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FINAL REPORT OF A SPECIFIC AUDIT

CARRIED OUT IN

LATVIA

FROM 15 TO 19 JUNE 2009

IN ORDER TO EVALUATE THE CONTINGENCY PLANS FOR EPIZOOTIC DISEASES AND THE ERADICATION PROGRAMME FOR RABIES

IN THE CONTEXT OF A GENERAL AUDIT

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 an endnote.

Executive Summary

This report describes the outcome of a specific audit mission carried out by the Food and Veterinary Office in Latvia from 15 to 19 June 2009, as part of the General Audit in that country.

The objectives of the mission were to verify that the approved eradication programme for rabies was being implemented, and that contingency plans and other preparations were in place to deal with possible outbreaks epizootic diseases, as required by Community legislation and in accordance with the Latvian multi-annual national control plan drawn up in accordance with Article 41 of Regulation (EC) No 882/2004.

The mission found that the economic downturn has significantly affected the organisation and prioritisation of activities by the competent authorities of Latvia.

With regard to rabies, despite a significant shortfall in the 2008 oral vaccination campaign, a significant decrease in the number of clinical cases of the disease was observed both in wild and domestic animals. Despite some shortcomings, the rabies vaccination campaign in Spring 2009 was adequately implemented. The competent authorities monitored the distribution of baits adequately, but did not assess the overall efficacy of the campaign. Deficiencies were identified in the quality specification for the vaccine used, and in the quality controls introduced to monitor its efficacy and innocuity. So far, funding for vaccination and surveillance activities during the rest of 2009 has not been secured.

Contingency plans for epizootic diseases are in place but are not detailed or adapted at national and regional level to a point where they could be applied immediately in case of an emergency. No firm plans are in place to check, test and revise them, although the need for such measures was identified by the CA. It is not ensured that sample analysis and diagnostic criteria will be performed in line with EU requirements. So far, neither the economic downturn nor the restructuring of the competent authorities (described in more detail in the General Audit report) has had a significant negative impact on the surveillance and diagnostic capabilities for animal diseases.

The report includes a number of recommendations addressed to the Latvian Competent Authority aimed at rectifying the identified shortcomings and enhancing the control system in place.

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Abbreviations and definitions used in this report

Abbreviation	Explanation
AC	Assembly centre
ADDL	Animal disease diagnostic laboratory
AHS	African horse sickness
AI	Avian influenza
ASF	African swine fever
BT	Bluetongue
CA	Competent authority
CCA	Central competent auhority
CP	Contingency plan
CRL	Community reference laboratory
CSF	Classical swine fever
EFTA	European Free Trade Association
ELISA	Enzyme linked t assay
EU	European Union
FAT	Fluorescence antibody test
FFU	fluorescent forming unit
FMD	Foot-and-mouth disease
FVO	Food and veterinary office
FVS	Food and Veterinary Service (*Pārtikas un Veterinārais Dienests*)

GPS	Global positioning system
IU	International unit
LDCC	Local disease control centre
MS	Member state
ND	Newcastle disease
NDCC	National disease control centre
NRL	National reference laboratory
PCR	Polymerase chain reaction
Report of SCAHAW	Report of the scientific committee on animal health and animal welfare on "oral vaccination of foxes against rabies", adopted on 23 October 2002
SVD	Swine vesicular disease
Task Force	The subgroup Rabies of the Task Force for monitoring disease eradication programmes in the Member States. Task force report: note on the meeting of the subgroup in Riga, 26-27 November 2008 (document SANCO/04/SI/hh D(2009) 40033)
TSA	Territorial Surveillance Unit (Regional competent authority)

1 Introduction

The specific audit formed part of the Food and Veterinary Office (FVO) planned mission programme and was carried out as a component of a general audit, as described in Article 45 of 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.

This report focuses on the sector specific issues identified during the audit. The aspects relating to Regulation (EC) No 882/2004 will be addressed in the subsequent General Audit report.

The mission took place in Latvia from 15 to 19 June 2009. The mission team comprised two inspectors from the FVO and was accompanied during the whole mission by representatives of the

Food and Veterinary Service (FVS) (*Pārtikas un Veterinārais Dienests*), which is the Central Competent Authority (CCA) within the scope of this mission.

2 Objectives Of The Mission

The objective of the mission was to verify that official controls are carried out in accordance with the multi-annual national control plan referred to in Article 41 of Regulation (EC) No 882/2004, and in compliance with Community law.

This verification was performed on the controls in place to give effect to EU requirements concerning:

- The implementation of the multi-annual programme for the eradication of rabies, approved by Commission Decision 2007/782/EC. This evaluation will include a revision of the actions taken by the Competent Authorities following the recommendations of the previous mission on a similar topic (mission DG(SANCO)/2007-7358: http://ec.europa.eu/food/fvo/rep_details_en.cfm?rep_id=1885).

- Contingency plans in the event of one or more outbreaks of epizootic diseases, with special regard to Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD), Classical Swine Fever (CSF), Avian Influenza (AI), Bluetongue (BT), African Horse Sickness (AHS), African Swine Fever (ASF), Newcastle Disease (ND), and Swine Vesicular Disease (SVD). This evaluation included a revision of the actions taken by the competent authorities following the recommendations of the previous mission which dealt with a similar topic (mission DG(SANCO)/7617/2005: http://ec.europa.eu/food/fvo/rep_details_en.cfm?rep_id=1552)

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

Competent authorities:	
Central competent authority	1
Regional competent authority	1
Animal identification data centre	1

Sites visits:	
National laboratory	1
National store for equipment in case of contingency	1
Regional store for material and equipment in case of contingency	1
National disease crisis centre	1
Regional disease crisis centre	1
Slaughterhouse	1
Rendering plant	1
Assembly centre	1

3 Legal Basis for the Mission

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

- Article 45 of Regulation (EC) No 882/2004;
- Commission Decision 98/139/EC of 4 February 1998, laying down certain detailed rules concerning on-the-spot checks carried out in the veterinary field by Commission experts in the Member States (MS).

Full legal references are provided in Annex 1. Legal acts quoted in this report refer, where applicable, to the last amended version.

4 Background

4.1 Contingency plans and epizootic diseases

In recent years, missions covering contingency planning were carried out by the FVO in all Member States. Whilst it was found that Member States were aware of the threats posed by epizootic disease to the health status of their national livestock populations, and that all had contingency plans in place, deficiencies were detected and there was considerable variation in the level of preparedness in the various Member States.

The recent outbreaks of epizootic diseases such as avian influenza, foot-and-mouth disease and

bluetongue in previously unaffected territories of the European Union highlights the threat posed by the sudden and sometime unexpected spread of such diseases, and further emphasizes the need for well-developed and resourced contingency plans in order to be prepared to implement immediate emergency measures.

The latest reported occurrence of certain epizootic diseases in Latvia is as follows:

Disease	**Last occurrence**
Avian influenza	never reported
Newcastle disease	2006 (in wild birds)
Foot and Mouth disease	1987
Swine vesicular disease	never reported
Classical swine fever	1996
African swine fever	never reported
Bluetongue	never reported
African horse sickness	never reported

(source:OIE website - June 2009)

4.2 Programme for eradication of rabies

Programmes for the eradication of rabies in Latvia have been approved and partly financed by the European Commission since 2006. At present, a multi-annual programme, covering the years from 2008 to 2010, has been approved by Commission decision 2007/782/EC and includes biannual oral vaccination campaigns in wildlife reservoirs, and controls to monitor the efficacy of these campaigns.

The number of declared cases of rabies in Latvia in recent years is as follows:

Year	Domestic carnivores	Other domestic animals	Wild animals	**Total**
2005	68	0	353	**421**
2006	75	13	383	**471**
2007	52	5	145	**202**
2008	14	6	90	**110**

(Source: FVS)

In November 2008, the Rabies subgroup of the Task Force for monitoring disease eradication programmes in the Member States (MS) met in Riga, where the Latvian programme was reviewed. The Task Force subgroup issued a report and recommendations, intended to improve the efficiency of the programme. This report can be downloaded from http://ec.europa.eu/food/animal/diseases/eradication/reportrabiessubgrouplatvia26-27nov2008.pdf.

The recommendations of the subgroup were:

- to perform quality control regularly, before and during the distribution of vaccine baits in the field;

- to reduce the flight line distance from 1000m to 500m,

- to include sampling of animals after the Spring campaigns, and to determine the age for differential epidemiological analyses in young and adults,

- to type virus strains in order to distinguish field from vaccine strains,

- to review the tendering process in order to avoid delivery problems.

5 Findings And Conclusions

5.1 Rabies eradication programme

5.1.1 Legal basis

Article 24 of Council Decision 90/424/EEC empowers the Commission to reimburse from Community funds the expenditure incurred by Member States in the course of implementing national programmes for the eradication, control and monitoring of certain animal diseases and zoonoses, including rabies.

Annex III of Council Decision 90/638/EEC establishes the criteria that programmes for the control of rabies must satisfy in order to qualify for Community funding. These include:

- description of the epidemiological situation of the disease;
- detailed information regarding the vaccination programme, including the regions to be included and the vaccines to be used
- information concerning the costs, benefits and duration of the programme;
- designation of the competent authorities responsible for supervising and coordinating the programme;
- details of the system in place to ensure the notification of all suspected or confirmed outbreaks of the disease;
- details of the control procedures and inspections carried out within the areas concerned.

Commission Decision 2007/782/EC approved the multi-annual programme for the eradication of rabies submitted by Latvia for the period from 2008 to 2010. Article 21 of this Decision establishes certain conditions that the MS must satisfy in order to be eligible to receive payment, including:

- implementation in accordance with the provisions of Community law, including rules on competition and on the award of public contracts;
- introduction of regulations and administrative provisions necessary for the implementation of the programme;
- submission of intermediate and final technical and financial reports covering each year of

the programme;
- ensuring that the programme is implemented efficiently.

The Commission asked the Scientific Committee on Animal Health and Animal Welfare (SCAHAW), to evaluate the reasons for failures noted in the implementation of certain rabies control programmes, and identify the recommended actions to ensure their efficiency. The report , adopted on 23 October 2002, is available at: http://ec.europa.eu/food/fs/sc/scah/out80_en.pdf .Among 21 recommendations, the Committe pointed out that the vaccines should fulfil the requirements of the European Pharmacopoeia monographs, as well as the efficacy and safety recommendations of the WHO. It specifically spelled out that vaccine titres at batch release should be at least ten times the dose found to completely protect an experimental group, and that the titre of the vaccine should not fall below the indicative 100% protective dose following exposure to 25ºC for seven days. It also indicated that when using the aerial method of bait distribution, flight line distance should not exceed 500 metres, and that all rabies virus isolates should be typed in order to distinguish between vaccine and field virus strain.

5.1.2 Previous campaigns

The FVA presented the following data on the implementation and result of the previous campaigns of oral vaccination in Latvia

Oral vaccination campaigns: territory coverage

Year	Spring campaign	Autumn campaign
2007	100%	100%
2008	0%	63 %
2009	100%	

Uptake and vaccination of foxes and raccoon dogs:

Year	Uptake	Presence of antibodies
2007	73%	47%
2008	70%	48%
2009	-	-

Similar results were obtained for both species

Observations:

- Delays in the completion of the tendering process (generated by legal appeal against the tender award decision) were responsible for the failure to implement the spring campaign in 2008 and the partial implementation of the autumn campaign that year, which was also affected by bad weather conditions;

- the tendering process has been finalized and a contract for the supply of vaccine has been awarded for all campaigns until the end of 2010;

- the CA indicated that half of the baits necessary for the 2009 autumn campaign have been purchased, and are currently stored by the manufacturer. However, the CA acknowledged that the economic difficulties facing the country when the mission took place meant that the State budget was subject to weekly revision and the CA had not yet received confirmation that funds will be available for the implementation of the autumn campaign;

- monitoring surveys carried out during 2008 indicated that the seroconversion rate among wildlife populations that were presumed to have been vaccinated were consistently below 50%, and that almost one third of the animals that had consumed a bait had not developed an immune response. These data were not subject to epidemiological investigation or analysis by the CA. In particular, no data was available on the age profile of the animals from which samples had been analysed.

5.1.3 Vaccine used for oral immunisation

The 2008-2010 tender was awarded to a manufacturer of an oral vaccine bait that contains the attenuated SAD B19 strain, different from the bait used in previous years. An addendum was added to the tender specification in 2009, which requires the manufacturer to provide a certificate of analysis from the Community Reference Laboratory (CRL), indicating the titre of vaccine virus in each bait no more than 30 days prior to dispatch, which must comply with the manufacturer specifications.

In addition, in response to one of the recommendation of the Task Force, the National Reference Laboratory (NRL) in Latvia performed a virus content titration on each batch before its use in the 2009 campaign.

Observations :

- according to scientific data available, the minimum titre to fulfil the SCAHAW recommendations (of 10 times the minimum protective dose) would be 7 log, and this minimum titre was part of the tender specification as observed during the last FVO mission;

-the tender terms used at the time of the present mission did not indicate the minimal virus titre that they must contain, but only specified that the baits must be registered for use as veterinary medicinal products in Latvia. The bait currently used is registered in Latvia with a minimal titre of 6 log;

- the analyses performed on behalf of the manufacturer within 30 days prior to delivery were available for the batches delivered in 2009. They were not performed in the CRL, but in the German NRL. They indicated an average titre for each batch between 6.1 and 6.3 log. Some samples in 3 out of the 4 batches analysed gave results below the minimum titre (6.0 log), giving a standard deviation that could bring the average below 6.0;

- similarly, whereas all batches analysed in the Latvian NRL gave average results above the minimum titre, in some cases the variation among samples was significant, with the titre of some samples being below the minimum limit. The NRL indicated that they evaluated the suitability of each batch based on the average virus titre for the samples analysed. However, there were no procedures in place indicating how the NRL should evaluate the analyses or the actions that would be taken in case of non-compliance.

- In line with the SCAHAW and the Task Force recommendations, the NRL analysed all batches used in the 2009 spring campaign. The batches stored during the winter were analysed before their use in the field. The batches delivered by the manufacturer in 2009 were sampled on arrival. However, and contrary to the same recommendations, no further quality control of vaccine

bait titres was performed or is planned during the distribution of vaccine baits in the field;

5.1.4 Storage and distribution of oral vaccine

Long-term storage of the vaccine is performed in cold stores under the supervision of the Territorial Surveillance Units (TSUs) of the FVS at local level. Refrigerated trailers are used to transport the baits to designated airfields and to maintain them there at a constant temperature of -20ºC until they are distributed..

Vaccination throughout most parts of the country is performed by aerial distribution from light aircraft, which drop 20 to 25 baits per km^2. In addition, manual vaccine distribution is organised by the FVS territorial units in parks and urban areas. While aircraft distribution is performed right up to the borders with neighbouring MS, distribution in a 3 km wide strip along the border with Third Countries is performed using helicopters operated by Latvian border guards.

In 2008, the Central and far Eastern regions were not covered. The 2009 spring campaign started in the Western region, then moved Eastwards, using aircraft. The campaign was completed within 24 days, ending on 10 May.

Observations:

- No vaccine was stored in Latvia at the time of the mission. Records maintained during the vaccination campaign indicated that temperatures checks were performed twice each month in the long term cold stores and twice a week in temporary stores at airfields. These records were supervised by the CCA. All checks indicated that the vaccines were stored at appropriate temperatures;

- distribution flights using aircraft were supervised by an official veterinarian (senior state veterinary inspector) . They were monitored and documented. Records were also available, including GPS track records of flights, which indicated the area covered and the number of baits distributed. The distance between flight lines remained at 1 000 m, which is not in accordance with a recommendation of the task force to reduce the distance to 500 m. The CAs indicated that this was because the additional financial impact of increasing the density of flights was considered too great;

- vaccine was distributed in a 3 km wide strip in the border area a month after the end of the airplane distribution, because the border guards had other priorities and the helicopter was not available. For the same reason, the number of flights were reduced compared to the original plan. The CA emphasized that this strip overlapped the area previously covered by light aircraft, which meant that vaccination in the zone close to the border was actually more intense than elsewhere;

- the distribution of vaccine in border areas was not synchronised with the authorities in neighbouring MS. However, the MS do exchange information on the schedule of the campaigns;

- the CCA explained that during the early part of the 2009 spring vaccination campaign, they reduced the density of bait distribution in order to optimise the resources and remain as close as possible to the minimum coverage target of 20 baits per km^2 of land covered. As a result, the total number of baits used for the campaign was 1.4 million, which was 0.35 million doses less than was forecast in the plan approved by the Commission.

5.1.5 Monitoring of vaccination

The approved multi-annual programme foresees that the efficacy of vaccination will be monitored by analysing samples collected from 5 120 foxes and raccoon dogs each year. These samples are tested using luminescent microscopy, to determine whether the animals have consumed baits, using an Enzyme Linked Immunosorbent Assay (ELISA) antibody test, to determine whether they have been vaccinated, and using a Fluorescent Antibody Test (FAT) antigen test, to detect the possible presence of virus in the brain.

Samples are collected in collaboration with hunters. TSUs are responsible for receiving, processing and sending the samples to the laboratory. A premium of €10 is given for each animal of the target species brought for analysis.

Observations :

- In 2008, the CA indicated that monitoring samples were only collected in Autumn. Although the CCA ordered the collection of 5 120 samples across the national territory on 20 October 2008, only animals from vaccinated territories were accepted, with slightly more than 2 000 analyses reported. No documented epidemiological analysis of these reports was available. However, seroconversion rates varied considerably between districts, with the lowest rates being obtained in urban and peri-urban districts;

- the CA indicated that they intend to halve the number of analyses that will be performed for monitoring purposes during 2009, in order to reduce costs. No monitoring has been performed or is formally planned following the 2009 spring vaccination campaign, contrary to the recommendation of the Task Force.

5.1.6 Laboratories

The organisation of the national laboratory network has been reviewed and may be modified soon. The number of laboratories performing rabies analyses has been reduced to three (compared to nine during the last FVO mission). In 2009, only the NRL will be involved in analyses related to the monitoring of the oral rabies vaccination campaign.

The NRL organises supervision of the regional laboratories working on rabies. This supervision includes regular methodological management meetings, audits, and ring-tests. All suspect cases giving a negative result with FAT, are referred to the NRL for further investigation using cell culture techniques.

The CCA indicated that facilities continue to be available at local level for the reception and processing of corpses, and the shipment of samples to the NRL. Routes for transportation of samples under controlled temperature have been organised, allowing the NRL to receive samples three to four times a week.

Observations:

- In response to a recommendation from the last FVO mission, details of all FAT negative samples that were found positive on cell culture investigation were recorded in a log-book at the NRL. In these cases, a new FAT test was performed, discrepancies were investigated, and corrective actions were taken and recorded;

- a detailed procedure for sampling foxes and raccoon dogs was available, but did not include information on age determination.The anamnesis report to be completed by hunters included a field

where the age of the animal could be reported. The CA indicated that in cases where this information is recorded on the hunter's form, they would report the information to the NRL. However, no information campaign had been launched on this topic and no guidelines for age evaluation had been defined or promoted;

- the threshold used in ELISA tests to determine seroconversion in wild animals was lower than that recommended by the World Health Organization as the minimum titre considered to represent a level of immunity that correlates with the ability to protect against rabies (0.25 instead of 0.5 IU/ml);

- the NRL indicated that, in line with advice received from the Task Force, they intend to reduce the scope of rabies investigations. A new submission form has been introduced, including details on the reason and objective for submission. For example, the laboratory will no longer perform virus cell culture investigation, which is very costly, in cases where samples collected from wild animal found dead give negative FAT results and there is no information (such as abnormal clinical signs or the presence of disease in the area) indicating a possible public health risk. Data were provided to indicate that this modification would not significantly affect the disease detection rate;

- techniques for sequencing of virus genomes, in order to differentiate wild strains from vaccine virus strains, are under validation at the NRL, and are expected to be operational soon. Although national legislation requires each isolate to be sequenced, in line with the SCAHAW recommendations, the CA indicated that no decision regarding the use of these techniques has been adopted yet. Sequencing could be restricted to occurrences where epidemiological data indicate an unexplained, or in case of regional rise in the number of confirmed cases.

5.1.7 Control in domestic animals

Annual vaccination of dogs, ferrets and cats is compulsory, at the owner's expense, as is the identification (with a microchip) and registration (in a national database, together with vaccination data) of dogs, since 2009. Controls on the correct vaccination of these animals are performed in animal holdings by official veterinarians during their inspections of such holdings, and by the municipal police in urban areas.

Observations:

- The economic downturn led to a decision to postpone the enforcement of identification and registration of dogs until 2011;

- the check-lists of veterinary inspectors include fields regarding the rabies vaccination of pet animals. In addition, at the region visited, the regional officer indicated that they occasionally request vaccination reports from private veterinarians, allowing them to cross-check these pieces of information;

- Although no data was available on the number of police controls that were performed, information provided to the FVS indicated that 35 sanctions and 158 warnings had been issued by the police in 2009 in relation to rabies vaccination in pet animals.

5.1.8 Conclusions

Despite the shortcomings identified, the most recent information available on the number of rabies cases in the country indicates an encouraging downward trend. Uncertainty regarding the oral vaccination campaign planned for this autumn significantly threatens the progress made so far.

The recommendations made in the report of the previous FVO mission, related to the deficiencies noted in the laboratory network of diagnosis of rabies, the revision of the tendering process to avoid gaps of supply, and supervision of the storage and distribution of vaccines have been adequately addressed now. However, those related to the vaccination strategy to be in line with SCAHAW recommendations and the monitoring of wildlife incidence, have not yet received a suitable answer, despite similar recommendations made by the Task Force.

Economic constraints have limited the implementation of some control measures, such as the suboptimal flight pattern density, the limited number of samples analysed for monitoring purposes and the delayed enforcement of the registration of dogs. However, other measures have not been introduced even though the additional cost of implementation would be marginal, such as age determination of sampled wildlife and the implementation of monitoring following the spring campaign.

Quality control checks have been introduced at reception and during storage of the vaccine and are correctly performed. Distribution of vaccine is closely monitored. However, quality requirements for the vaccine in use are no longer as stringent as those recommended by the European Commission's SCAHAW. This, together with the absence of direct checks on the viability of vaccine baits during the campaign and the lower serological titre considered acceptable may partially explain the significant differences noted between bait uptake and seroconversion rates and the overall low seroconversion rates reported. This suggests that there is room for improvement in relation to the control systems in place in order to ensure the most effective use of the significant investment made in logistics for the oral vaccination campaigns. The absence of clear critical point for the quality control checks performed on batches of vaccine received, and of procedures to follow in case of nonconformity represents a further risk to the satisfactory implementation of the campaign.

The possible reversion of pathogenicity of the vaccine strain is not monitored, and the decision not to systematically test all dead wild animals may lead to an incomplete picture of the situation.

5.2 Contingency plans for epizootic diseases

5.2.1 Animal identification, holding registration, movement controls and traceability

5.2.1.1 Legal basis

Regulation (EC) No 1760/2000 of the European Parliament and of the Council defines the conditions for identification and registration of bovine animals. They must be individually identified with two ear tags , been issued an individual passport (with a possible derogation for national movements in a country with a database recognised as fully operational). Animal keepers (except transporters) must keep a movement register of a format approved by the CA on their holding, and notify them within seven days to a computerised database, record movements in the passport. The formats of ear tags, passport and holding registers are further detailed in Commission Regulation (EC) No 911/2004).

Commission Regulation (EC) No 1082/2003 lays down rules as regards the minimum level of controls to be carried out in the framework of the system for the identification and registration of bovine animals, requiring at least 10% of holdings to be controlled in that framework (unless

exception), selected following to a risk analysis.

Council Regulation (EC) No 21/2004 defines the conditions for identification and registration of ovine and caprine animals. They must be individually identified with an ear-tag and another means of identification. Animal keepers (except transporters) must keep a movement register of a format approved by the CA on their holding. All holdings must be registered by the CA, and movements must be either recorded in the computerised database (within seven days), or be accompanied by a movement document.The database must contain a data field where animal health information, for example restrictions on movements, or status, can be entered by the CA.

Commission Regulation (EC) No 1505/2006 lays down rules as regards the minimum level of controls to be carried out in the framework of the system for the identification and registration of ovine and caprine animals, requiring at least 3% of holdings (comprising at least 5% of the animal population) to be controlled in that framework (unless exception), selected following to a risk analysis.

Council Directive 2008/71/EEC defines the obligation of identification for pigs (before they leave their holding of birth, with an eartag or tattoo making it possible to determine the holding from which they came), and requires the presence of a movement register on each holding, and a registration of all holdings by the CA. Commission Decision 2000/678/EC lays down detailed rules for the registration of holdings in national databases for porcine animals.This Decision states that the database registering pig holdings must contain a data field where animal health information, for example restrictions on movements, or status, can be entered by the CA.

Commission Regulation (EC) Nº 504/2008 defines the rules for identification of equidae. The rules include the issuing of a passport, an electronic identification (or, by derogation, an alternative method of identification), and a database to record the identification of the equidae. This regulation applies from 1 July 2009. Beforehand, Commission Decisions 93/623/EEC and 2000/68/EC established the format of passport which had to be issued for every registered equidae, or equidae for breeding and production.

Article 11(2) of Council Directive 64/432/EEC requires the operator of assembly centres and Article 13(1)(b) of the same Directive require dealer to record information about the animals which they are responsible including the addresses or holding numbers of the holding of origin and of the holding of destination, the data of entry and exit to the centre (assembly centres), the data purchase (dealer), the registration number of the transporter and the licence number of the lorry delivering or collecting the animals.

Article 44 (1) of Commission Regulation (EC) No 796/2004 requires that the CA shall, with regard to the requirements or standards for which its responsible, carry out checks on at least 1% of all farmers submitting aid applications under support schemes established in Titles II and IV of Commission Regulation (EC) No 1782/2003 and for which the CA is responsible.

5.2.1.2 Findings

A central computerised registration database is in place for all domestic species covered by the scope of the mission. All holdings with cattle, sheep, goats, horses, poultry (including backyard holdings), must be registered, together with the number of animals present; updates are compulsory. The database contains details of the keepers and of the location the holdings. The system is linked to a powerful mapping system, which allows holdings to be located precisely on a detailed computerised map, with registered livestock movements to and from the holding within a user-defined period being displayed graphically.

Keepers of cattle, pigs, sheep and goats must complete movement documents, which accompany the animals, and notify the database within 7 days of the movement. These notifications are registered by the State Agricultural Agency in charge of the database, either for each individual animal, in the case of cattle, or for groups of animals of other species. The deadline set for the entry of information is 14 days following receipt of the information. Slaughterhouses have recently been given the means to register the arrival of animals directly in the database.

Official controls on holdings are performed according to a plan, which requires at least 10% of cattle, sheep and goat holdings to be checked for identification and movement control purposes. The frequency of controls for pigs and horses is higher. Holdings are selected for inspection at TSU level, according to risk criteria. The results of these controls are entered on the database. If shortcomings are detected, corrective actions are requested, deadlines for completion are set and follow-up visits are performed.

Movement registers and copies of movement notifications were available in the holdings visited by the mission team. The mission team saw few animals: the pigs leaving a production holding were correctly identified; in the assembly centre (AC), two cattle out of thirty had arrived and been accepted with one ear-tag only. Movements of cattle were in many cases not completely recorded in the bovine passport. Most of the consignments of cattle from and to the AC were recorded in the database; a consignment moved three weeks earlier did not appear in the database.

Information on the health status of the holdings may also be entered on the database. Although no specific field was in place to enter events of epizootic disease, the agency indicated that it could easily be added in case of need.

5.2.1.3 Conclusion

The registration and movement database is well designed and maintained. Official controls are performed according to EU requirement and more, increasing the reliability of the information collected. However, delays or omission in entering data and lack of enforcement of the requirement to record movement details on cattle passports weaken the power of these tools in case of emergency.

5.2.2 Disease outbreaks and surveillance

5.2.2.1 Legal basis

Annex I, Chapter II, B, to Regulation (EC) Nº 854/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council indicates that an official veterinarian is to perform an ante mortem inspection of all animals, within 24 hours of arrival, and less than 24 hours before slaughter, in order to detect any condition which might adversely affect human or animal health. Paragraph D of the same Chapter indicates that carcasses and accompanying offal are to be subjected without delay after slaughter to post-mortem inspection, for the same purpose.

According to article 3 of Council Directive 90/425/EEC, animals intended for intra-Community trade must also be subject to a clinical examination from an official veterinarian.

Article 4 of Council Directive 2005/94/EC requires the MS to carry out a surveillance programme on AI, in accordance with the guidelines edited in Commission Decision 2007/268/EEC.

Article 4 of Commission Regulation (EC) Nº 1266/2007 requires MS to carry out surveillance on BT, in accordance with the criteria detailed in Annex I to the same Regulation.

5.2.2.2 Findings

- *Ante* and *post mortem* inspections are performed in slaughterhouses by approved veterinarians, or private veterinarians under contract to perform official tasks (see horizontal part of the report). Records of these inspections were available in the slaughterhouse visited, and these tasks were under the supervision of a veterinarian inspector, who visited the slaughterhouse regularly. In 2006, a suspect FMD case was reported from a slaughterhouse to the CA, which used this notification as the basis for a real-time exercise.

- An animal disease surveillance plan is issued by the CA each year. The plan for 2009 includes the obligations of active surveillance for BT (in adult cattle, young cattle from other MS, and entomological surveillance) and AI (in commercial and backyard herds, and in wild birds), according to the respective Community requirements. The surveillance programme for AI is approved and co-financed by the Commission in accordance with Decision 2008/897/EC. The plan includes testing for ND in backyard farms (commercial flocks are vaccinated), and for Classical Swine Fever (more than 1 000 domestic pigs and between 1 100 and 2 200 wild boars).

5.2.2.3 Conclusion

In addition to meeting Community requirements and implementing general passive surveillance, an additional targeted active surveillance gives a high level of confidence on the health status of the country regarding epizootic diseases.

5.2.3 Contingency plans

5.2.3.1 Legal basis

Council Directives 2005/94/EC (avian influenza, AI), 92/66/EEC (Newcastle disease, ND), 2003/85/EC (Foot-and Mouth diseases, FMD), 92/119/EEC (certain animal diseases, including swine vesicular disease, SVD)2001/89/EC (Classical swine fever, CSF), 2002/60/EC (African swine fever, ASF), 2000/75/EC (Bluetongue, BT), 92/35/EEC (African horse sickness, AHS), require the MSs to draw up contingency plans specifying the national measures to be implemented in case of outbreaks, taking into account local factors. The plan should allow access to facilities, equipment, and personnel for a rapid and efficient eradication outbreaks.

The annexes of the Directives detail the criteria and requirements relating to contingency plans. They include legal powers, secured access to emergency funds, the establishment of a chain of command, measures to ensure that appropriate resources are available, an instruction manual giving full and detailed practical description of all procedures, instructions and measures to be employed. Training must be organised for the staff, both on veterinary and communication techniques.

Among the instructions and measures to be employed, all relevant Directives (except the ones for BT and AHS) require the disinfectants to be used and their concentration, to be approved by the CA, in order to ensure the destruction of the relevant virus. They must also be officially authorised

and registered according to Directive 98/8/EC, concerning the placing of biocidal products on the market.

A fully functional national disease control centre (NDCC) and local disease centres (LDCC) must be immediately set up in event of outbreak,.

The technical requirements for NDCC and LDCC are in particular detailed in articles 76 and 77 of Directive 2003/85/EC (for FMD);

A permanently operational expert group shall be created in order to maintain the expertise needed by the CA in ensuring disease preparedness. Directive 2003/85/EC specifies that the group is to be constituted of epidemiologists, veterinary scientists and virologists in a balanced way. However, MSs may arrange formalised agreements with other MSs on mutual assistance in regard of the expert group.

A detailed plan for emergency vaccination, and vaccine requirements needed in the event of emergency vaccination for CSF, FMD, BT, AI, ND must be indicated.

Regions with high density of livestock (for FMD), of pigs (for CSF) and poultry (for AI) must be identified in the relevant CPs. The CP for AI must give an indication of the number and location of all commercial holdings.

CPs should indicate the capability required for conducting tests, and the updating of swift transportation of samples and rapid diagnostic techniques for BT, AI and ND; a national reference laboratory (NRL) must be designated, to carry out the functions and duties detailed in the respective Directives. These include the use of tests and standards set in the legislation, collaboration with the CRL (including participation to ring-tests). However, the CA may delegate these these functions and duties to the NRL of another MS through a formal mutual agreement between CAs. No list of NRLs is presently published, but, according to Directive 2008/73/EC they will have to be made available to other MS and to the public from 01/01/2010. Laboratories performing analyses in the context of official controls must comply with quality requirements listed in Article 12 of Regulation (EC) No 882/2004.

Diagnostic manuals have been formally adopted for some epizootic diseases (Commission Decision 2002/106/EC for CSF, 2003/422/EC for ASF, 2006/437/EC for AI,2000/428/EC for SVD, and Annex XIII of Directive 2003/85/EC for FMD, Annex III of Directive 92/66/EEC for ND, Annex D to Directive 90/426/EEC for AHS).

The CP for FMD must indicate the arrangements to minimise damage to the environment in the event of an outbreak, in particular if it is necessary to burn or bury carcasses.

For ASF and CSF, alarm drills must be organised at least twice a year. Real-time exercises must also be conducted. For FMD, they should occur twice within a five years period (or in combination with an exercise in a neighbouring MS or another disease).

Contingency plans are approved by the Commission Decisions 2007/24/EC, for AI and ND; 2007/18/EC for FMD; 2007/19/EC for CSF. Significant modifications in the CP for FMD must be notified to the Commission. In any case, each MS must update its CP for FMD every five years and particularly in the light of experiences gained during real-time alert exercises.

5.2.3.2 Findings

Contingency plans

CPs have been drafted for all relevant diseases, and respective CPs from Latvia are listed in the relevant Commission decisions. The CPs contain three different sections:

- A general CP for all diseases is in place, containing legal and financial provisions, indications in relation to NDCC, LDCC, chain of command and expert groups, resources, establishment of quarantine, provisions for vaccination, training and public awareness, and general data on laboratories.

- More detailed instructions for eradication of each disease. These provide details of the actions to be taken in case of suspicion and confirmation (including actions in the protection and surveillance zones), vaccination of animals if relevant and the killing and disposal of animals. The detailed instructions for AI also contain a detailed diagnostic procedure for differential diagnosis and confirmation of the disease.

- A manual with common instructions on the notification of highly dangerous diseases, on the disinfection of holdings and guidelines on humane killing.

The chapter on legal provisions in the CP indicates that CPs must be updated annually. The general CP and instructions for FMD were reviewed in 2008, from a 2004 and 2002 version respectively. A new AI CP was being finalized during the mission. Instructions for BT date from 2006, and for other diseases from 2004.

The CP for CSF, AI and FMD have been approved by the Commission, as stated in the related Decisions. The updated version of the CP for FMD has not been officially notified to the Commission, but was sent to the FVO.

The CCA indicated that procedures are in place for updating the CPs in case of significant change. They also indicated that the CPs were under major review, and would in future take account of:

- the CAs intention to develop regional CPs, and to delegate further responsibilities to the TSUs for operational issues;

- the modification of the regional organisation (from 27 to 11 TSUs)

- the need for more detailed instructions concerning vaccination.

The extent to which specific instructions for each disease adapt Community requirements to national conditions is limited. For example, they do not provide:

- details on the practical use of killing devices available in the country;

- details on protection of personal protection in case of AI;

- references to the diagnostic manuals;

The CP provides regional census information dating from 2007 for the main domestic species. It no longer gives an indication of the number and location of all commercial poultry holdings, with the maximum number of poultry that could be present on these holdings. This information was indicated in the original version of the CP and is required by Article 62 of Directive2005/94/EC.

Organisation, chain of command, resources

The CP describes the chain of command in place, and the role of the Chief Veterinary Officer. An Operational Group would be summoned by the CVO to carry out duties in the NDCC. The members of this group are identified in the CP. In addition, a State Emergency Situations Operational Committee would be constituted under the guidance of the Ministry of Interior, in order to coordinate the activities of the various State institutions involved. The CVO is part of this committee.

The CP also contains details of Territorial Working Groups who would staff the LDCC. This section refers to the old FVS structure with 27 TSUs.

The CP also contains details of an international memorandum of understanding with 7 other EU and

EFTA MSs, aimed at collaboration, support and assistance to fighting the spread of epizootic diseases, if the resources in the country affected are insufficient. Within the framework of this agreement, regular meetings are held twice a year during peace time and seminars, training and simulation exercises are organised.

No dedicated NDCC site has been identified. The CCA explained that they would use the facilities and equipment availble at central level and normally used for their routine tasks. In response to the doubts from the mission team that this arrangement would allow to manage an efficient eradication campaign, and in the absence of simulation or experience proving otherwise, the CCA indicated that they intended to devolve most operational aspects to the LDCC, but this was not yet formalised. At the NDCC, suitable communication and mapping resources were available.

At the LDCC visited, which was also the TSU of the region, national CPs were available. No regional CP have been drawn yet, but in the region visited, a list of experts to be attend suspicions of epizootic diseases in the newly constituted region had been drawn-up.

A list of material and equipment to be kept in case of emergency either at local or national level is included in the CP. The CCA indicated that they are in the process of reviewing the lists and conditions of storage. At present, some equipment is kept in stores controlled by the Ministry of Interior. The mission team visited such a store, where four killing devices were stored since their purchase last year. These devices were still in their original packaging and the equipment had not been inspected. No instruction manual for their use was available. The FVO mission DG(SANCO)2005/7617 noted that no practical arrangements were in place for killing poultry. A draft agreement with a company providing gas killing equipment was presented to the mission team.
The CCA indicated that they were in the process of reviewing their need, and signing contracts with providers in order to secure prompt supply in case of emergency. Signed or draft contracts were presented. The necessary equipment to attend suspicions was available at the TSU visited.

Communications

At the NDCC, an updated list of key officials and administrations to be contacted at national level in case of emergency was kept. At the TSU, in addition to the list of officials to be called in case of suspicion, a list of all veterinarians in the region could be produced. However, and contrary to requirement of Article 75 of Directive 2003/85/EC, no lists of national and international organisations to be contacted in case of outbreak was available.

Legal powers in peace time and in emergencies

Under Latvian legislation, the control of infectious disease is a significant state function, the implementation of which is compulsory. This includes surveillance and eradication aspects of all the diseases included in the scope of this mission.

In case of emergency, legal provisions are in place to involve other government bodies, and give powers to the CA to restrict movement of animals, people, animal products, in accordance with requirements of national regulations, which are incorporated in the respective sections of the CP. Legal powers include compulsory killing of animals presenting a threat to human or animal health.

Financial provisions for eradication and compensation

The CP details the compensation arrangements for the compulsory killing of animals in case of emergency. Compensation rates are fixed for each category of animal. They have not been revised since 2004, despite substantial inflation in the country. The plan does not indicate the delay for paying the compensation. The financial resources are allotted from an emergency reserve fund, provided for in the state budget. The mission team asked what was the current status of this reserve in the framework of the budget revision for 2009, but did not get any information on this aspect.

Epidemiological capacity

A single expert group is defined in the CP to cope with all disease emergencies. The field of expertise is not detailed for the experts listed, but preliminary information suggests that the field of expertise of some experts (such as parasitology) would not be directly relevant. No evidence was presented to demonstrate that the team composition was balanced, as required by article 78 of Directive 2003/85/EC. Although the international memorandum of understanding introduces the possibility of receiving expert help from abroad, there are no plans in place for the addition of a foreign expert to the expert group.

The CPs do not specify how the expert group might assist the CA during epidemiological enquiries, sampling, testing or interpretation of laboratory results (as required by Article 23 of Directive 2001/89/EC, Article 22 of Directive 2002/60/EC and Article 78 of 2003/85/EC).

The CCA indicated that they are in the process of reviewing the composition of the expert team, and to widen its pool of expertise, including the addition of a meteorologist. The CCA also indicated that the expert group is used for training of officials but is not involved in revising the CPs.

Laboratories

The general CP identifies the Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory (ADDL) as NRL for FMD, SVD, CSF, BT, AI. The CP also refers to an agreement with the NRL of Denmark for assistance to confirm or rule out suspicion of outbreak of these diseases (except BT) and ASF.

The AHS part of the CP indicate that the ADDL is also the NRL for AHS. However, laboratory officials indicated that this is no longer officially the case. They have contacted the CRL, asking it to accept responsibility to act as the NRL for Latvia, but have not received a response to this request.The CP indicates that samples for ND should be sent to the OIE reference laboratory, which is not identified. In practice, the ADDL is recognised as NRL for this disease. No arrangement is in place for diagnostic of diseases cited in Directive 92/119/EEC, other than SVD and BT.

The ADDL holds a double accreditation according to the international quality standard, ISO/IEC 17025. The first one is awarded by the national accreditation body, which accredits individual tests. The second one is awarded by a German accreditation body, which issues "general method" accreditation, with all individual tests based on the method being automatically accredited. All methods officially used by the laboratory in relation with the object of this mission were covered by the scope of one or both accreditations.

No laboratory contingency plan was in place, but a list of contact details of all members working at the laboratory, and those who could be called to assist at short notice, was available. The CP also indicates the immediate capacity of the laboratory, its maximum capacity, and the delay necessary to reach this full capacity. The maximum capacity of the laboratory is limited to less than 100 virus genome or antigen detection tests per day. A contract has been secured with a transporter for shipment of pathological specimens. Instructions are in place for TSUs regarding the preparation and shipment of samples.

The ADDL participates in ring-tests and meetings organised by the respective CRLs for CSF, FMD, BT, AI, ND, SVD. It also participates regularly in ring-tests organised by the CRL for ASF. In 2004 it took part in a ring test for AHS. Evidence of the corrective actions taken following the analyses of the results of these tests was presented. However, real-time PCR had not yet been introduced for BT diagnosis, despite a recommendation to this effect by the CRL.

In addition to the standard operating procedures for each method, charts describing the diagnostic pathway for the confirmation of FMD, CSF and AI have been drawn up. They are not related to nor checked against the Commission's diagnostic manuals. No reference to these diagnostic manuals is made in either the CP or the instructions for specific diseases. The CPs and diagnostic pathway

charts are not consistent: for instance, the CP on AI indicates that the NRL must be able to carry out the intravenous pathogenicity index test in 6 week old chickens, although this method is not used in the NRL. The diagnostic pathway charts presented also contained some shortcomings: they do not indicate the circumstances under which a negative suspicion for CSF or FMD should be tested for ASF or SVD respectively; the diagnostic path for CSF indicates that organs are to be tested only if positive results are obtained from the analysis of blood samples.

Representative from the NRL participated in theoretical simulation exercises, and simulation for the transport of suspect material was organised. No simulation exercise was organised at the laboratory itself.

Provisions for emergency vaccination

General provisions for emergency vaccination are given in the general and specific CPs, but no detailed plan has been established. These documents do not include an estimate of doses of vaccines that would be required. The CCA indicated that they are in the process of revision of these parts of the CPs.

The CCA also presented evidence of contacts with a provider of a registered vaccine for BT (serotype 8), in order to secure a rapid supply in case of need.

Cleaning and disinfection, disposal

Instructions on disinfection are included in the CP manual, with a detailed list of active ingredients and some disinfectants active against FMD. Indications are also given for disinfection in case of CSF, ND or AI. Except for FMD, the instructions refer to disinfectants registered in Latvia against the respective agents.

No official from the FVS could present to the mission team a list of approved disinfectants, nor could they explain how they ensured that the disinfectants used were properly approved. At the final meeting, the mission team was informed that such a list is available on the internet. The CCA were unable to identify any procedures concerning the registration or authorisation of disinfectants effective against specific agents relevant for animal health. The list that was provided to the mission team at the final meeting did not include the disinfectants that were used at the various sites visited, nor did it contain the disinfectants included in a supply agreement signed between the CCA and a provider. The labels on many of the containers of disinfectant examined by the mission team did not indicate that the products had been authorised by the national environmental agency, the validity date, or their spectrum of activity.

The CPs require the LDCC to keep 2 litres of “universal” disinfectant. Each TSU can decide which product to use, the concentration of the stock and the purpose for which it would be used.

Regarding disposal of carcasses, the CP includes an agreement between the CA and the only rendering plant present in the country. This agreement includes the possibility for the rendering plant to upgrade its capacity (within a month). The CA also indicated that they had an informal agreement with the rendering plant of a neighbouring MS, and their CA, allowing the shipment of animal by-products if the available capacity in Latvia was insufficient.

All TSUs were requested to identify potential sites for burying or burning of carcasses. However, no such sites are identified in the CPs. In the region visited, no suitable site could be identified, but the CA considered that such a solution would not be needed in any event.

Training and simulation exercises, information

Training of official veterinarians is organised in the context of the CA's ISO 17020 accreditation. A training course on epizootic diseases took place a week prior to the FVO mission. No provision exists at central level for training of authorised veterinarians, who perform official checks in

slaughterhouses, the rendering plant and assembly centres. They may receive training organised by the TSUs or by agricultural chambers. A draft procedure is being developed to make training of authorised veterinarians compulsory.

Simulation exercises are planned at the end of each year for the following year. The first exercise was organised in 2001. The last exercises included a training on CSF in 2007, when new killing equipment was tested. An international exercise on BT was organised in 2008, and another international exercise on West Nile Fever in 2009. This latter exercise consisted of a five hour exercise at central level, to test international communication and traceability capacities.

Some follow up actions were taken following the 2007 exercise, including a decision to buy more killing equipment. The CCA has prepared a structured evaluation of the BT exercise held in 2008. This evaluation identified the need for a number of corrective actions, including updating of the CP to include more detailed instructions, and revising the quantity of diagnostic reagents held in reserve. However, at the time of the mission, the CP for BT had not yet been revised.

The CA has produced publicity material to improve the awareness of epizootic disease among farmers. For example, posters and leaflets providing information on several diseases, including AI, CSF in domestic pigs, and FMD were seen in various sites visited.

5.2.3.3 Conclusion

Contingency plans are in place for the major animal diseases but not to a level that they are immediately applicable. Provisions and plans for updating and adapting the plans to regional needs are in place, but no deadline for the completion of this work has been established. The CCA has identified a number of sectors where CPs need to be updated, including the need to take account of the the recent major reorganisation. The organisation and chain of command in case of emergency is clearly established. Powers are in place to the satisfaction of the CA to implement all necessary actions in case of outbreak. The CA is in the process of revising its strategy for purchasing, storing and securing access to essential equipment. The current situation is such that at present, availability and suitability of material and equipment is not completely ensured.

The fixed compensation scheme for animals killed in case of emergency, which has not been revised, the lack of a defined period within which this compensation would be paid and the possible threat to these provisions in the current budget, create an unfavourable environment in which to ensure the collaboration of owners in case of a major disease outbreak. The epidemiological capacity is not referred in detail in the CP, and expert teams for prospective and analytical epidemiology of specific diseases have not been adequately established. Capacity to deal with suspicions at laboratory level has been established, and the NRL adequately participates in activities proposed by the various CRLs, even for diseases for which it is not officially designated as NRL. However, the overall capacity of the NRL has not been practically tested, and it is not ensured that the diagnostic pathway charts used in case of suspicion of epizootic by the NRL will follow the provisions set out in the CPs, and in the Commission's diagnostic manuals.

In the absence of formal approval procedures for disinfectants in the field of animal health, the correct selection of disinfectants, both for routine use and in case of emergency, is not easy to ensure or control.

The simulation exercises organised so far were limited in terms of scope and depth, and in terms of the conclusions reached and the corrective actions taken or improvements made. No exercise of sufficient scope has been undertaken to test both the chain of command and practical operations in the field, or to give practical training and experience to OVs in the field. A recent international simulation exercise on BT allowed to identify weaknesses in the CP.

Theoretical training is correctly organised for official veterinarians, but not ensured for veterinarians performing official tasks and supervision in sites where routine official surveillance of animals for animal health purpose is performed.

5.2.4 Miscellaneaous

5.2.4.1 Legal basis

Directive 64/432/EEC requires AC involved in Intra-community trade to be approved by the CA according to the provisions of its article 11;

Commission Decision 2007/846/EC defines the format under which MS must notify the list of approved ACs.

Annex III, Chapter I, b, to Regulation (EC) Nº 853/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council requires slaughterhouses to have separate lockable facilities or, climate permitting, pens for sick or suspect animals with separate draining and sited in such a way as to avoid contamination of other animals, unless the competent authority considers that such facilities are unnecessary.

5.2.4.2 Findings

The AC visited was not on the list of the Commission (http://circa.europa.eu/irc/sanco/vets/info/data/assembly/assembly.htm). It had received a formal approval from the CA. However, the approval notice did not include any legal reference, did not define the capacity of the centre and covered both cattle and pigs, although the centre had no facilities suitable for pigs. Despite being under the supervision of an authorised veterinarian, and having been inspected by an official veterinarian, the AC presented significant shortcomings in its structure (the facilities were not easy to clean and disinfect) and operations (animals entering the centre were accompanied by veterinary "pre-certificates" that did not contain sufficient information to allow the operator verify that they satisfied the requirements for admission or to enable the OV to certify that they met the requirements for intra-Community trade).

New pens for sick or suspect animals were available at the slaughterhouse visited. However, the draining was inadequate to avoid contamination of other animals.

5.2.4.3 Conclusion

The structural requirements in AC and slaughterhouse, related to the protection of animal health, were insufficiently enforced. With regard to the AC, the scope of the approval was insufficiently defined, and the animal health guarantees were inadequate both for reception of the animals in the AC, and for the OV to sign certificates.

6 Overall Conclusions

The economic downturn is significantly affecting the organisation and prioritisation of activities of the competent authorities of Latvia.

Despite significant under-performance of the 2008 oral vaccination campaign, a significant decrease in the number of rabies cases was observed both in wild and domestic animals. Despite some shortcomings, the 2009 spring campaign of rabies vaccination was adequately implemented. The distribution of baits was adequately monitored, but not the overall efficacy of the campaign. Deficiencies were identified in the quality requirements for the vaccine used, and in the quality controls introduced to monitor of its efficacy and innocuity. Funding of the activities for the rest of 2009 has not been secured.

Contingency plans are in place but they are not detailed or adapted at the national and regional level to a point where they could be applied immediately. No firm plans are in place to check, test and revise them, despite such needs being identified by the CA. It is not ensured that sample analysis and diagnostic criteria will be performed in line with EU requirements. Surveillance and diagnostic capacities have not been substantially impacted so far by the economic downturn and restructuring of the CA.

7 Closing Meeting

During the closing meeting held in Riga on 19 June 2009, the mission team presented the findings and preliminary conclusions of the mission to the CA. During this meeting, the CA acknowledged the findings and preliminary conclusions.

8 Recommendations

The Competent Authority of Latvia is recommended to:

N°.	Recommendation
1.	Ensure that the characteristics of the vaccine used are in line with the 6th and 7threcommendations of the SCAHAW report on oral vaccination of foxes against rabies, and the 1st recommendation of the notes on the meeting of the rabies subgroup of the Task Force for monitoring disease eradication programmes in the Member States; be prepared in case an unfavourable outcome of quality controls leads to disruption of the vaccination campaign;
2.	Ensure that relevant data are collected and analysed after each oral rabies vaccination campaign, in order to monitor and ensure its efficacy, as per the 1st recommendation of the SCAHAW report on oral vaccination of foxes against rabies, and the 3rd and 4th recommendation of the Task Force report;
3.	Type the rabies virus strains collected in the field (4th recommendation of the SCAHAW report on oral vaccination of foxes against rabies and 5th recommendation of the Task Force report);
4.	Consider the reduction of the flight distance for aerial distribution of baits (19th recommendation of the SCAHAW report on oral vaccination of foxes against rabies, and 2nd recommendation of the Task Force report);

N°.	Recommendation
5.	Develop, detail and adapt the contingency plans at national and regional level in order for them to be immediately and efficiently applicable in order to allow access to facilities, equipment, personnel and all other appropriate materials necessary for the rapid and efficient eradication of the outbreak, as per Article 62 (2) of Directive 2005/94/EC, Article 72 (2) of directive 2003/85/EC, Article 21 (1) of Directive 2002/60/EC, Article 22 (1) of Directive 2001/89/EC, Article 18 (1) of Directive 2000/75/EC, Article 21 (1) of Directive 92/66/EEC, Article 17 (1) of Directive 92/35/EEC; ensure that permanently operational expert groups are set up so that they can assist the CA in ensuring the disease preparedness, as required by Article 23 (5) of Directive 2001/89/EC, Article 22 (5) of Directive 2002/60/EC, and Article 78 of Directive 2003/89/EC; in particular, and in accordance with this last article, ensure that they arecomposed of epidemiologists, veterinary scientists and virologists in a balanced way
6.	Ensure that updates and revision of contingency plans are performed as necessary,and that significant modifications or updated plans are submitted to the Commission at least every 5 years, as per Article 62,5 of Directive 2005/94/EC, Article 72,10 of directive 2003/85/EC, Article 21,3 of Directive 2002/60/EC, Article 22,3 of Directive 2001/89/EC;
7.	Ensure that diagnostic procedures, sampling and laboratory testing is performed in accordance with the Community diagnostic standards and requirements, as per Article 50,1 of directive 2005/94/EC, Article 17,1 of Directive 2003/89/EC, Article 18,1,a of Directive 2002/60/EC, Article 17,1,a of Directive2001/89/EC, Article 12 of Directive 82/66/EC, and that a national reference laboratory is formally designated for all diseases, including AHS (Article 14 of Directive 92/35/EEC) and ASF (Article 18,1,b of Directive 2002/60/EC), and details are available to the other Member States and to the public;
8.	Ensure that alert drills and simulation exercises are performed at the adequate frequency, as required in Article 73,1 of Directive 2003/85/EC, Annex VI, (f), (ii) to Directive 2002/60/EC, Annex VII, g, (ii) to Directive 2001/89/EC, and submit the main results on the FMD exercises to the Commission, as required in Article 73,3 of Directive 2003/89/EC;
9.	Improve the traceability of cattle by enforcing the movement information to be recorded in the passports (as required by Article 7 (2) of Regulation (EC) No 1760/2004, and Article 6 (1) (c) of Regulation (EEC) No 911/2004, and by ensuring a rapid registration of movement notifications in the national database so that it can effectively its role as described in Article 14 (C) (3) of Directive 64/432/EEC;
10.	Ensure that the disinfectants to be used, and their concentrations, are officially authorised and registered to ensure the destruction of the specific agents against which they are intended to be used, as per Article 48 (e) of Directive 2005/94/EC, Article 11,1 of Directive 200389/EC, Article 12 (a) of Directive 2002/60/EC, Article 12,1,a of

N°.	Recommendation
	Directive 2001/89/EC, Article 11 (a) of Directive 92/66/EEC, Article 16 (1) (a) of Directive 92/119/EEC; to ensure that the disinfectants labels bear the authorisation number allocated by the CA and the expiry date, as required by Article 20 (3) (b) and (i) of Directive 98/8/EC;
11.	Consider reviewing the provisions for financial compensation in case of compulsory killing or slaughter of animals in case of contingency, so that they do not represent an impediment for an efficient application of such measures;
12.	Ensure that the premises in slaughterhouses and assembly centres meet the structural requirements aimed at avoiding contamination in case of animal health risk (Article 11 (1) (c) and (d) of Directive 64/432/EEC; Annex III, Chapter II (1) (a) and (b) of Regulation (EC) No 853/2004); to ensure that animals are accepted in assembly centres and certified only if they are correctly identified, and on the basis of an official document containing all necessary information completed by the official veterinarian for the holding of origin, as required by Articles 5 (2) (a) and 11 (1) (e)of Directive 64/432/EEC.

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

http://ec.europa.eu/food/fvo/ap/ap_lv_2009-8259.pdf

ANNEX 1 - LEGAL REFERENCES

Legal Reference	Official Journal	Title
Reg. 1760/2000	OJ L 204, 11.8.2000, p. 1-10	Regulation (EC) No 1760/2000 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 July 2000 establishing a system for the identification and registration of bovine animals and regarding the labelling of beef and beef products and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 820/97
Reg. 1082/2003	OJ L 156, 25.6.2003, p. 9-12	Commission Regulation (EC) No 1082/2003 of 23 June 2003 laying down detailed rules for the implementation of Regulation (EC) No 1760/2000 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards the minimum level of controls to be carried out in the framework of the system for the identification and registration of bovine animals
Reg. 1782/2003	OJ L 270, 21.10.2003, p. 1-69	Council Regulation (EC) No 1782/2003 of 29 September 2003 establishing common rules for direct support schemes under the common agricultural policy and establishing certain support schemes for farmers and amending Regulations (EEC) No 2019/93, (EC) No 1452/2001, (EC) No 1453/2001, (EC) No 1454/2001, (EC) 1868/94, (EC) No 1251/1999, (EC) No 1254/1999, (EC) No 1673/2000, (EEC) No 2358/71 and (EC) No 2529/2001
Reg. 21/2004	OJ L 5, 9.1.2004, p. 8-17	Council Regulation (EC) No 21/2004 of 17 December 2003 establishing a system for the identification and registration of ovine and caprine animals and amending Regulation (EC) No 1782/2003 and Directives 92/102/EEC and 64/432/EEC
Reg. 796/2004	OJ L 141, 30.4.2004, p. 18-58	Commission Regulation (EC) No 796/2004 of 21 April 2004 laying down detailed rules for the implementation of cross-compliance, modulation and the integrated administration and control system provided for in of Council Regulation (EC) No 1782/2003 establishing common rules for direct support schemes under the common agricultural policy and establishing certain support schemes for farmers

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Reg. 852/2004	OJ L 139, 30.4.2004, p. 1, Corrected and re-published in OJ L 226, 25.6.2004, p. 3	Regulation (EC) No 852/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 on the hygiene of foodstuffs
Reg. 853/2004	OJ L 139, 30.4.2004, p. 55, Corrected and re-published in OJ L 226, 25.6.2004, p. 22	Regulation (EC) No 853/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 laying down specific hygiene rules for food of animal origin
Reg. 854/2004	OJ L 139, 30.4.2004, p. 206, Corrected and re-published in OJ L 226, 25.6.2004, p. 83	Regulation (EC) No 854/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 laying down specific rules for the organisation of official controls on products of animal origin intended for human consumption
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
Reg. 911/2004	OJ L 163, 30.4.2004, p. 65-70	Commission Regulation (EC) No 911/2004 of 29 April 2004 implementing Regulation (EC) No 1760/2000 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards eartags, passports and holding registers
Reg. 1505/2006	OJ L 280, 12.10.2006, p. 3-6	Commission Regulation (EC) No 1505/2006 of 11 October 2006 implementing Council Regulation (EC) No 21/2004 as regards the minimum level of checks to be carried out in relation to the identification and registration of ovine and caprine animals
Reg. 1266/2007	OJ L 283, 27.10.2007, p. 37-52	Commission Regulation (EC) No 1266/2007 of 26 October 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
Reg. 504/2008	OJ L 149, 7.6.2008, p.	Commission Regulation (EC) No 504/2008 of 6 June 2008 implementing Council Directives

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	3-32	90/426/EEC and 90/427/EEC as regards methods for the identification of equidae
Dir. 64/432/EEC	OJ 121, 29.7.1964, p. 1977-2012	Council Directive 64/432/EEC of 26 June 1964 on animal health problems affecting intra-Community trade in bovine animals and swine
Dir. 90/425/EEC	OJ L 224, 18.8.1990, p. 29-41	Council Directive 90/425/EEC of 26 June 1990 concerning veterinary and zootechnical checks applicable in intra- Community trade in certain live animals and products with a view to the completion of the internal market
Dir. 90/426/EEC	OJ L 224, 18.8.1990, p. 42-54	Council Directive 90/426/EEC of 26 June 1990 on animal health conditions governing the movement and import from third countries of equidae
Dir. 92/66/EEC	OJ L 260, 5.9.1992, p. 1-20	Council Directive 92/66/EEC of 14 July 1992 introducing Community measures for the control of Newcastle disease
Dir. 92/119/EEC	OJ L 62, 15.3.1993, p. 69-85	Council Directive 92/119/EEC of 17 December 1992 introducing general Community measures for the control of certain animal diseases and specific measures relating to swine vesicular disease
Dir. 98/8/EC	OJ L 123, 24.4.1998, p. 1-63	Directive 98/8/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 February 1998 concerning the placing of biocidal products on the market
Dir. 2000/75/EC	OJ L 327, 22.12.2000, p. 74-83	Council Directive 2000/75/EC of 20 November 2000 laying down specific provisions for the control and eradication of bluetongue
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. 2002/60/EC	OJ L 192, 20.7.2002, p. 27-46	Council Directive 2002/60/EC of 27 June 2002 laying down specific provisions for the control of African swine fever and amending Directive 92/119/EEC as regards Teschen disease and African swine fever

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Dir. 2003/85/EC	OJ L 306, 22.11.2003, p. 1-87	Council Directive 2003/85/EC of 29 September 2003 on Community measures for the control of foot-and-mouth disease repealing Directive 85/511/EEC and Decisions 89/531/EEC and 91/665/EEC and amending Directive 92/46/EEC
Dir. 2005/94/EC	OJ L 10, 14.1.2006, p. 16-65	Council Directive 2005/94/EC of 20 December 2005 on Community measures for the control of avian influenza and repealing Directive 92/40/EEC
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)
Dir. 2008/73/EC	OJ L 219, 14.8.2008, p. 40-54	Council Directive 2008/73/EC of 15 July 2008 simplifying procedures of listing and publishing information in the veterinary and zootechnical fields and amending Directives 64/432/EEC, 77/504/EEC, 88/407/EEC, 88/661/EEC, 89/361/EEC, 89/556/EEC, 90/426/EEC, 90/427/EEC, 90/428/EEC, 90/429/EEC, 90/539/EEC, 91/68/EEC, 91/496/EEC, 92/35/EEC, 92/65/EEC, 92/66/EEC, 92/119/EEC, 94/28/EC, 2000/75/EC, Decision 2000/258/EC and Directives 2001/89/EC, 2002/60/EC and 2005/94/EC
Dec. 93/623/EEC	OJ L 298, 3.12.1993, p. 45-55	93/623/EEC: Commission Decision of 20 October 1993 establishing the identification document (passport) accompanying registered equidae
Dec. 2000/68/EC	OJ L 23, 28.1.2000, p. 72-75	2000/68/EC: Commission Decision of 22 December 1999 amending Commission Decision 93/623/EEC and establishing the identification of equidae for breeding and production
Dec. 2000/428/EC	OJ L 167, 7.7.2000, p. 22-32	2000/428/EC: Commission Decision of 4 July 2000 establishing diagnostic procedures, sampling methods and criteria for the evaluation of the results of laboratory tests for the confirmation and differential diagnosis of swine vesicular disease
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

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		as foreseen by Council Directive 64/432/EEC
Dec. 2002/106/EC	OJ L 39, 9.2.2002, p. 71-88	2002/106/EC: Commission Decision of 1 February 2002 approving a Diagnostic Manual establishing diagnostic procedures, sampling methods and criteria for evaluation of the laboratory tests for the confirmation of classical swine fever
Dec. 2003/422/EC	OJ L 143, 11.6.2003, p. 35-49	2003/422/EC: Commission Decision of 26 May 2003 approving an African swine fever diagnostic manual
Dec. 2006/437/EC	OJ L 237, 31.8.2006, p. 1-27	2006/437/EC: Commission Decision of 4 August 2006 approving a Diagnostic Manual for avian influenza as provided for in Council Directive 2005/94/EC
Dec. 2007/18/EC	OJ L 7, 12.1.2007, p. 36-37	2007/18/EC: Commission Decision of 22 December 2006 approving contingency plans for the control of foot-and-mouth disease pursuant to Council Directive 2003/85/EC
Dec. 2007/19/EC	OJ L 7, 12.1.2007, p. 38-40	2007/19/EC: Commission Decision of 22 December 2006 approving contingency plans for the control of classical swine fever pursuant to Council Directive 2001/89/EC
Dec. 2007/24/EC	OJ L 8, 13.1.2007, p. 26-28	2007/24/EC: Commission Decision of 22 December 2006 approving contingency plans for the control of avian influenza and Newcastle disease
Dec. 2007/268/EC	OJ L 115, 3.5.2007, p. 3-17	2007/268/EC: Commission Decision of 13 April 2007 on the implementation of surveillance programmes for avian influenza in poultry and wild birds to be carried out in the Member States and amending Decision 2004/450/EC
Dec. 2007/782/EC	OJ L 314, 1.12.2007, p. 29-39	2007/782/EC: Commission Decision of 30 November 2007 approving annual and multi-annual national programmes and the financial contribution from the Community for the eradication, control and monitoring of certain animal diseases and zoonoses, presented by the Member States for 2008

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		and following years
Dec. 2008/897/EC	OJ L 322, 2.12.2008, p. 39-49	2008/897/EC: Commission Decision of 28 November 2008 approving annual and multi-annual programmes and the financial contribution from the Community for the eradication, control and monitoring of certain animal diseases and zoonoses presented by the Member States for 2009 and following years