SUMMARY REPORT

Morning session 10:00-13:00

Introduction, opening, chair: A. Laddomada Head of Unit G2 - DG SANCO

1. Schmallenberg virus

The Commission briefly presented the current state of play of the Schmallenberg virus (SBV) situation, including activities already undertaken together with the Member States (MS) and the Guidance Document on the priority actions to be undertaken in the EU in the next months (endorsed on 7 February 2012 by the Standing Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health (SCoFCAH). It also clarified the position of the EU on trade measures taken by third countries.

All who spoke were supportive of the approach taken by the MS and the Commission, in particular with regards to trade aspects. IFAH-Europe raised the issue of the production/use of a vaccine and the need for a mechanism to ensure that a development programme is launched by the private and/or public sector. The need of sharing samples for the development of diagnostic tools was also underlined. The lack of knowledge on SBV was recognised. The OIE commended the EU MS for their transparency in notifying this emerging disease and informed the Committee that a press release had been issued by the OIE on SBV.

The Commission clarified that it would explore ways for supporting specific studies related to SBV, whereby noting that vaccine production would require some time. In this respect a Working Group had already been convened by the Commission. The already existing networking between EU research centres had brought considerable exchange of information (and samples) which allowed most MS to already have in place diagnostic capabilities for SBV. This current disease event was also used as a test to see whether and how the planned EU Animal Health Law would provide the necessary tools to address it. The Commission would continue to work with MS for ensuring a coordinated approach to SBV.

At the end of the meeting the Commission informed the Committee also about the conclusions on another meeting with the MS, which took place on the same day, in parallel with the meeting of the Animal Health Advisory Committee, and distributed the Statement on the Schmallenberg virus situation issued by the European Commission together with the EU MS.
2. **Update on animal health BTSF programmes**, (point 21 of the Programming document\(^1\)), SANCO G4

The Commission informed the Committee about the 'Better Training for Safer Food' programme (general aspects, objectives and organisation). Trainings organised under BTSF are destined for staff of competent authorities in charge of official controls in sanitary and phytosanitary fields in order to increase awareness of EU law and allow greater harmonisation in control activities. All activities performed in the animal health and welfare fields since the launch of the programme in 2006, both in the Member States and in countries outside the EU were further specified. Specific details were also given on the content and objectives of two new activities to be run in 2012 and 2013 on "emerging animal diseases" and on "emergency planning and disease control".

The Commission also emphasised the importance of the "train-the-trainers" approach which is one of the basic principles under BTSF and should ensure a wide dissemination of the knowledge acquired during training activities. In that context participants were asked to pass the messages on the recent and upcoming subjects (and generally information on BTSF) to their national organisations/members so that they could subsequently liaise with the central veterinary authorities of their respective Member States to see what role the trained officials could play in the further training of operators and other public.

The OIE representative added concerning the organisation and implementation of food security support activities under the programme "Better Training for Safer Food in Africa", that the OIE had been awarded a component of the BTSF programme and took the opportunity to thank the European Union for its financial support in this context and presented a brief summary of the activities carried out by the OIE, notably: (a) the implementation of the PVS Pathway in African countries (initial PVS evaluations, PVS Gap Analysis, PVS Pathway follow-up missions), a continuous process aiming to sustainably improve the compliance of Veterinary Services with international standards; (b) technical assistance on veterinary legislation; (c) support to laboratory twinning projects, and (d) regional information and training seminars for National Delegates to the OIE and for National OIE focal points (contact persons nominated by the national delegates for relations with the OIE) on the following topics: (i) disease information systems; (ii) animal production food safety; (iii) veterinary medicinal and biological products; (iv) aquatic animal diseases; (v) animal welfare; (vi) wildlife; (vii) veterinary services communication and (viii) laboratories.

3. **Information on EU-OIE cooperation**, SANCO G2, OIE

   – Memorandum of Understanding between the European Commission and the World Organisation For Animal Health (OIE) concerning their general relations (OJ C 241/1 19.08.2011)

The Commission presented the MoU concluded last year between the Commission and the OIE that was recently signed in Berlin during the Green Week 2012. That MoU aims at further developing the excellent relations between the two institutions which are based on common interests and to foster even closer cooperation by formalising the procedures for exchanging information on technical and specialist issues, *inter alia* by creating an OIE contact point in the Commission. That contact point is maintained by the Director responsible for Animal Health and Welfare. In addition, the background of these relations was explained, some examples of the cooperation and of common activities were given, and the

\(^1\) [http://ec.europa.eu/food/animal/diseases/strategy/pillars/action_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/food/animal/diseases/strategy/pillars/action_en.htm)
implementation of the MoU within the Commission services as well as the role of the Commission as an observer to the OIE in the OIE Standard setting procedure and the coordination of the 27 EU Member States comments and positions in all OIE related matters, which remains unaffected by the MoU, were explained.

The OIE thanked the Commission for the conclusion of the MoU, confirmed the excellent relations of the two institutions and affirmed its determination to further develop the cooperation with the EC.

4. CALLISTO: an FP7 animal health research programme, FVE

The executive director of the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE), coordinator for this project, presented the FP7 funded research project CALLISTO which started on 1 January 2012. The aim of the project is to set up a think tank and to propose actions to mitigate risks for transmissible diseases in people and in food producing animals associated with keeping companion animals. Several stakeholders present in the meeting e.g. OIE, IFAH-Europe, CopaCogeca and Eurogroup participate in the project.

The project also involves a number of conferences that will be open to interested parties; a first one is planned for 25 October this year.

The Commission invited FVE to keep the Animal Health Advisory Committee informed about the progress of the CALLISTO project. It also announced that more research projects will be put on the agenda of future meetings of the Committee to keep participants informed about ongoing EU funded research in the fields of animal health and welfare.

5. Information on upcoming legislative initiatives, SANCO G2

   – Review of the Pet Regulation,

The Commission indicated that a proposal to repeal Regulation (EC) No 998/2003 is in the pipeline to be adopted. The Commission explained that due to the expiry of the transitional regime and period under that Regulation and due to the need to make a number of amendments bringing its text into line with the TFEU2 in a sufficiently clear and accessible manner for the ordinary citizen, that Regulation should be repealed and replaced by this proposal. Given the aligning and clarificatory objective of the proposal, no significant changes or impacts are foreseen.

NOTE: the corresponding proposals have been adopted by the Commission since the meeting. All official EU language versions of the final proposals can be accessed on the following pages (when you are on those pages, you can choose your preferred language in the drop down menu of the top right corner):

http://ec.europa.eu/prelex/detail_dossier_real.cfm?CL=en&DosId=201388
http://ec.europa.eu/prelex/detail_dossier_real.cfm?CL=en&DosId=201389

   – Recast of the zootechnical legislation,

The Commission explained that although the EU zootechnical legislation does not belong to the animal health and welfare area and the remit of this forum, for transparency and general interest for animal-oriented stakeholders it has chosen to give a brief update on this upcoming

2 Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union
initiative. At the meeting of the standing Zootechnical Committee of 12 January 2012 the Commission informed also the Member States of its intention to review the existing zootechnical legislation.

This legislation aims at promoting free trade in breeding animals and their genetic material considering the sustainability of breeding programs and preservation of genetic resources. At present it consists of several species specific (vertical) Directives laying down the fundamental principles, in particular concerning animals of the bovine, porcine, ovine, caprine species and equidae. These Directives provide the legal bases for the adoption of measures on the approval or recognition and listing of breeding organisations, breeders associations and private undertakings, registration and classification of animals in herd-books, flock-books, stud-books and, in the case of hybrid pigs in registers, performance testing and genetic value assessment as well as pedigree certificates for animals and semen, ova and embryos. In addition, a horizontal Directive provides rules on imports from third countries, another one lays down principles for other animal species, and a specific Council Decision provides rules on the designation of a reference body for breeding of bovine animals.

While the abovementioned Directives are of similar nature they have been drafted over time and thus miss sometimes the consistency of language and the legal clarity required from modern legislation. The Commission has started a process of reviewing the current legislation aiming at the alignment of existing legislation with the Lisbon Treaty and with the "Better Regulation" principles. This process should simplify and clarify existing provisions, and therefore ensure better and more uniform enforcement. Unit G2 is therefore working on a Commission proposal for a European Parliament and Council Regulation that would inter alia repeal all existing pieces of legislation on zootechnics adopted in the past by the Council under the old consultation procedure, its formal adoption is planned in 2012.

The Commission's current approach is that the final proposal would confirm the principles and the main elements of the existing legislation, without introducing any significant change in the current policy. However, it would provide for a single legal framework on the principles of approval or recognition and listing of breeding organisations, breeders associations and private undertakings, registration and classification of animals in herd-books, flock-books, stud-books and, in the case of hybrid pigs in registers, performance testing and genetic value assessment as well as pedigree certificates for animals and semen, ova and embryos.

The proposed Regulation would provide the legal base for the adoption of delegated and implementing measures, in accordance with Articles 290 and 291 of the TFEU and it would also update the provisions on the Standing Committee on Zootechnics.

The main input the Commission now expects from stakeholders is to identify those provisions/legal aspects in the existing legislation which may not be clear enough and may be resulting in restrictions to the functioning of the single market as a result of their misinterpretation.


The Commission briefly introduced two documents distributed at the meeting concerning the preliminary structure of the new Animal Health Law (AHL) and the list of legislation affected by the new animal health legal framework. In addition, information was provided on the state of play of the process and the timeframe for the adoption of the new animal health framework. ATA, FESSAS, COPA-COGECA participated in the discussion.

ATA requested clarification if the AHL will define which animals and when they can be considered as pets and whether or not special rules for the movements of those animals will
also be provided for. Commission confirmed that the AHL will clearly define those animals and provide a legal basis for specific movement rules where needed.

COPA-COGECA and FESSAS welcomed both distributed documents and were supportive towards the development of the legal text. However, they emphasised that the new legal framework will consist of many layers and they would like to see an example of a delegated or implementing act supplementing the AHL as a methodological example of the complete legal package.

FESSAS emphasised the need of well-structured transitional periods and measures and regretted the non-existence of the financial provisions in this legal proposal. They emphasised the importance of collective farmers' organisations, which should in their view be recognised by the new legislative framework.

COPA-COGECA requested clarifications concerning the freedom of diseases established at a national level and which might be relevant only for certain regions. Commission explained that the categorisation of diseases will also envisage the possibility of voluntary eradication, where the approach which will be consequentially recognised across the Union.

7. Animal health requirements, list of third countries and import health certificates for certain products of animal origin for human consumption, (e.g. frogs' legs, snails, raw material for gelatin production etc.) amending Regulation (EC) No 2074/2005 and repealing Decision 2003/812/EC

The Commission shortly explained that for animal health reasons it is necessary to ensure that raw material (e.g. hides, skins and bones) for the production of gelatine and collagen for human consumption comes from a source that meets the EU guarantees of animal health. Consequently, specific animal health requirements for imports of such material into the EU must be clarified and laid down or specified treatments need to ensure that it meets the Union's animal health standard upon importation. The Commission will propose an amendment to the Regulation to deal with these elements and has been working recently with Member States and with the most concerned stakeholders to fine-tune its proposal. (NOTE: this initiative has been notified to all public via the SANCO Comitology Register ca. 2 years ago). It will be put for vote of the Standing Committee in the Food Chain and Animal Health in the near future. To further protect the animal health situation of the Union, under the new rules un-treated raw materials shall be transported directly to the establishment producing the collagen or gelatine.

Un-treated raw material for the production of gelatine or collagen may also come from different species: Depending on the animal resource, the list of countries authorised to send material can be found in the relevant legislation for that species:

- Commission Regulation (EU) No 206/2010 for bovine, ovine, caprine, porcine and equine animals, including farmed and wild animals (part I of Annex II),
- Commission Regulation (EC) 798/2008 for poultry (part I of Annex I),
- Decision 2006/766/EC for fish (Annex II) and

In case of treated raw material, the conditions are less stringent and the material may come from any country listed in Part I of Annex II to Commission Regulation (EU) No 206/2010.

ATA enquired about some details on how the means of transports will be send directly to the establishment of destination. The Commission clarified that those rules are regulated under
the Article 8 of Directive 97/78/EC (so called "channelling procedure") and flow of information between the border inspection post and the place of destination is ensured by the TRACES system.

8. **EU foot and mouth disease vaccine and antigen bank**, (point 24 of the Programming document), SANCO G2

The Commission explained that the EU control measures for foot and mouth disease (FMD) laid down in Directive 2003/85/EC do not exclude the use of emergency vaccination, in particular a "vaccination to live" approach. In order to do so, the EU maintains since 1991 an antigen and vaccine bank that was completely restructured in 2011 at a cost of 11 M€. The bank stores in close collaboration with the manufacturers of the authorised vaccines, antigens of several strains and all serotypes in quantities notified by the EU Member States in the framework of their contingency plans and confirmed through a risk assessment carried out by the Research Group of EuFMD. Vaccines reconstituted from those antigens can be delivered within a few days to any EU Member State or third country in our neighbourhood. The Commission explained that this action signifies a major milestone for improved preparedness and thanks to this, the EU Member States are now in a much better position than ever to consider emergency vaccination as one of their key potential tools to fight an FMD epidemic, to downsize or cease to maintain their national vaccine banks (avoid unnecessary duplication and lessen their costs) and to use the same vaccine throughout the EU as part of a more harmonised strategy.

The Commission also added that while none of the antigens procured since 1991 at a cost of nearly 9 mEUR had ever been used for vaccination in a Member State, high potency vaccines reconstituted from those antigens have been donated on several occasions to third countries adjacent and distant to the external borders of EU, where they were used to improve the FMD situation. This contributes to the better protection of the EU by fighting the disease at its source and thereby reducing the chance of its entry into the EU territory.

Afternoon session 14:30-18:00

9. **Information from the Danish Presidency**

   – **Events and priorities**

Information was given by the Danish Chief Veterinary Officer about the two conferences during the Danish Presidency: an animal welfare conference is arranged together with the Commission and will take place in Brussels February 29- March 1. The scope is market-driven animal welfare and focus on enforcement. **NOTE: it took place since the meeting:** [http://ec.europa.eu/food/animal/welfare/seminars/index_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/food/animal/welfare/seminars/index_en.htm)

The other conference will focus on antibiotics in a One-Health perspective and will take place in Copenhagen March 14-15, 2012.

   – **The Danish Animal Health Advisory Committee,**

The Danish Advisory Committee on Animal Health was established in 2008 as a forum with participation of representatives from the public administration, universities, the Danish Veterinary Association and the industry in order to discuss new EU initiatives e.g. Animal
Health Law and other issues of common interest for the industry and the authorities. It is an informal forum for exchange of information. A number of working groups dealing with biosecurity, financing of the veterinary area, compartmentalisation, vaccination strategies, veterinary preparedness and emerging diseases have been established in order to come up with advice to the Minister of Food, Fisheries and Aquaculture. Besides these activities the Committee has arranged two seminars dealing with Biosecurity and Threats of contagious animal diseases to EU and Denmark.

10. Commission Communication on Antimicrobial Resistance, SANCO G4

The Commission presented the "Action plan against the rising threats from antimicrobial resistance". Over the past decade the Commission has developed initiatives in human and veterinary medicines to prevent antimicrobial resistance. But scientific opinions and data on monitoring show that these initiatives are not enough. The Commission emphasized that AMR is a priority and therefore, to better tackle antimicrobial resistance, the Commission launched in November 2011 a new 5 year Action Plan against AMR. The Plan is based on a holistic approach involving all sectors and aspects of AMR (public health, food safety, consumer safety, environment, animal health, non-therapeutic use of antimicrobials). It aims at strengthening the prevention and control of antimicrobial resistance across all sectors and at securing the availability of new antimicrobial agents. The Action Plan covers seven areas and sets out 12 concrete actions both in the human and veterinary field. The Commission explained in more detail the actions related to veterinarian and food field.

During the ensuring extensive discussion stakeholders welcomed the Action Plan. Some considered that BTSF could be a good instrument to promote responsible use of antimicrobials in the veterinary sector and emphasised the importance of action 12 (Communication, training). Comments were made about possible development of risk management actions on AMR without scientific evidence (i.e. more data is needed) and stakeholders welcomed surveillance and monitoring (again, due to the need for data). IFAH-Europe emphasized the need for keeping the industry interested in developing new antimicrobials in veterinary medicine.

Questions and clarifications were made on imports from 3rd countries, i.e. whether will the same requirements apply to 3rd countries and also for responsible use, related to the approval of alternatives for antimicrobials and to their regulatory framework and about impact assessment on AMR and the time table for the implementation of the action plan.

11. Group housing of sows: state of play of implementation, SANCO G3

The Commission presented the current state of play on group housing of sows and the future actions the Commission will take to push Member States to fully comply with the Directive on the protection of pigs by 1 January 2013.

12. Report on animal transport, SANCO G3

The report was welcomed, and many supported the conclusion of the report to give priority to enforcement and harmonised implementation of the current EU legislation on animal welfare during transport.

The possibility to change the reference to IATA regulations for transport via air was requested (this can be done through so called "comitology"). Furthermore, the Commission was asked
by ASSOCARNI – EUROCONSULTING to look into the possibility to change the legislation on the use of meat from animals slaughtered under emergency situations. In particular point 9, chapter VI, section I, annex III of Regulation (EC) 853/2004, that obliges food business operators to put on the market meat from domestic ungulates that have undergone emergency slaughter outside the slaughterhouse only if it gets a special health mark. And also to take into account the possibility to submit these meats to a process ensuring their microbiological safety (e.g. sterilization treatment). The Commission agreed to investigate these issues further.

13. Practical guidelines to assess fitness for transport of adult bovines, UECBV

The UECBV representative gave a short presentation on the UECBV – EUROGROUP for Animals initiative: “Guidelines to assess fitness for transport of adult bovine animals”. Together with Animal Angels, FVE, International Road transport Union and European Livestock Transport, they produced a guidelines which is very practical to use and easy to understand by all operators involved in the transport operations of adult bovines in order to help them decide if an adult bovine is fit or not for transport and to better understand requirements of Regulation (EC) No 1/2005.

As the guidelines which were prepared with good collaboration of different stakeholders are in line with the EU Commission report conclusions on the animal transport Regulation and the AW strategy 2012-2015, the UECBV stated that it would like to see more involvement from the Commission in translation and dissemination and also a future support from the EC on stakeholders' future guidelines and projects. Any professional, involved in the animal transport sector, can request a personal copy from info@uecbv.eu. Several stakeholders congratulated and expressed their support on the UECBV/Eurogroup initiative.

The Commission commented in general terms that the development of EU level industry guides is an important element of the EU Animal Health Strategy as well and regretted that so far no guides have been proposed and developed by industry for various production systems and species (with the notable exception of the two poultry guides which were presented and discussed during the 16 June 2011 meeting).

14. EU Animal Welfare Strategy, SANCO G3

The Commission presented the strategy - no further comments or discussion.

15. Any other business

Nothing raised.