusions

The measures foreseen in Croatian Law regarding preparedness for CSF outbreaks are largely met. In addition, the CA has adopted some additional measures which provide further guarantees on the health status of the Croatian pig industry, if properly applied.

However, some issues were noted, in particular regarding some aspects of the equipment for disease control centres or the described use of a certain method for killing in the event of an outbreak is not in line with the general provisions of Article 3 of Council Directive 93/119/EC. More importantly, some OVs responsible for the supervision of biosecurity aspects in farms, assessed inadequately some of those aspects or applied tolerance in their appreciation which are not foreseen in the relevant Croatian legislation.

5.6 CATERING WASTE FEEDING

5.6.1 Legal requirements

According to point II.2.3, (d) in the POR certificate laid down in Annex II to Regulation (EC) No 206/2010, pigs used to produce the meat for export must come from holdings for which an undertaking has been issued that catering waste is not used for feeding the pigs. This guarantee has to be provided when certifying only when the pork is originating from countries for which a special annotation has been made in the table of Part 1 of Annex II.

This is a provision equivalent to the ban imposed, within the EU, by Article 24 of Directive 2001/89/EC.

5.6.2 Findings

While the original Croatian Ordinance transposing Directive 2001/89/EC had left a derogation for small holdings (up to ten pigs) to continue – until the date of Accession - using catering waste for the feeding of their pigs provided it was adequately heat treated, an amendment of this Ordinance in 2008 (OG 23/08) repealed this provision. Hence the use of catering waste is now banned in the whole territory and for all types of pig farms. Before that it was also prohibited as from 2006 on the basis of temporary CSF control measures, one of them still being in place (Order of 2.03.09, published in OG 32/09, see section 5.5.2.8) . The mission team did not find any indication which could lead to the suspicion that this ban was not widely respected even if many smaller and medium-size farms use own grown crops to feed their pigs.

In addition, some figures were available regarding the enforcement of this prohibition. The figures showed a decrease in numbers of infringements between 2007 and 2009.

¹² It is interesting to note that the CCA representative indicated that this farm had been sampled in the framework of active surveillance as it had been identified as a possible risk farm. It is also useful to mention that the CCA provided documented evidence at the final meeting on corrective action imposed on this farm. However, this corrective action did not address the OV's assessment.

Table: Official controls on the use of catering waste feeding

2007			2008			2009		
Number of official controls	Official decisions	Motions to indict	Number of official controls	Official decisions	Motions to indict	Number of official controls	Official decisions	Motions to indict
867	209	18	559	47	5	606	54	6

5.6.3 Conclusion

The ban in place on the use of catering waste for the feeding in place and the enforcement controls thereon allow the CA to certify that pigs in the holding of origin have not been fed with catering waste, as requested by the relevant provision in the POR certificate in Annex II to Regulation (EC) No 206/2010.

5.7 TRADE

5.7.1 Legal requirements

Article 8, Paragraph 1 of Council Directive 2002/99/EC requires the Commission to take particular account of the of the rules on the prevention and control of these diseases and their implementation when drawing up or updating the lists of countries approved to export to the EU.

5.7.2 Description

As explained in the section regarding the CSF epidemics in previous years, domestic trade in pigs and, in particular, piglets, has been a major source of secondary CSF outbreaks in those epidemics.

Currently, in view of the fact that many farms are specialised fattening farms, large numbers of piglets are traded, sometimes over long distances between regions. Similarly, as most of the pig meat industry is concentrated in a few counties only, slaughter pigs have sometimes to travel over long distances to reach the slaughterhouse. Although no clinical CSF occurs for the time being and no CSF virus has been isolated since 2008, the possible persistence of virus in the wild boar population in some areas as indicated in section 5.3 could mean that there is a different health status from one region to another.

In addition, a large proportion of pig farms are very small to medium sized farms, likely to result in more individual pig movements taking place.

The existence of markets which act as collection centres for piglets sold by small scale farms and which then could be transported over long distances to collection centres constitutes another added risk for spread of disease if CSF were to re-appear. This risk is mitigated, however, by the fact that markets need to be formally approved by the VD (and registered in the URDA, identified through a code consisting of HR+seven digits), by the official market supervision and the fact that pigs can only be brought to the market if they are identified in accordance with the official identification system and are accompanied by the necessary movement documents and health certificates. As such, markets are considered to be a holding, so movement documents made for pigs going to the market mention their UINF as destination and when the pigs leave the market to go to their new

destination, they need to be accompanied with new documents.

In total, nine markets which deal with pigs (not necessarily exclusively) are registered in the URDA. Similar provisions exist for assembly centres (11 registered in the URDA).

A number of pig dealers (27 on 18.08.2010) operate in Croatia, some also in other livestock species, some specifically in pigs. They have an approval number issued by the VD (HR + five digits) and a list was available to the team.

5.7.3 Findings/observations

The CCA representatives confirmed that there were no general pig movement restrictions in place between different regions in Croatia, in spite of the existence of temporary additional restriction measures in certain areas related to the situation in wild boars (Order on measures to prevent the appearance and spread of CSF in the territory of the Republic of Croatia OG 32/09). However, certain restrictions apply as this Order bans the movement of pigs to another holding in view of natural servicing in the whole country.

During the visit to a local market, the team found that:

- Official supervision was in place through the presence of an AV;
- All pigs present at the market (only a small number of weaned piglets) were accompanied with the required documents and were identified with the plastic ear tag;
- Access to the market was through a wheel disinfection or boot disinfection mat, but both were in a poor condition and the team was not provided with protective clothing;
- No cleaning and disinfection of vehicles took place on the market and in particular the trailers used by pig keepers bringing their own animals had not been cleaned thoroughly.

One fattening farm visited with low biosecurity standards served also as a re-distribution centre of imported piglets: while part of the consignments stayed in the farm itself for completing the fattening, part of the pigs were moved to other fattening farms after an observation period of 30 days. As such, it necessitated a number of additional movements and contacts.

As far as the dealer was concerned, the team was able to check his documentation in the VID offices in the meat processing plant for which he was working. As such he was rather a buyer for that company than a real independent dealer.

5.7.4 Conclusion

The structure of the pig industry in Croatia combined with the existence of small scale markets which are not completely satisfactory in relation to cleaning and disinfection of vehicles and have no distance restriction as far as the origin and destination of the marketed pigs is concerned constitute a certain risk for spread of CSF virus if it were to reappear. Similarly, this risk could be increased through the fact that no additional pig movement restrictions are in place on areas for which the presence of CSF virus in wild boars cannot be completely excluded in view of surveillance results.

The practice of re-distributing pigs from a fattening farm, in particular in view of its low biosecurity

standards, could constitute an additional risk for further spread of pig diseases if any were to occur.

6 OVERALL CONCLUSIONS

In general, it can be concluded that Croatia has a broadly effective animal health control system in place. This is on account of the veterinary presence on the ground, the relevant EU legislation transposed in the framework of the “*A cquis Communautaire*” transposition for Candidate Countries, the existence of a complex but operational identification and registration system for pigs and pig farms as well as for pig movements and the implementation of active and passive surveillance programmes for CSF. However, the mission team identified some weaknesses in the system, such as some inadequate assessment of compliance with biosecurity standards in pig farms and the existence of small scale pig markets without restrictions to their catchment areas.

In addition, in spite of in depth investigations on the epidemiology and an extensive CSF surveillance programme, the presence of CSF virus in the wild boar population in some regions cannot be ruled out completely. In spite of this situation, acknowledged by the CA, there are no movement restrictions of domestic pigs from those regions towards the rest of the country.

7 CLOSING MEETING

The FVO team held a closing meeting with the CCA, the field services and other relevant authorities on 24 September 2010, at which the main findings and preliminary conclusions of the mission were presented. The CCA provided further data requested during the mission.

In addition, they demonstrated the issuance of a corrective action decision for the fattening farm in which significant biosecurity deficiencies were noted.

8 RECOMMENDATIONS

The Competent Authorities of Croatia are invited to present an action plan describing the action taken or planned in response to the recommendations of this report and setting out a time table, and a description of the actions taken to correct the deficiencies identified, within 25 working days of receipt of the report. In particular, the CCA should

N°.	Recommendation
1.	Consider organising, as a matter of priority, an audit on the performance of the CA regarding certain aspects of their work, including assessment of biosecurity criteria and the implementation of the identification and registration system, in line with the principles laid down in Article 4 of Regulation (EC) No 882/2004.
2.	Take the necessary precautions when visiting farms and markets as imposed in the national legislation and provide official visitors to farms and markets with the

N°.	Recommendation
	necessary protective clothing in order to prevent any disease possibly present in those premises from spreading to other sites, in line with Article 8, Paragraph 1 of Directive 2002/99/EC.
3.	Consider providing the diseases control centres at different levels with a more direct access to the necessary equipment and maps in order not to loose time if an outbreak of CSF were to occur in the future in line with Article 8, Paragraph 1 of Directive 2002/99/EC. In that context, they should consider what clauses are required in the contract with the company concerning the supply of material and equipment for replacing depleted stocks.
4.	Re-consider, for the purpose of killing pigs in the framework of CSF control, the use of lethal injections taking into account the principles of Article 3 of Council Directive 93/119/EC.
5.	Consider the adoption of additional movement restrictions from regions in which the absence of CSF virus in wild boars is not completely excluded, in line with the principles of Article 8, Paragraph 1 of Council Directive 2002/99/EC.
6.	Consider to further intensify the investigations in hunting grounds in which they have identified a possible risk that CSF virus might be present in wild boars.

The competent authority's response to the recommendations can be found at:

http://ec.europa.eu/food/fvo/ap/ap_hr_2010-8826.pdf

ANNEX 1 - LEGAL REFERENCES

Legal Reference	Official Journal	Title
Dir. 93/119/EC	OJ L 340, 31.12.1993, p. 21-34	Council Directive 93/119/EC of 22 December 1993 on the protection of animals at the time of slaughter or killing
Dir. 96/93/EC	OJ L 13, 16.1.1997, p. 28-30	Council Directive 96/93/EC of 17 December 1996 on the certification of animals and animal products
Dir. 2001/89/EC	OJ L 316, 1.12.2001, p. 5-35	Council Directive 2001/89/EC of 23 October 2001 on Community measures for the control of classical swine fever
Dir. 2002/99/EC	OJ L 18, 23.1.2003, p. 11-20	Council Directive 2002/99/EC of 16 December 2002 laying down the animal health rules governing the production, processing, distribution and introduction of products of animal origin for human consumption
Dir. 2004/68/EC	OJ L 139, 30.4.2004, p. 321-360. Corrected and re-published in OJ L 226, 25.6.2004, p. 128.	Council Directive 2004/68/EC of 26 April 2004 laying down animal health rules for the importation into and transit through the Community of certain live ungulate animals, amending Directives 90/426/EEC and 92/65/EEC and repealing Directive 72/462/EEC
Reg. 882/2004	OJ L 165, 30.4.2004, p. 1, Corrected and re-published in OJ L 191, 28.5.2004, p. 1	Regulation (EC) No 882/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 on official controls performed to ensure the verification of compliance with feed and food law, animal health and animal welfare rules
Dir. 2008/71/EC	OJ L 213, 8.8.2008, p. 31-36	Council Directive 2008/71/EC of 15 July 2008 on the identification and registration of pigs (Codified version)
Dec. 2000/678/EC	OJ L 281, 7.11.2000, p. 16-17	2000/678/EC: Commission Decision of 23 October 2000 laying down detailed rules for registration of holdings in national databases for porcine animals as foreseen by Council Directive 64/432/EEC
Dec. 2002/106/EC	OJ L 39, 9.2.2002, p.	2002/106/EC: Commission Decision of 1 February 2002 approving a Diagnostic Manual establishing

Legal Reference	Official Journal	Title
	71-88	diagnostic procedures, sampling methods and criteria for evaluation of the laboratory tests for the confirmation of classical swine fever
Dec. 2008/855/EC	OJ L 302, 13.11.2008, p. 19-25	2008/855/EC: Commission Decision of 3 November 2008 concerning animal health control measures relating to classical swine fever in certain Member States
Reg. 206/2010	OJ L 73, 20.3.2010, p. 1–121	Commission Regulation (EU) No 206/2010 of 12 March 2010 laying down lists of third countries, territories or parts thereof authorised for the introduction into the European Union of certain animals and fresh meat and the veterinary certification requirements