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FINAL REPORT
OF A MISSION TO HUNGARY
WITH REGARD TO THE OPERATION OF ANIMAL HEALTH CONTROLS
FROM
27 NOVEMBER TO 1 DECEMBER 2000



14/02/01 - 31681

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE REPORT

BIP	Border Inspection Post
CCA	Central Competent Authority
CFT	Complement Fixation Test
CSF	Classical Swine Fever
CVI	Central Veterinary Institute
ELISA	Enzyme Linked Immunoessay
EU	European Union
FMD	Food and Mouth Disease
FVO	Food and Veterinary Office
IFAT	Immunofluorescence Antibody Test
PCR	Polymerase Chain Reaction
SVD	Swine Vesicular Disease

1. INTRODUCTION

The mission took place from 27 November to 1 December 2000. The mission team comprised three inspectors from the Food and Veterinary Office (FVO), and a national expert from a Member State. It was accompanied by representatives from the central competent authority (CCA) throughout the entire programme, which included an opening and a final meeting, both held at central level. No representative of the Department of European Integration, which forms part of the Hungarian Ministry of Agriculture and which is in charge of enlargement, was present during the opening or the final meetings.

This mission was part of a planned series of inspection visits to third countries to assess their national animal health control measures.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE MISSION

The objective of the mission was

- to evaluate the operation of the veterinary services at all levels, with particular regard to the certification of exports of livestock from Hungary to the European Union (EU), and
- to assess the identification, registration and internal movement controls over livestock,

as a follow-up to the findings of the previous mission carried out with similar objectives (document reference number DG(SANCO)/1156/1999).

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

Category	Sites visited		Number
CCA	Competent authority offices	Central	1
CRA		Regional	1
LCR	Laboratory service	Central/reference (Central Veterinary Institute)	1
		Regional	1
BIP	Border inspection post		1
FFF	Farms (1 pig, 1cattle, 1 sheep farm)		3

3. LEGAL BASIS FOR MISSION

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

- Council Directive 72/462/EEC of 12 December 1972 on health and veterinary inspection problems upon importation of bovine, ovine and caprine animals and swine, fresh meat or meat products from third countries.¹
- Council Directive 90/426/EEC of 26 June 1990 on animal health conditions governing the movement and import from third countries of equidae.²

¹ Official Journal L 302, 31/12/1972 p. 0028 - 0054

² Official Journal L 224, 18/08/1990 p. 0042 - 0054

- Council Directive 96/93/EC of 17 December 1996 on certification of animals and animal products.³
- Commission Decision 98/140/EC of 4 February 1998 laying down certain detailed rules concerning on-the-spot checks carried out in the veterinary field by Commission experts in third countries.⁴

In addition, the mission team examined the relevant Hungarian export certificates for compliance with the following legislation:

- Council Directive 90/426/EEC of 26 June 1990 on animal health conditions governing the movement and import from third countries of equidae.²
- Commission Decision 93/196/EEC of 5 February 1993 on animal health conditions and veterinary certification for imports of equidae for slaughter.⁵
- Commission Decision 93/197/EEC of 5 February 1993 on animal health conditions and veterinary certification for imports of registered equidae and equidae for breeding and production.⁶
- Council Directive 72/462/EEC of 12 December 1972 on health and veterinary inspection problems upon importation of bovine, ovine and caprine animals and swine, fresh meat or meat products from third countries.¹
- Commission Decision 98/372/EC of 29 May 1998⁷ concerning the animal health conditions and veterinary certification for imports of live animals of bovine and porcine species from certain European countries as amended by Commission Decision 98/505/EC⁸.
- Commission Decision 93/198/EEC of 17 February 1993 laying down a model for the animal health conditions and veterinary certification for the importation of domestic ovine and caprine animals from third countries.⁹
- Commission Decision 97/232/EC of 3 March 1997 drawing up lists of third countries from which the Member States authorise imports of sheep and goats.¹⁰
- Council Directive 92/102/EEC of 27 November 1992 on the identification and registration of animals.¹¹
- Council Directive 96/93/EC of 17 December 1996 on certification of animals and animal products.³

³ Official Journal L 013, 16/01/1997 p. 0018 - 0030

⁴ Official Journal L 038, 12/02/1998 p. 0014 - 0016

⁵ Official Journal L 086, 06/04/1993 p. 0007 - 0015

⁶ Official Journal L 086, 06/04/1993 p. 0016 - 0033

⁷ Official Journal L 170, 16/06/1998 p. 0034 - 0061

⁸ Official Journal L 226, 13/08/1998 p. 0050 - 0056

⁹ Official Journal L 086, 06/04/1993 p. 0034 - 0042

¹⁰ Official Journal L 093, 08/04/1997 p. 0043 - 0046

¹¹ Official Journal L 355, 05/12/1992 p. 0032 - 0036

4. BACKGROUND

4.1. Conclusions and recommendations of the previous animal health mission report

During the previous animal health mission (document reference number DG(SANCO)/1156/1999) to Hungary which was carried out from 27 September to 1 October 1999, a number of non-compliances and deficiencies were identified and noted in the report.

- There was a general inability of the veterinary services at all levels, including the Central Veterinary Institute and the Border Inspections Posts visited, to provide the mission team with the relevant documents on request. In some cases documents requested were apparently not available.
- Due to the high number of veterinary officials who work as private practitioners, and vice versa, the system of veterinary administration bears a considerable potential for a conflict of interest. There is an internal Regulation, which stipulates that officials signing export certificates should not treat livestock originating from the same farm. This rule is not, however, strictly enforced.
- The preamble to Commission Decision 97/232/EC of 3 March 1997¹⁰ states that Hungary is approved for the export of sheep to the EU on the grounds of a confirmation given by the CCA that scrapie, in addition to certain OIE list A diseases, is notifiable in the country. However, scrapie is not listed as a notifiable disease in the Hungarian Animal Health Act, promulgated on 4.11.95, thus raising concerns about the reliability of the information provided by the CCA.
- The surveillance plans for FMD and CSF are based on the serological control of a certain percentage of animals. The selection of the herds takes into account certain risk factors. In the absence of a complete description of a proper sampling strategy it appears that the plans better serve the purpose of passive monitoring rather than active surveillance.
- In general, there is no individual identification of small ruminants and pigs. The current methods used to identify breeding animals are troublesome from a technical point of view as they allow for misinterpretation of the identities of marked animals. Reference to the herd is only made in animals kept for breeding purposes. Identification and registration of small ruminants and pigs is not equivalent to the provisions of Council Directive 92/102/EEC¹¹.
- Internal movement controls are not based on recording the transport of individually identified livestock. It is only in regard to cattle that the passport system guarantees traceability of animal movements.
- At the Central Veterinary Institute only positive test results are communicated in writing, and no summaries of test results are compiled. Virological testing of samples and wild boar carcasses for CSF, and the reporting of test results in general, are apparently not carried out in line with the principles of good laboratory practice as defined by internationally recognised standards.
- Border Inspection Posts only keep incomplete records of export certificates. Important documents such as animal passports are handed over to customs and are not available on request.

- The issue of export certificates by official veterinarians in Hungary is not undertaken in accordance with Council Directive 96/93/EC³.
- Certificates issued to accompany exports of livestock, in particular sheep, consistently show various non-compliances. Certification of sheep consignments is consistently in breach of the provisions in Commission Decision 93/198/EEC⁹. Sheep, reportedly destined for slaughter in Italy, are sent accompanied by documents required for fattening sheep, without, however, the necessary guarantees on brucellosis being given. Generally, traceability is not assured and the identity of the animals transported is not clearly documented, as the number of ear-tags allocated to the shipment repeatedly exceeds the number of animals indicated on the certificates. The CCA issues model certificates for breeding sheep which lack any information about scrapie, as scrapie is not given the status of a notifiable disease in Hungary. It remains unclear how veterinary officials issuing export documents verify the guarantees given on the issued certificates as required by Commission Decision 93/198/EEC.

It was recommended that the national authorities:

- provide the relevant documents requested by the mission team during the mission,
- strictly ensure that situations are avoided where there may be a conflict of interest for the veterinary officials,
- amend the national veterinary legislation governing notifiable diseases, in particular scrapie, in order to qualify for the criteria laid down in Commission Decision 97/232/EC¹⁰,
- ensure that the laboratories which are involved in the diagnosis of notifiable diseases of livestock, compile summaries of test results and communicate all test results in writing to the periphery, and that a stringent quality control system is applied to the virological examination of samples for CSF, taking into account internationally recognised quality standards for diagnostic laboratory procedures,
- ensure that Border Inspection Posts keep copies of documentation in a way which readily allows a trace back of animal movements and a check on the relevant guarantees,
- ensure that, where exports of livestock to the European Union are concerned, the guarantees supporting the relevant health certificates are based on information obtained from animals which are identified individually and for which there is movement control which guarantees traceability,
- rectify the consistent non-compliances found in health certificates issued for exports of livestock to the European Union and ensure that only consignments are dispatched for which certification is issued in a manner which is strictly in line with the provisions of the relevant EU legislation.

In the recommendations of the report of the previous mission, the CA was informed that a plan describing the actions to be taken and the time-span needed should be submitted to the Commission within 25 working days of receipt of the final report.

In their comments on the draft report of this mission the Hungarian veterinary authorities stated that corrective actions had been taken to ensure that complete copies of certificates are kept at the Border Inspection Posts.

In a further note to the FVO, the CCA gave additional assurances with regard to the full separation of the official and private veterinary activity, reporting of laboratory test results to the periphery and the inclusion of scrapie on the list of notifiable diseases. The CCA stated that in future everything would be done to avoid the deficiencies found by the mission team.

4.2. Live animal imports from Hungary into the European Union

Hungary is on the list of third countries from which Member States are authorised by Council Decision 79/542/EEC¹² to import live animals and products.

Imports of live animals from Hungary into the European Union (1999, source Eurostat)

	Pure-bred breeding horses	Horses for slaughter
Italy	1	6962
Austria	2	
France		21
Germany	4	
United Kingdom	2	
Total number imported	9	6983

	Lambs up to 1 year	Pure-bred sheep for breeding
Italy	678660	
Greece	96822	
Austria		59
Total number imported	775482	59

	Pure- bred breeding bovines	Live bovine animals
Italy		17368
Greece	1372	4398
Germany	80	875
Belgium		62
Austria	6	56
Netherlands		36
Total number Imported	1458	22795

	Domestic swine weighing less than 50 kg
Spain	7488
Greece	4349
Italy	2916
Total number imported	14753

5. OBSERVATIONS

Reference should be made to the report of the previous mission (document reference number DG(SANCO)/1156/1999). Only significant changes in the situation from that seen in the previous mission are reported in the following chapters to avoid unnecessary duplication.

5.1. Competent authorities control system

The co-operation of the CCA with the mission team varied and, in general, was not satisfactory. Although the mission team requested visits to farms and BIPs with significant export of livestock well in advance of the mission, the CCA proposed places which were not representative. From a cattle farm visited during the last twelve months just one cow had been temporarily exported, whilst no fattening sheep have been exported to the EU through the BIP visited. The CCA did not agree to major changes of the programme when requested by the mission team. In a number of instances, documentation requested was not provided.

¹² Official Journal L 146, 14/06/1979 p. 0015 - 0017

The CCA has prepared a draft proposal to amend the Animal Health Act with the intention of allocating private tasks to official veterinarians only in case of emergency. The mission team was told that the proposal will be discussed in the parliament either by the end of 2000 or at the beginning of 2001. The draft proposal also includes scrapie on the list of notifiable diseases.

No summarised data on surveillance programmes on OIE list A diseases or *Brucella melitensis*, which reflect the situation in the whole country, are compiled at central level. No comprehensive reports, which would include details of sampling strategy, type of laboratory tests used, results, follow-up of non-negative results, or action taken as a consequence of positive results, were provided.

The circular letter, which was said to have been sent to the BIPs to ensure that complete sets of certificates are copied and filed, was made available to the mission team after the end of the mission.

Fluctuation in staff numbers at central level was reported to be high. A large number of experienced staff left the Ministry and, due to budgetary restraints, no additional posts are likely to be allocated. As a whole the Ministry is seriously understaffed.

There is no clear separation of functions between the Ministry of Agriculture and the Central Veterinary Institute. Some documents, such as a list of all sero-surveillance programmes operated in the country, were said to be available at the CVI. When the mission team requested these documents from there, it was, however, re-directed to the Ministry. Allocation of tasks between both administrative units remained therefore unclear.

The Ministry is involved in setting up a computer network system which includes the BIPs. At the time of the mission the network was practically not operational as the speed of response to any query was too slow. The server of the network is located at the CVI.

5.2. Farm Registration

The animal identification and farm registration system for cattle has been described as satisfactory in the previous report.

Small pig farms with no commercial activity are not registered. Small sheep and goat farms are also not registered. The veterinary services at county level use alphabetic lists provided by the breeding association as a database, but do not keep a list of registered farms. It remained unclear as to the number of animals that had to be present for a distinction to be made between large farms, which have to be registered, and small farms, which are exempt from registration. Farm registration numbers are allocated by the Agricultural Institute for Quality Control in Budapest.

5.3. Animal identification

For cattle the ENAR system is in place and functions satisfactorily.

For pigs, an internal identification system has been introduced on big farms and was described in the previous report. At the time of the mission no general national system for pig identification was in force.

The farm visited had its own identification system in place, which serves for internal purposes. Piglets are identified by cutting the ears and by an ear-tag. Sows are marked with a plastic ear-tag when they enter reproduction. Fattening pigs are ear-marked by the trader at the time when leaving the farm for slaughter. Pigs used for breeding are marked on the farm. Ear-tags do not bear any reference to the herd identification number.

On large sheep farms an internal system is in use. On the farm visited, all sheep were identified with the farm registration number, either by tattoo or by ear-tag, plus an individual number. The system in place allowed the certifying officer to verify that sheep for export originate from the farm. There was also a recording system in place, which allows the date of birth to be recorded.

After January 2001 all new-born sheep should be tattooed when leaving the farm of origin. There are plans to introduce a computerised system to facilitate documentation.

5.4. Movement Controls

No significant changes were found compared to the situation described in the previous report.

5.5. Laboratories

There are six veterinary laboratories in the country, the Central Veterinary Institute (CVI) in Budapest and five other laboratories, which operate at regional level. Three of these laboratories will be closed by 1.1.2001.

The mission team visited the Central Veterinary Institute, which is the only laboratory in the country approved for testing samples from animals destined for export to the EU.

An annual report for 1999 was available and given to the mission team.

The CVI has got a computerised system for the registration of incoming samples and for the reporting of test results. As a rule, the documents, which accompany any samples sent to the CVI, do not indicate the reasons for the tests requested.

In general the laboratory is well equipped for diagnostic procedures regarding CSF. Written protocols for the test procedures are available. Facilities to carry out animal experiments in order to produce reference sera and positive control samples are available at the Control Institute of Medicinal Products in Budapest. The mission team was told that an accredited quality management system will be implemented within the next two years.

The mission team also visited the Regional Diagnostic Laboratory at Debrecen. This laboratory reports directly to the Ministry of Agriculture, not to the CVI, and is also in charge of investigations for CSF in wild boar, the meat of which is destined for export to the EU. The equipment to carry out screening tests for CSF diagnosis is good - even the expensive and labour intensive method of PCR is in operation. Information was provided to the mission team in a very co-operative manner.

The diagnostic procedures for two notifiable diseases were inspected in detail:

5.5.1. *Brucella melitensis*

There is a sero-surveillance programme for *Brucella melitensis* in place, and in 1999 18,758 blood samples were taken from sheep in all 20 Hungarian counties, for serological testing. 5,861 of these samples, originating from six counties, were examined in the CVI by use of a commercially available antibody ELISA test, which does not differentiate between *Br. melitensis* and other *Br.* species. The mission team was informed that around 3 % of these samples tested positive and were re-tested using a Complement Fixation Test (CFT) for *Br. melitensis*, with negative results.

Confirmatory CFTs are also carried out on samples received from regional laboratories. In 1999 the CVI re-tested 220 samples positive for *Brucella* from all regional laboratories. All these samples tested negative for *Br. melitensis* in the CFT, whereas positive *Br. ovis* antibody titres were confirmed by use of a specific ELISA in 198 of these samples. Although Brucellosis including *Br. ovis* is notifiable in Hungary, the CVI only reported the results obtained for *Br. melitensis* to the regional laboratories.

Data compiled in the annual report for 1999 indicate that a total of 6,566 blood samples were tested in the CVI for *Br melitensis* antibodies. Confirmatory re-tests by CFT did not reveal positive results. At the time of the mission the test series for 2000 was still ongoing and therefore re-testing had not yet started. In 2000 the number of samples per county was reduced from around 1,000 to 250.

As a rule, the documents which accompany the samples sent to the CVI do not indicate the reasons for the tests.

5.5.2. Classical Swine Fever

Investigations of wild boar for CSF antigen and virus

In 1999 30,387 samples originating from all over the country were examined in the CVI and in three regional laboratories for CSF antigen by Immunofluorescent Antibody Test (IFAT). No positive results for CSF were obtained. In general these samples were taken from adult wild boar shot for export. The fees for testing are paid by the export companies. In the case of the CVI the proceeds cover more than 20 % of the annual budget.

Between 01.01.2000 and the time of the visit to the CVI, 20,184 samples taken from wild boar carcasses destined for export to the EU were examined for CSF antigen using the IFAT. The test results are reported by fax to the certifying officer on the day of receipt, even if the number of samples is low. Each batch of samples is identified by an individual batch identification number, to which reference is made when the result is reported to the sender. 119 of the samples taken earlier in 2000 initially tested 'non-negative' and the veterinarians certifying the export documents were informed that the samples were "unsuitable" for testing. 61 samples were re-tested by virus isolation with negative result. It was explained that in some cases the exporter prefers not to include the carcass in the consignment destined for export, rather than awaiting the final result which takes a minimum of three days, and therefore no virus isolation is carried out. Workload in the CVI was said to be another reason for not re-testing all 'non-negative' samples by virus isolation.

Identification of the samples allowed for tracing of the place of origin where the animals were shot. The mission team was provided with summarised data indicating the number of samples taken per county.

The procedure to follow up 'non-negative' IFAT results varies between the CVI and the regional laboratories. In the regional laboratory visited, PCR is in use for re-testing. There is no clear arrangement with the CVI about re-testing by virus isolation as required for export certification.

In 1999, 10 carcasses of wild boar found dead in 8 locations were examined for CSF virus by the CVI with negative results. In no part of the country were serological tests for CSF antibodies carried out on samples taken from wild boar.

Sero-surveillance in domestic pigs

In 1999, 17,912 samples from domestic pigs were examined in the CVI for CSF antibodies by use of an antibody-ELISA. 11,032 of these samples were taken from only the two eastern counties bordering Romania within the framework of a sero-surveillance programme. In addition, a further 9,003 samples were taken in two other eastern counties and examined in the regional laboratory of Debrecen. The test results were summarised in the 'Annual Report of the CVI' and reported negative. However, during a visit to a county veterinary station, the mission team found documentary evidence which proved that out of 5,003 samples taken at 40 farms, 10 samples, i.e. 0,2 %, originating from two farms, had tested positive to the antibody-ELISA. In the regional laboratory where the tests had been carried out, the mission team was told that the samples had been sent to the CVI for re-testing. However, during the mission neither records of this nor written results of follow-up tests or documentary proof of any consequent action were available¹³.

Sero-surveillance in domestic pigs is focussed on fattening pigs, from which 80 % of the samples are taken, whereas only 20 % of the samples are collected from sows. Sampling is restricted to a few months in autumn.

In one county visited, the county veterinary office has received instructions from the CCA to organise sampling from slaughterhouses. However, no test results were available at the county veterinary station, and the mission team was told that the regional laboratory in charge of testing the samples only reports positive results. As no such results had been reported it had been assumed that all the results had been negative. In the regional laboratory, however, no records were available to prove that any samples taken at slaughterhouses had been examined.

5.6. Certification

5.6.1. Border Inspection Posts

The BIP visited was generally well organised in terms of filing and documentation. Statistical data on import, export and transit of livestock and products of animal origin were available and filed in a consistent way. Complete sets of copies of import and export certificates were also available. The control activities of the BIP were well documented.

¹³ After the mission documents were received in the FVO which prove that the positive samples were sent to the CVI and were re-tested by a CSF specific Virus-Neutralisation-Test with negative results.

5.6.2. Export certificates

It was explained to the mission team that, due to lack of staff, the Ministry does not produce model certificates. It is in fact the exporter who submits draft certificates to the Ministry for approval. Each model certificate is assigned an approval number before it is distributed to the county veterinary stations.

The mission team was taken to one cattle farm from where just one breeding cow was exported. The copy of the export certificate did not show any signature of the senior certifying officer.

On a large pig farm, export certificates were checked which showed that out of two consignments of 1,750 piglets sent to Spain for fattening, only 10 % were tested for CSF and SVD. It was explained that taking blood samples from piglets weighing less than 20 kg was troublesome in terms of animal welfare. Therefore, the county veterinary officer had agreed to reduce the number of tests, following pressure from the importer. The mission team was told that in 1993 the CCA had issued a letter in which authorisation was given to the county veterinary officers to reduce the number of tests.

The mission team examined more than 100 copies of export certificates which were provided by the CCA, for fattening sheep that were sent to Italy, as well as a few certificates which were presented at the farm visited. The documents showed the following non-compliances:

- Guarantees for *Br. melitensis* were either omitted or no valid guarantees were given:
 - The certificates did not contain any relevant information indicating whether the animals originated from a farm recognised as officially brucellosis-free or were tested twice serologically for *Br. melitensis*.
 - In some of the certificates the certifying officer declared that Hungary was recognised as satisfying the requirements for officially brucellosis-free status and is included in the list in the Annex, Part 5 to Commission Decision 97/232/EC, which is a false statement.
- The address of the importer was entered as the address of destination, but not the place of final destination which should be the fattening farm.

No discrepancies between the number of animals and the number of ear-tags allocated to the consignment were noted. All certificates had a list of ear-tag numbers attached to the document.

Certificates for fattening sheep showed the same approval number as certificates for slaughter sheep, although the certificates are different. Only a few certificates for sheep destined for slaughter in Italy were presented. The mission team was told that these certificates are only used as pre-certificates to accompany fattening sheep from the farm of origin to the place where they are finally loaded for transport to Italy.

The CCA presented a model certificate for breeding sheep, which included the guarantees for scrapie. No approval number was assigned to the certificate.

Certificates for slaughter horses sent to Italy include guarantees for Venezuelan equine encephalomyelitis which state that the disease is notifiable in Hungary. This is obviously a false statement, as only Eastern and Western equine encephalomyelitis are notifiable. It is also certified that Venezuelan equine encephalomyelitis has not occurred during the last two years. Such a guarantee can however only be given for notifiable diseases. The CCA assigned different approval numbers to the same certificates.

In all these cases the CCA had not taken any corrective action, although a number of severe non-compliances with the relevant EU legislation for certification of exports had already been pointed out in the previous mission report to which the CCA responded (see 4.1.).

6. CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1. During the mission serious failings in the controls over health certification of live animals were discovered.
- 6.2. The mission programme was not sufficiently flexible, and the documents requested were not always made available. Where documents have been requested in advance of and during the mission, but were not provided by the end of the mission, their availability is open to question.
- 6.3. The amendment to the Animal Health Act, intended to minimise conflict of interest for official veterinarians, and to include scrapie on the list of notifiable diseases, has not yet been adopted¹⁴.
- 6.4. No comprehensive data on sero-surveillance programmes were available¹⁵.
- 6.5. There is a high turnover of staff at central level.
- 6.6. Separation of tasks between the Central Competent Authority and the Central Veterinary Institute is not clear.
- 6.7. Farm registration and animal identification was in place on the pig farm visited.
- 6.8. The laboratories visited were well equipped and tests are carried out according to protocols.
- 6.9. The performance of tests on wild boar for export seemed subject to commercial pressure, rather than forming part of an official surveillance programme for a notifiable OIE list A disease. Re-testing of samples, which test 'non-negative' for CSF virus by IFAT, is not carried out systematically. In the CVI not all samples were re-tested by virus isolation. In one regional laboratory, the PCR technique which is not approved by Commission

¹⁴ In their response to the draft report, the Hungarian authorities noted that the amendment to the Veterinary Framework Act is in progress, and is expected to be completed by the end of June.

¹⁵ In their response to the draft report, the Hungarian authorities noted that a circular letter had been sent to all county animal health and food control stations concerning the monitoring programmes for foot and mouth disease, classical swine fever, swine vesicular disease and ovine/caprine brucellosis.

Decision 97/220/EC¹⁶, was used for re-testing. There is no programme for the detection of CSF antibodies in the wild boar population.¹⁷

- 6.10. Sero-surveillance of domestic pigs for CSF is focussed on fattening pigs although the chance of finding antibodies is higher in sows. At a regional laboratory no documentary evidence was made available during the mission to prove that samples which tested positive in the antibody ELISA were re-tested for confirmation¹⁸.
- 6.11. Fattening pigs are exported without all pigs being tested for CSF and SVD. Certification is, therefore, not in line with the requirements of Commission Decision 98/372/EC¹⁹.
- 6.12. The identity of fattening sheep was clearly documented on the export certificates.
- 6.13. Although the central competent authority claims that *Br. melitensis* is not diagnosed in the country, sheep farms in Hungary do not meet the standards laid down in Part 1 C, Chapter 1, of Commission Decision 93/198/EEC⁹ and cannot therefore be recognised as officially brucellosis-free. Hungary is also not included in the Annex, Part 5, to Commission Decision 97/232/EC¹⁰, establishing third countries as satisfying the requirements for officially brucellosis-free status. No date of any tests for *Br. melitensis* is entered in the export certificate. Data obtained in the CVI indicates that most sheep intended for export are not tested for Brucellosis. The export of fattening sheep is therefore not in line with the provisions of Commission Decision 93/198/EEC⁹ and Council Directive 96/93/EC³.
- 6.14. The Central Veterinary Institute does not report results which are positive for *Br. ovis* to the sender, although Brucellosis, including *Br. ovis*, is notifiable in Hungary. This has implications for the export certification of breeding rams for which one of the guarantees laid down in Commission Decision 93/198/EEC is that they come from a holding where no case of *Br. ovis* has been diagnosed in the last 12 months. As this guarantee cannot be validated, certification of breeding sheep is not in line with the provisions of Commission Decision 93/198/EC and Council Directive 96/93/EC³.
- 6.15. Western equine encephalomyelitis is not notifiable in Hungary²⁰. The disease is, however, certified as notifiable and a guarantee is given that the disease has not occurred during the last two years prior to the transport. Certification of slaughter horses, as encountered during the mission, is therefore not in line

¹⁶ Official Journal L 088 , 03/04/1997 p. 0070 - 0077. NB. The approval of the PCR technique is currently under review by the Commission.

¹⁷ In their response to the draft report, the Hungarian authorities noted that the CSF control and sero-surveillance programme is under review for both domestic pig and wild boar populations.

¹⁸ See footnote 13

¹⁹ In their response to the draft report, the Hungarian authorities noted that they did not consider it realistic to require testing of large numbers of production (fattening) pigs under 20kg live weight in the few days before loading. They had therefore decided to sample only 10% of these pigs prior to export.

²⁰ In their response to the draft report, the Hungarian authorities noted that this appears to be due to a translation problem, which will be corrected during the amendment to the Veterinary Framework Act (see footnote 14)

with the provisions of Commission Decision 93/196/EEC⁵ and Council Directive 96/93/EC³.

- 6.16. Although the CCA has responded to the recommendations made in the previous report by giving assurances to take corrective action, no significant improvements in certification of livestock exports to the EU were verifiable.

7. CLOSING MEETING

A closing meeting was held on 1 December 2000 in the presence of central competent authority representatives. At this meeting the main findings and conclusions were presented by the mission team.

During the meeting the CCA representatives offered to provide further documents as proof of the progress made in response to the recommendations of the previous mission report.

The CCA accepted the findings and conclusions and gave some explanations for the non-compliances.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1. To the national competent authority

- 8.1.1. Until the certification deficiencies identified in this report have been satisfactorily resolved, no further exports of live fattening pigs, fattening sheep, breeding sheep and slaughter horses should be permitted.
- 8.1.2. To take immediate action to correct the serious deficiencies identified in the certification of live sheep, horses and pigs exported to the European Union. In particular, certification should only be issued if it is accurately and fully completed, and the requirements of the relevant EC legislation are fully respected. Any necessary legislative action to resolve these certification shortcomings should be given a high priority.
- 8.1.3. Urgently to complete the actions still required to respond satisfactorily to the recommendations of the previous mission report (SANCO/1156/1999) to Hungary. In particular, the introduction of procedures for the registration of farms, identification of animals and movement controls should be accelerated, so that an effective traceability system for animals and animal products is achieved.
- 8.1.4. To review the operation of the existing CSF monitoring and surveillance programmes in both wild boar and domestic pig populations, such that a complete picture of the epidemiological situation is obtained. In particular account should be taken of the "Report of the Scientific Committee on Animal Health and Animal Welfare on classical swine fever in wild boar" and "Guidelines for

monitoring of classical swine fever in EU member states and candidate countries".

- 8.1.5. To ensure that there is a clear attribution of responsibilities for veterinary controls between the different authorities at national level.

The Hungarian authorities should take immediate action to respond to recommendations 8.1.1. and 8.1.2., and provide a report on this action within one month of receiving the draft report of this mission.

In addition, the Hungarian authorities should prepare an action plan to address recommendations 8.1.3. to 8.1.5. and the detailed conclusions of this report. This plan should indicate the deadlines for the implementation and completion of each of these actions. The plan should be submitted to the Commission's services within three months of the receipt of the final report.

8.2. To the Commission services

- 8.2.1. To advise Member States of the certification deficiencies found during this mission, and to request that additional checks be undertaken at border inspection posts on imports of the species concerned from Hungary.
- 8.2.2. To review existing approvals for imports of live animals from Hungary in light of the response of the competent authorities of Hungary to the recommendations and deadlines for action set out in section 8.1.

ADDENDUM

Competent Authority response to the recommendations in the report

The draft report was sent to the Hungarian authorities on 15 December 2000. A response was received in a fax, dated 1 February 2001, which offered comments on some of the issues raised in the report. These comments have been incorporated into the report as footnotes to the "Conclusions" section.

It must be noted that the response from the Hungarian authorities does not fully address the urgent, and serious, problems identified in the report.