



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

HEALTH & CONSUMERS DIRECTORATE-GENERAL

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**SUMMARY RECORD OF THE
STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE FOOD CHAIN AND ANIMAL HEALTH
HELD IN BRUSSELS ON 11 AND 12 NOVEMBER 2008**

(Section Animal Health and Welfare)

(Section Controls and Import Conditions)

(Section Biological Safety of the Food Chain)

Presidents: Alberto Laddomada, Eric Pondelet and Andrea Gavinelli.

On 11 November: Cyprus was partly absent.

On 12 November: Malta was absent. Cyprus was partly absent. The Czech Republic and Lithuania were partly absent and not represented. Bulgaria, Finland, Hungary, Luxembourg, Poland and Slovenia were partly absent but represented.

A representative of the Swiss Federal Department of Economic Affairs – Institute of Virology and Immunoprophylaxis IVI was present during the discussion of item 1A.

A representative of the German Federal Research Institute for Animal Health – the Friedrich-Loeffler-Institut was present during the discussion of items 4-6.

1. Update from the Member States on the bluetongue situation.

The [Belgian](#), [Czech](#), [Danish](#), [Spanish](#), [French](#), [German](#), [Dutch](#), [Portuguese](#) and [Austrian](#) representatives made a presentation on the issue.

The **Greek, Italian, Luxembourgish, Hungarian, Swedish and British** representatives provided information orally.

A representative of the Community Veterinary Emergency Team (CVET) presented the [CVET mission report on the bluetongue virus serotype6 in the Netherlands](#).

1A. Information from Switzerland on “Toggenburg-Orbivirus” in goats.

The Swiss representative made a [presentation](#) on a bluetongue (BT) virus of serotype 8 case detected in goats and on a second case BT of a new serotype called “Toggenburg-Orbivirus” (TOV).

2. Information on Strategy for future development of the Community policy on bluetongue.

The Commission's representative made a [presentation](#) on a draft proposal for the amendment of Regulation (EC) No 1266/2007, as regards preventive vaccination against BT in restricted zones without virus circulation.

Two documents were distributed by the Commission:

a) Working document on Strategy for future development of the Community policy on Bluetongue, discussed at the meeting of the Chief Veterinary Officers (CVOs) of the Member States held on 13-15 October 2008 in Strasbourg.

b) Informative note – Bluetongues: State of play, discussed at the meeting of the CVOs of the Member States held on 6 November 2008 in Brussels.

Most of the Member States welcomed the Commission's proposal for amending Regulation (EC) No 1266/2007. Some Member States expressed concerns on the surveillance of sentinels and how cost effective it is according to the current provisions of the Regulation.

3. Information on the Task Force on Animal Disease Surveillance.

Document SANCO/3661/2008 was distributed and presented by the Commission: Working Document on the Task Force on Animal Disease Surveillance.

The purpose of this document is to outline the context and the terms of reference for a new Task Force on Animal Disease Surveillance (TFADS) on bluetongue. The Commission highlighted the fact that the task forces for other disease have provided real support to the Member States and this is expected to be the case also with the one for bluetongue. Member States were asked to send their comments to the Commission.

4. Information from Germany and Portugal on preventive vaccination against avian influenza.

The Portuguese representative made a [presentation](#) on the preventive vaccination plan for avian influenza in a game bird holding of breeding mallard ducks.

The Commission representative informed that Decision 2008/838/EC approving that preventive vaccination plan has been published and vaccination will apply until July 2009.

A representative of the **German** Federal Research Institute for Animal Health and OIE and National Reference Laboratory for avian influenza – the Friedrich-Loeffler-Institut (FLI) - made two presentations: a) [Do we need a regular virological duck monitoring?](#) and b) [Use and efficacy of inactivated AIV-H5 vaccines in the field.](#)

5. Information from Germany on the avian influenza situation.

The German representative made a [presentation](#) on the highly pathogenic avian influenza situation in Markersdorf (Saxony). The restrictive measures in place will end on 12 November 2008.

The French representative informed that the results of the serological investigations on the holdings that provided the poultry to Germany were negative.

5A. Information from Bulgaria, Romania and Sweden on the Newcastle disease situation.

The Swedish representative informed about a Newcastle disease (ND) outbreak confirmed in an egg production flock on the 2nd of November in the southern part of the country. All necessary measures were applied immediately. Cleaning and disinfection were finalised on the 5th of November. No further outbreaks or suspicion of the diseases were recorded in other Swedish poultry holdings. Laboratory examinations showed that the virus isolated in this outbreak is similar to the one isolated in a previous outbreak in poultry in Sweden. The Swedish authorities are currently discussing with the industry possible vaccination against ND.

The Romanian representative made a [presentation](#) providing general information on the breeding poultry system in Romania and on the last outbreak of ND in the Gorj county.

The Commission requested further data on the epidemiology.

The Bulgarian representative informed that on 27 October there was a suspicion of ND in the Ratsel town, in a backyard farm with 6 laying hens. One was found dead, and the rest were immediately destroyed. Samples tested negative for Newcastle disease and avian influenza at the National Reference Laboratory.

6. Information from the Commission on online reporting for avian influenza surveillance results. (Doc. SANCO/3505/2008)

The Commission representative reminded the Member States that every three months the reports for avian influenza (AI) surveillance results in poultry and wild birds should be submitted to the Commission in order to be published on the Commission's website. The first two quarterly reports of 2008 have already been published.

To ensure a quick and direct follow-up, the Commission has requested by fax on 1st February 2008 that Member States indicate the contact persons dealing with the online reporting of AI surveillance results. Some Member States have not submitted the requested details so they were asked to do so latest by 30 November 2008.

7. Information from Slovakia on the situation of classical swine fever in wild boar and the control measures in place.

The Slovak representative made a [presentation](#) on the epidemiological situation on classical swine fever (CSF) in wild boar in Slovakia and a second [presentation](#) on the control measures taken in that Member State in relation to the disease. The situation is

not favourable so the Commission representative proposed a meeting with Slovakia and Hungary to discuss how to harmonise the measures taken in those two countries, against CSF.

7A. Information from Italy on the swine vesicular disease situation.

The Italian representative made a [presentation](#) on the swine vesicular disease situation in October and November 2008 and on the measures taken to control the disease.

8. Summary from the Commission on information received from the Member States on checks carried out in relation to the identification and registration of bovine animals (Regulation No 1082/2003) and ovine and caprine animals (Regulation No 1505/2006).

Document SANCO/3311/2008 entitled "Reports from Member States on the results of controls made in 2007 in the bovine, ovine and caprine sectors regarding Community provisions for identification and registration" was distributed during the meeting by the Commission. Although the deadline for the submission of the reports by the Member States to the Commission was the 31st of August, some were still missing. Those Member States that had not sent the reports yet were asked to do so and the others were asked to verify the information included in the summary document.

9. Status and perspectives of TRACES: conclusions of the seminar of 8 to 10 October.

The Commission's representative made a [presentation](#) on the conclusions of the seminar. A draft Decision is currently prepared by the Commission aiming to amend the import certificates. The draft will be sent to the Member States for comments with the intention to present it in this Committee for an opinion at the beginning of 2009.

Another meeting to further discuss this issue is organised by the Commission on the 13th of November in Brussels.

The British representative distributed during the meeting the letter sent by the British Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs to the Commission, expressing concerns over the proposals for the welfare module in the TRACES certificate. The Commission will further reflect on the issues raised by the British.

10. Imports of equine meat from third countries.

A letter which will be sent to third countries was distributed by the Commission during the meeting. The Commission, in that letter, informs the third countries on the conclusions of an internal evaluation of the current third country controls for export of horse meat into the Community in relation to residues, and proposes a minimum set of measures to be fulfilled by third countries in order to provide appropriate food safety guarantees. In order to minimise the possible impact on trade relations between the EU

and third countries, a three-year transitional period is proposed during which third countries are required to implement this set of measures covering a minimum control period of six months before the slaughter of the animals for meat export to the EU. After the transitional period, third countries must fully satisfy Community food safety requirements either by compliance or by equivalent measures. Within three months of the date of this letter, third countries are requested to submit an action plan to the Food and Veterinary Office (FVO) which lays out how the minimum set of measures referred to above will be implemented. Those third countries which have submitted action plans to the FVO will be required to submit annual updates on the implementation of these action plans when submitting their national residue control plans to the FVO for technical assessment. Where appropriate, the implementation of these action plans will be assessed on the spot during FVO inspection missions.

10A. Information on Russian import conditions for animals and products of animal origin.

The Commission provided the Member States with the latest information as regards the Russian import requirements. Details were given on the conditions of implementation of the memorandum of 2 September 2004 concerning veterinary certification of EU exports to Russia, in particular on listing of EU establishments.

11. Information on the state of play of the draft Commission Regulation on technical requirements for navigation systems used in the transport of certain animals over long road journeys pursuant to Council Regulation (EC) No 1/2005.

The Commission proposed, and Member States agreed, to have a working group meeting with experts to discuss technical issues on the navigation systems and on their applicability.

12. Information on the outcome of the first OIE Inter-American Meeting on Animal Welfare organised in Panama City on 19-20 August 2008.

The EU funded OIE Inter-American Meeting on Animal Welfare was organised by the OIE and it was the first OIE regional event on animal welfare organised for the Americas. The delegates attending the meeting came up with concrete proposals for activities and worked at the first steps for developing a regional strategy on animal welfare. The conclusions of the meeting were distributed by the Commission during the meeting.

13. Information on the outcome of the "FAO Open Forum and Expert Meeting on Capacity Building to Implement Good Animal Welfare Practices" organised in Rome from 29 September to 3 October 2008.

The Commission reported on the FAO activities on Capacity Building to Implement Good Animal Welfare practices and distributed information on the above mentioned meeting.

14. Information on the outcome of the "Second OIE Global Conference on Animal Welfare - Putting the OIE Standards to Work" organised in Cairo on 20-22 October 2008.

The conference was co-organised by the OIE with EU technical and financial support. The event was attended by about 400 participants including Chief Veterinary Officers and private sectors, including the trade sector. The state of play on the implementation of OIE animal welfare standards as well as the needs for capacity building on animal welfare were discussed.

15. Information on the declarations/notifications received from Member States in order to achieve disease freedom with regard to several non-exotic diseases of aquaculture animals under Council Directive 2006/88/EC.

Information on Member States' applications was distributed during the meeting on a CD. Member States could send any comments by email within the next two months.

16. Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Decision on the evolution of animal diseases in the Community and in third countries.

No item raised.

17. Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Decision amending Decision 2008/155/EC as regards certain embryo collection and production teams in Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United States. (Doc. SANCO/2927/2008)

Withdrawn from the agenda.

18. Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Regulation amending Commission Regulation (EC) No 1266/2007 as regards the prolongation of additional conditions for exempting certain animals of susceptible species from the exit ban provided for in Council Directive 2000/75/EC. (Doc. SANCO/3384/2008)

Regulation (EC) No 1266/2007 on implementing rules for Council Directive 2000/75/EC as regards the control, monitoring, surveillance and restrictions on movements of certain animals of susceptible species in relation to bluetongue establishes the conditions for exception from the exit ban applicable to movements of susceptible animals, their semen, ova and embryo.

Experience has shown that in a number of Member States the effectiveness of the measures provided for in Regulation (EC) No 1266/2007 to ensure the protection of

animals against attacks by vectors might be undermined by a combination of factors, including the vector species, climate conditions and the type of husbandry of the susceptible ruminants.

As a transitional measure, Commission Regulation (EC) No 394/2008 allows Member States to require that the movement of non-immune animals into their territory is subject to additional conditions, as the protection against attacks by vector might be insufficient. The application of these transitional measures is limited to 31 December 2008.

Taking into account the recent EFSA Opinion and experiences gained in Member States, and pending further scientific assessment, it is appropriate to extend the period where the transitional provisions can be applied until 31 December 2009.

Regulation (EC) No 1266/2007 should therefore be amended accordingly.

Vote: qualified majority by 265 votes in favour, 22 votes absent, 58 votes abstained. Bulgaria absent but represented.

19. Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Decision amending Decision 2008/185/EC to include the Netherlands in the list of Member States free of Aujeszky's disease and Hungary in the list of member States where approved Aujeszky's disease control programmes are in place. (Doc. SANCO/2730/2008)

The title of the draft Decision presented at the meeting has changed from the one included on the agenda, to read as follows:

Draft Commission Decision amending Decision 2008/185/EC as regards the inclusion of the Netherlands in the list of Member States free of Aujeszky's disease and of Hungary in the list of Member States where an approved national control programme for that disease is in place. (Doc. SANCO/2730/2008 – Rev.1)

Directive 64/432/EC lays down rules applicable to intra-Community trade in bovine animals and swine. It provides criteria for approving compulsory national control programmes and for approving a Member State or region thereof for certain contagious diseases, including Aujeszky's disease.

Annex I to Decision 2008/185/EC lists Member States or regions thereof which are free of Aujeszky's disease and where vaccination is prohibited. Annex II to that Decision lists Member States or regions thereof where approved control programmes for Aujeszky's disease are in place.

The Netherlands and Hungary have submitted supporting documentation to the Commission as regards their Aujeszky's disease status. In both countries national control programmes for Aujeszky's disease have been implemented for several years. The Commission has examined the documentation submitted by those two Member States and found that they comply with the criteria of Directive 64/432/EC.

The Netherlands should therefore be added to Annex I of Decision 2008/185/EC and Hungary to Annex II. Decision 2008/185/EC should be amended accordingly.

Vote: unanimous in favour.

20. Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Decision amending Decision 2005/779/EC to include Sicily in the list of Italian regions free of swine vesicular disease. (Doc. SANCO/3338/2008)

Commission Decision 2005/779/EC concerning animal health protection measures against swine vesicular disease in Italy lays down animal health rules as regards swine vesicular disease for regions of that Member State that are recognised as swine vesicular disease-free and those not recognised as free from that disease.

A programme for the eradication of swine vesicular disease has been implemented in Italy for several years with the aim that all regions of Italy achieve a disease-free status.

Italy has submitted supporting documentation to the Commission as regards the swine vesicular disease-free status of Sicily demonstrating that the disease has been eradicated from this region. The Commission has examined the documentation submitted by Italy and given the favourable results of the yearly eradication and monitoring programme, it proposed to include Sicily in the list of swine vesicular disease-free regions.

Decision 2005/779/EC should therefore be amended accordingly.

Vote: unanimous in favour.

21. Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Regulation amending Regulation (EC) 2007/2006 as regards the allowed sources and the intended uses of intermediate products and Regulation (EC) 1774/2002 as regards the definition of laboratory reagents. (SANCO/2967/2008 - Rev.1)

Withdrawn from the agenda.

21A. Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Regulation amending Regulation (EC) No 318/2007 laying down animal health conditions for imports of certain birds into the Community and the quarantine conditions thereof. (Doc. SANCO/3134/2008 – Rev.4)

Annex V to Regulation (EC) No 318/2007 sets out a list of quarantine facilities and centres approved by the competent authorities of the Member States for import of certain birds other than poultry. France, Germany and the United Kingdom have changed their list of approved quarantine facilities and centres. Annex V to Regulation (EC) No 318/2007 should therefore be amended accordingly.

Vote: unanimous in favour.

21B. Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Decision establishing Community reserves of vaccines against African Horse Sickness. (Doc. SANCO/2367/2008 - Rev.1)

African horse sickness (AHS) is a deadly incurable arboviral disease in horses and mules. AHS virus and bluetongue virus (BTV) are transmitted by the same vector *Culicoides*. As bluetongue (BT) has most likely arrived in Europe through the incursion of infected midges, it is highly likely that AHS will arrive in Europe. In addition, the current BT affected areas in Spain, Portugal and central-northern Europe are at the same time core breeding grounds for valuable horse populations.

The early use of vaccines in cases of an outbreak of AHS is provided for in Council Directive 92/35/EEC. In accordance with Article 9(2) of that Directive, the Commission may take a decision to carry out systematic vaccination of equidae against AHS; however, no vaccine against AHS is currently produced by the pharmaceutical industry based in the Member States or registered in Europe by an international manufacturer.

At present the only available and potentially useable vaccine is a live attenuated polyvalent vaccine from South Africa. This vaccine contains seven serotypes conferring protection against all nine known serotypes.

Given that in the case of an outbreak of AHS the use of a polyvalent live attenuated vaccine would expose the Community to unacceptable risks of disseminating virus of additional serotypes that are not circulating in the environment, it is foreseen that a series of monovalent vaccines should be made available for emergency use.

For the protection of susceptible equidae it is therefore appropriate to establish Community reserves of vaccines against AHS and to make them available for emergency use in Member States or in epidemiologically relevant neighbouring third countries representing a particular AHS risk to them.

The purpose of this Decision is to establish a legal basis for the purchase, storage and delivery of a total of 700 000 doses of monovalent serotype 1,2,3,4,6,7 and 8 specific vaccines, sufficient to complete a primary course of vaccination of 50 000 equine animals.

Vote: unanimous in favour.

21C. Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Decision amending Annex II to Council Decision 79/542/EEC as regards the regionalisation for Botswana in the list of third countries or parts thereof from which imports into the Community of certain fresh meat is authorised. (Doc. SANCO/3628/2008 – Rev.1)

Document SANCO/3738/2008 was distributed and presented by the Commission during the meeting, providing information on the foot-and-mouth disease situation in Botswana.

Decision 79/542/EEC provides that imports of fresh meat intended for human consumption are only allowed if such meat comes from a territory of a third country or a part thereof listed in Part 1 of Annex II to that Decision, and the fresh meat meets the

requirements set out in the appropriate veterinary certificate for that meat in accordance with the models set out in Part 2 of that Annex, taking into account any specific conditions or supplementary guarantees required for the meat.

Based on the animal health situation of Botswana in particular as regards foot-and-mouth disease, certain regions of that country are listed in Part 1 of Annex II to Decision 79/542/EEC and these regions are authorised to export to the EC de-boned and matured fresh meat of bovine, ovine and farmed and wild game ungulates.

An outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease was suspected in Botswana on 20 October 2008 in a farm located in the district of Ghanzi located in the veterinary disease control zone 12 that is one of the regions authorised to export fresh meat to the EC. As soon as the outbreak was confirmed, the competent authorities in Botswana immediately suspended exports of meat to the EC.

Considering that the Botswana authorities have now given enough guarantees about the measures put in place in the country in order to control the spread of the disease and considering that the affected areas are completely fenced, it is opportune to adopt restrictive measures on import into the Community of fresh meat only from the veterinary disease control zone concerned.

Decision 79/542/EEC should therefore be amended accordingly.

Vote: qualified majority by 323 votes in favour, 22 votes absent, Bulgaria, Finland, Hungary, Luxembourg, Poland and Slovenia absent but represented.

21D. Exchange of view and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Regulation amending annexes VII and IX to Regulation (EC) No 999/2001 laying down rules for the prevention, control and eradication of certain transmissible spongiform encephalopathies. (Right of scrutiny of the European Parliament) (Doc. SANCO/3660/2008 – Rev.3)

On 6 November 2008 the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) published an opinion on the human and animal exposure risk related to transmissible spongiform encephalopathies from milk and milk products derived from small ruminants. In that opinion, EFSA concluded that a) classical scrapie can be transmitted from ewe to lamb via milk or colostrums, b) the use of milk and milk products from a flock with classical scrapie may carry a TSE exposure risk for humans and animals, c) the breeding programmes for scrapie resistance in sheep can be expected to reduce human and animal exposure associated with small ruminants dairy products and d) as regards the atypical scrapie, the apparent restricted dissemination of the agent in the organism of affected individuals could limit the transmissibility through milk.

In view of those new scientific elements and in particular the proven transmissibility of classical scrapie through milk from ewe to lamb, at this stage new protective measures in relation to milk and milk products coming from classical scrapie infected flocks should be adopted as soon as possible.

In order to ensure the same level of safety regarding imported milk and milk products of ovine and caprine origin, similar measures should apply to imports into the Community.

Regulation (EC) No 999/2001 should therefore be amended accordingly.

Previous versions of this draft have been discussed during a working group meeting and at the Chief Veterinary Officers' (CVOs) meeting. The Commission replied to questions raised by the Member States. Certain Member States expressed concerns and the Commission proposed to discuss it again during a working group and at the CVOs meeting.

Vote: postponed.

22. Exchange of views of the Committee on a draft Commission Regulation amending Regulation (EC) No 1266/2007 as regards conditions for movements within the same restriction zone and the conditions for exempting animals from the exit ban provided for in Council Directive 2000/75/EC. (Doc. SANCO/3647/2008)

Council Directive 2000/75/EC lays down control rules and measures for the eradication of bluetongue (BT). In accordance with article 5, vaccination against BT is only allowed within the protection zone, which is established by the Member States in case of an outbreak of BT, as laid down in Article 8 of the Directive.

Regulation (EC) No 1266/2007 on implementing rules for Council Directive 2000/75/EC as regards the control, monitoring, surveillance and restrictions on movements of certain animals of susceptible species in relation to BT, establishes the conditions for exception from the exit ban applicable to movements of susceptible animals, their semen, ova and embryos. In accordance to Article 2(d) of this Regulation, the protection zone, together with a surveillance zone forms the restricted zone. Vaccination is only allowed within the protection zone that then becomes part of a restricted zone.

Regulation (EC) No 1266/2007 also establishes that for movements of susceptible animals within a restricted zone where the same virus type (or types) of bluetongue is (or are) present, there are no extra requirements as regards BT as the animals have the same health status in relation to that disease, apart from not showing clinical signs.

The purpose of this Regulation is to amend Regulation (EC) No 1266/2007 as regards the current provisions on movement of animals within the restricted zones, facilitating preventive vaccination in restricted areas that are free from bluetongue virus.

The Commission's intention is to present this draft Regulation for an opinion as soon as internal consultation is finalised. Taking into account the urgency for the adoption of this Regulation, the Commission might present it for vote in another section of this Committee.

Most Member States had positive views on the draft.

Miscellaneous

Issues raised by the Commission:

- During the meeting, information on the mortality of Pacific oysters on the French coast was distributed by the Commission. The information was communicated by the French authorities. The massive mortality of oysters observed during summer has decreased since September thus the resumption of a normal functioning within the French oyster production zones is authorized from 12 September. Since 25 September, the exchanges and exports of seed oysters were reauthorized, subject to the preliminary checking by the local competent authorities of certain conditions concerning the establishment of origin and the sanitary conditions of the exported batch. An epidemiological study is ongoing in an effort to collect further information which could make it possible to explain the phenomenon.
- Document SANCO/3766/2008 was distributed at the meeting entitled: Information on the foot and mouth situation in Uruguay and a request for bone-in sheep meat exports to the EU. Member States were requested to send their comments on the document by email to the Commission with the intention to discuss it at the next meeting of this Committee.
- The Commission informed that the OIE working group meetings are scheduled for 15-17 December and that the invitations will be sent out to the Member States in the next few days.
- The Commission presented the conclusions of the International Ministerial Conference on avian and pandemic influenza, held on 24-26 October 2008 in Sharm el Sheikh, Egypt, with the participation of many countries. The main outcome of the conference, well received by the participants, was the need for transparency. Member States were also informed that the Commission organises a meeting on sharing information on avian influenza, to be held at the beginning of 2009.

Issues raised by the Member States:

- **The Czech** representative made a [presentation](#) on an **enzootic bovine leukosis outbreak** confirmed on 10 November in the Southern Moravian region close to the Austrian border. Four animals were found positive; three of them were imported from Romania in July 2007. Epidemiological investigation is ongoing. The Romanian representative requested more information on those three animals in order to investigate if these were the origin of the disease. The Commission reminded that in such cases, it is preferable to share information.