SHORT REPORT
OF THE
STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE FOOD CHAIN AND ANIMAL
HEALTH
HELD IN BRUSSELS ON 08-09 APRIL 2003
(Section Animal Health and Welfare)

President: Bernard van Goethem for points 5, 6, 9, 10 & 14-19 & Alberto
Laddomada for points 1-4, 7, 8, 11-13 & 20-28.
All the Member States were present.

1. Exchange of views of the Committee on the evolution of animal diseases in
the Community including:

Avian influenza
The Netherlands

AI in the Netherlands:

The Netherlands announced that the number of outbreaks of AI was still rising. The
epidemic has spread towards the south into the centre of the poultry area in Brabant
and Limbourg, leaving the “Gelderse Vallei” area for the first time since the primary
outbreaks in Scherpenzeel and Renswoude. There are confirmed cases in Beneden
Leeuwen, Teefelen, Ochten and Opheusden and serious suspected holdings have
been found in Ospel and Nederweert. Since the start of the epidemic, a total of 783
holdings with over 11,157,000 birds have been culled. At the date of the Committee
meeting, the number of infected holdings is 197 and another 21 holdings are
seriously suspected.

The Dutch authorities have created buffer zones around the infected areas, where
all poultry farms are being emptied. To prevent disease spread, the country has
been divided into "compartments" and potentially dangerous movements of
vehicles transporting poultry, eggs, etc. between compartments are strictly
regulated. The culling capacities have been increased in order to speed up the
response to newly detected suspicious cases.

The Netherlands further commented on the decrease of human AI-infections after
the implementation of control measures, such as wearing protective glasses, mouth
masks and improving personal hygiene, and the obligatory treatment with
Oseltamivir (antiviral drug).

Belgium announced the creation of a buffer zone in Limbourg which implies:
inventory of all poultry farms; block of entry of all poultry farms with a white and
red chain; assembling of live birds is prohibited; transport ban on live birds,
hatching eggs and table eggs; transport ban on poultry litter and used bedding;
transport ban on all litter in mixed farms with poultry; all poultry need be locked up,
other animals on farms with poultry may not leave the farm; collecting of raw milk under strict hygienic conditions; disinfection of all vehicles that leave poultry farms, weekly control visit by veterinarian.

**Classical swine fever in wild boar**  
**France, Germany, Luxembourg, Belgium**

**CSF in France:**  
France reported that in its Infected Zone, 86% of the wild boar population is immune, but PCR tests have still been found positive. In its Observation Zone, no extension of the infection was reported.

**CSF in Germany:**  
Germany reported no further outbreaks of classical swine fever in domestic pigs since its report at the 10 March 2003 SCFCAH, as well as a drop in identified cases among wild boars: 27 cases, in Rhineland-Palatinate. Germany further specified that vaccination had first been concentrated in the Eifel area and was enlarged to the South of Palatinate in February 2003.

**CSF in Luxembourg:**  
Luxembourg reported no outbreak of CSF in domestic pigs in March 2003, whereas in wild boars there had been only 1 case in February 2003 and 2 cases in January 2003. The last case among domestic pigs was found in October 2002. A vaccination campaign has started on wild boars on 08-09 March 2003 and 5-6 April 2003. Further vaccination will take place in June 2003 and July 2003, as well as in September 2003 and October 2003.

**CSF in Belgium:**  
Following a single case of classical swine fever in wild boar in November 2002, Belgium installed a buffer zone, which included the compulsory analysis of wild boars, a ban of hunting, surveillance and restriction on movements of pigs.

**2. Information on the eradication programmes from MS**  
**Bovine brucellosis: Greece, Italy, Portugal**

**Bb in Greece:**  
Greece reported that 1.98% of herds and 0.99% of animals were infected with Bb in 2002. Overall, 22,657 herds out of 27,196 and 410,003 animals out of 537,632 are officially Bb free. The Greek Delegation stressed that the eradication programme was poorly implemented in some Nomos and that the Nomos having the worst results were those that were implementing the eradication programme the least.

The Commission stressed the need for a radically different next campaign.

**Bb in Italy:**  
Italy will report at the next SCFCAH, Animal Health Section, meeting.
Bb in Portugal:
In Portugal’s mainland, Bb infected herds increased from 0.57% in 2001 to 0.66% in 2002, whereas the infected animals decreased from 0.31% in 2001 to 0.26% in 2002. According to the Portuguese delegation, the increase of the infection on herds in 2002 is mainly due to the reduction of the total number of herds in the country and a high infection in the region of Tras-os-Montes.
In Portugal’s Autonomous Region of the Archipelago of Azores, infected herds decreased from 8.91% in 2001 to 5.72 in 2002, whereas the infected animals increased from 1.53% in 2001 to 2.19% in 2002. According to the Portuguese Delegation, the unfavourable situation in the Azores is due to the late starting of the vaccination programme (August 2001).

The Commission stressed that were no substantial improvements. Vaccination campaigns must be rigorous.

Bovine tuberculosis: Greece, Spain, Ireland, Italy, Portugal

Tb in Greece:
Greece will report at the next SCFCAH, Animal Health Section, meeting.

Tb in Spain:
Spain reported that, in 2001, 97.58% of the animals tested were Tb-free, which represents 25,253 positive animals out of 4,377,151 animals tested. Out of 148,886 holdings, 136,977 were officially Tb-free in 2001.

The Commission stressed that Spain ought to consider changing its eradication programme radically if it keeps being unsuccessful.

Tb in Ireland:
Ireland announced that out of 127,711 holdings, 123,068 were officially Tb-free on 31 December 2002, which represents a percentage of 96.4% (compared to 96.2% in 2001 and 96.7% in 2000). Furthermore the percentage of positive animals has fallen from 0.6% in 2000 and 0.5% in 2001 to 0.4% in 2002 (respectively, 39,847; 33,702 and 28,930 positive animals).

The Commission stressed that Ireland ought to consider changing its eradication programme in order to get better results.

Tb in Italy:
Italy will report at the next SCFCAH, Animal Health Section, meeting

Tb in Portugal:
In Portugal’s mainland, Tb, infected herds increased from 0.30% in 2001 to 0.36% in 2002, whereas the infected animals increased from 0.07% in 2001 to 0.09% in 2002. According to the Portuguese delegation this increase is mainly due to the reduction of the total number of herds in the country.

The Commission stressed that Portugal ought to consider changing its eradication programme.
3. **Information from Austria on the eradication of classical swine fever in feral pigs in Lower Austria (Document SANCO/10212/2003)**

The Austrian Delegation reported that there had only been a small outbreak in a defined area, with no spread of the disease and no infection of domestic pigs. It further announced a voluntary programme during the next year, after completion of the official eradication and surveillance plan.

4. **Information on low pathogenic avian influenza subtype H7N3 in Italy (Document SANCO/10211/2003)**

The Italian Delegation reported on low pathogenic avian influenza (H7N3) in the Lombardia, Veneto and Emilia Romagna regions. They reported 65 outbreaks in Lombardia (with 1,842,386 animals stamped out or slaughtered and 60 farms depopulated); 211 outbreaks in the Veneto (with 3,420,822 animals stamped out or slaughtered and 206 farms depopulated); 4 outbreaks in Emilia Romagna (with 57,789 animals stamped out or slaughtered and 4 farms depopulated). Altogether, there were 280 outbreaks of low pathogenic avian influenza (H7N3) in Italy, with a total of 5,320,985 animals stamped out or slaughtered.

5. **Information on Newcastle disease in the United States of America (Document SANCO/10210/2003)**


The Commission distributed to the Member States a letter from the APHIS-USDA (Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service of the United States Department of Agriculture) on the recognition of animal disease status of regions in the European union.

The Member States had previously been requested to provide an official document describing the geographical administrative structure of their veterinary services and local competent authorities for monitoring animal diseases and animal welfare, in order to create geographical reference areas and simplify regionalisation.
The Commission acknowledged that the document was not fully satisfactory, but represented nonetheless an improvement of the situation.

7. Information on data received from Member States (or regions of Member States) officially free of bovine brucellosis, tuberculosis and enzootic bovine leukemia-year 2001 (Monitoring compliance on requirements for maintaining the status in the framework of Council Directive 64/432/EEC) (Document SANCO/10193/2003)

The Commission distributed a document on information received from Member States (or regions of Member States) officially free of bovine brucellosis, tuberculosis and enzootic bovine leukemia in 2001. The three reports were put together in a unique document for simplification purposes.


The Commission distributed a document outlining the time limits laid down for the introduction of financial statements and technical reports by community reference laboratories.

The Commission informed the Member States that, even though documents needed to be sent by 31 March 2003, fines will only be applied after 30 April 2003 to the laboratories still missing a report or financial statement. Documents sent by e-mail were accepted exceptionally. Nevertheless, from 2004 onwards, all documents will have to arrive officially.

9. For information and/or discussion / Pour information et/ou discussion

- Presentation of a request from Finland for an amendment to the program approved by Decision 2002/304 with a view of achieving approved status as regards VHS and IHN (Document SANCO/10203/2003)

The Commission informed the Member States of a request made by Finland for an amendment to the approved programme applied with a view of achieving approved status as regards VHS and IHN. The proposal was presented by the Finnish delegate, and Member States were invited to send their comments on the Finnish proposal to the Commission.

- Presentation of a request from Italy for an amendment to the program approved by Decision 2002/304 with a view of achieving approved status as regards VHS and IHN in the Province of Bolzano (Document SANCO/10204/2003)
The Commission informed the Member States of a request made by Italy for an amendment to the approved programme applied with a view of achieving approved status as regards VHS and IHN in the Province of Bolzano. As this falls within the scope of the already approved VHS/IHN Programme, no new decision or vote is necessary for such an amendment to the programme.

10. Documents submitted for information only / Documents présenté uniquement pour information:


11. Distribution for information / Distribution pour information:

- Draft report of a mission carried out in Latvia from 10/02/03 to 14/02/03 to review controls concerning animal welfare (DG(SANCO)/9053/2003 – MR)
- Final report of a mission to Poland from 9 to 13 December 2002 concerning import controls (DG(SANCO)/8679/2003 – MR Final)


The Commission reported to the Member States on a meeting of the Working Group on diagnostic methods of infectious bovine rhinotracheitis (IBR), which was held in Brussels on 22 January 2003 and tackled the results of the inter-laboratory comparative test of BHV1 sero-diagnosis.

The Member States expressed their interest for the work done by the Working Group and asked for it to be continued. The Member States furthermore stressed the need for harmonising and improving diagnostic, as well as for a Community Reference Laboratory for the development of a test.

13. Issues relating to the implementation of Decision 2002/995/EC concerning the imports of products of animal origin for personal consumption
The Commission debated on the implementation of Decision 2002/995/EC on the import of products of animal origin for personal consumption. The Member States reported some concerns about the transposition of the Decision into national legislation, particularly in regard to the legal basis for transport companies to inform passengers about the new rules prior to entry into the EU. In some cases, MS reported that the fixed design of the posters had caused some problems as some publicity sites at points of entry had predetermined rules governing the size of posters for display. Member States also wished for clarification on the basis of controls for personal consignments at entry points without a border inspection post.

The Commission took note and agreed to consider the issues raised.

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

The Commission presented to the Member States a draft Commission Decision amending Decision 2002/975/EC on introducing vaccination to supplement the measures to control infections with low pathogenic avian influenza in Italy and on specific movement control measures, adding some provinces and municipalities of the Veneto and Lombardia Regions to the original vaccination zone.

Vote: Unanimous vote in favour


The Commission proposed to extend until 25 April 2003 the restrictions put in place after outbreaks of avian influenza in the Netherlands. No live poultry, hatching eggs and fresh, unprocessed poultry manure or litter may be dispatched to other Member States or third countries and, with some derogations, no live poultry and hatching eggs may be transported within the Netherlands. Stringent biosecurity measures to apply in the whole poultry and egg sectors are enforced.

Furthermore, the authorisation for export of day-old chicks hatched outside the surveillance zones has been cancelled. Strict rules will also apply for the collection, storage and transport of table eggs. The Netherlands shall ensure that stringent security and hygiene measures are taken on all levels of poultry production in order to avoid contacts that might be responsible for the spread of avian influenza between farms. These measures will apply in particular to avoiding risky contacts between animals, transport means, equipment and people on and between poultry farms, egg packing stations, hatcheries, slaughterhouses, feedmills, litter processing and rendering plants.
The Commission emphasised that all preventive action shall be taken and respected by the operators and the competent authorities in the Netherlands and neighbouring Member States.

Vote: Unanimous vote in favour

16. Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Decision amending Decision 92/452/EEC establishing lists of embryo collection teams and embryo production teams approved in third countries for export of bovine embryos to the Community as regards the United States of America (Document SANCO/10102/2003)

The Commission presented to the Member States a Decision amending the Annex to Decision 92/452/EEC establishing lists of embryo collection teams and embryo production teams approved in third countries for export of bovine embryos to the Community as regards the United States of America, deleting Dr Robert Toole and adding Dr Larry Lanzon in the United States of America teams.

Vote: Unanimous vote in favour

17. Exchange of views and possible technical opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Decision laying down the animal health conditions and certification requirements for imports of live molluscs, their eggs and gametes for further growth, fattening, relaying, or human consumption (Document SANCO/10078/2002)

The Commission requested a technical opinion from the Member States on a draft Commission Decision laying down the animal health conditions and certification requirements for imports of live molluscs, their eggs and gametes for further growth, fattening, relaying, or human consumption. This Decision aims at setting-up a list of territories from which imports are authorised and contains the necessary animal health certificate for the importation into the European Community, statements to be issued by the competent authority at the border inspection post, as well as the minimum health conditions for the approval of “approved import centres”. This Decision shall not apply to the importation of ornamental molluscs kept permanently in aquariums.

Technical Vote: Unanimous vote in favour
Submitted to SPS for notification

18. Exchange of views and possible technical opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Decision laying down the animal health conditions and certification requirements for imports of live fish, their eggs and gametes intended for farming, and live fish of aquaculture origin and products thereof intended for immediate human consumption or for further processing before human consumption (Document SANCO/10145/2002)
The Commission requested a technical opinion from the Member States on a draft Commission Decision laying down the animal health conditions and certification requirements for imports of live fish, their eggs and gametes intended for farming, and live fish of aquaculture origin and products thereof intended for immediate human consumption or for further processing before human consumption. This Decision aims at setting-up a list of territories from which imports are authorised and contains the necessary animal health certificate for the importation into the European Community, statements to be issued by the competent authority at the border inspection post, as well as the minimum health conditions for the approval of “approved import centres”. This Decision shall not apply to the importation of tropical ornamental fish kept permanently in aquariums.

**Technical Vote: 79 votes in favour, 8 votes against**
**Submitted to SPS for notification**

*Statement from the Commission:*  
“In the light of the adoption of harmonised import rules from third countries for fish and molluscs of aquaculture origin, the Commission will assess the applications for additional guarantees for the diseases listed in Annex A, column 1 list III to Directive 91/67/EEC, in line with the previous opinions of the Standing Veterinary Committee. The assessment will be finished before the proposed date of entry into force of the harmonised import rules.”

*Declaration from Sweden:*  
“Sweden welcomes the Commission’s declaration that will assess all applications for additional guarantees for fish diseases, before the drafted harmonised rules for fish enter into force.

However, Sweden does not agree that the Standing Veterinary Committee has already given an opinion on Sweden’s application for additional guarantees regarding fish diseases, as foreseen in the Treaty of Sweden’s accession to the EU.

Sweden therefore requests that the Commission, in cooperation with the Member States, properly and transparently shall assess all applications for additional guarantees as regards fish, before the harmonisation of the import rules. However, Sweden hereby withdraws its applications with regards to yersiniosis and furunculosis in fish.


The Commission presented to the Member States a draft Commission Decision aiming at laying down the certification requirements for the import of live gametes of fish belonging to the family *Salmonidae* originating in Norway and the Faeroe Islands subject to the consignments being accompanied by the health certificate
regarding infectious salmon anaemia (ISA) for salmonid eggs and gametes originating in Norway and the Faeroe Islands.

Vote: unanimous vote in favour

20. Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Decision establishing special conditions for placing on the market of aquaculture animals species considered not susceptible to certain diseases and the products thereof (Document SANCO/10143/2002)

The Commission presented to the Member States a draft Commission Decision establishing special conditions for placing on the market of aquaculture animals, their eggs and gametes, considered not susceptible to certain diseases, in zones and farms with approved programme or status. When introduced into zones and farms with approved programmes or status, all aquaculture animals covered by this Decision, their eggs and gametes shall be accompanied by, and comply with the requirements referred in the model movement document, taking into account the explanatory notes. The Decision furthermore sets out a list of non-carrier aquaculture animal species. This Decision shall not apply where the aquaculture animals, their eggs and gametes are placed on the market directly for human consumption.

Vote: unanimous vote in favour

21. Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a Draft Commission Decision amending Annexes I and II of Decision 2002/308/EC establishing lists of approved zones and approved farms in non-approved zones with regard to one or more of the fish diseases viral haemorrhagic septicaemia (VHS) and infectious haematopoietic necrosis (IHN) (Document SANCO/10083/2003)

The Commission presented to the Member States a draft Commission Decision establishing lists of approved zones and approved farms in non-approved zones with regard to one or more of the fish diseases viral haemorrhagic septicaemia (VHS) and infectious haematopoietic necrosis (IHN).

Vote: unanimous vote in favour

22. Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a Draft Commission Decision amending Annexes I and II of Decision 2002/304/EC as regards programmes applied with a view to obtaining the status of approved zones or farms for viral haemorrhagic septicaemia (VHS) and infectious haematopoietic necrosis (IHN) (Document SANCO/10084/2003)

The Commission presented to the Member States a draft Commission Decision as regards programmes applied with a view to obtaining the status of approved zones
or farms for viral haemorrhagic septicaemia (VHS) and infectious haematopoietic necrosis (IHN).

Vote: unanimous vote in favour

23. Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Decision amending Decision 2002/300/EC establishing the list of approved zones with regard to Bonamia ostreae and/or Marteilia refringens (Documents SANCO/10169/2003 and SANCO/10186/2003)

Due to an outbreak of Bonamiosis in Ireland, the Commission presented to the Member States a draft Commission Decision establishing the new list of approved zones in Ireland, the United Kingdom, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man with regard to Bonamia ostreae and/or Marteilia refringens.

Vote: unanimous vote in favour

24. Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Decision on the approval of the plan for the eradication of classical swine fever in feral pigs in Belgium (Document SANCO/10116/2003)

The Commission presented to the Member States a draft Commission Decision on the approval of the plan for the eradication of classical swine fever in feral pigs in Belgium

Vote: unanimous vote in favour

25. Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Decision repealing Decision 98/399/EC approving of the plan for the eradication of classical swine fever in feral pigs in the province of Varese, Italy (Document SANCO/10117/2003)

The Commission presented to the Member States a draft Commission Decision repealing the measures adopted due to classical swine fever in feral pigs in the province of Varese, Italy.

Vote: unanimous vote in favour

The Commission presented to the Member States for discussion a draft Commission Decision establishing the officially tuberculosis, brucellosis and enzootic bovine leukosis-free status of bovine herds of certain Member States or regions of Member States.

27. Exchange of views on a draft Commission Decision repealing Decision 2002/182/EC approving the plan for the eradication of classical swine fever in feral pigs in Lower Austria, Austria (Document SANCO/10213/2003)

This point has been transferred to the 06-07 May 2003 meeting of the Standing Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health, Animal Health Section.

28. Miscellaneous – Divers

- Italy informed the Commission and the Member States that all live animals from all species were banned from China & Hong-Kong, following the outbreak of SARS. This was taken as a precautionary measure only, as there are no proof of zoonoses

- The Commission advised the Member States to give a harmonised answer to the letter they received from the Russian authorities on the outbreak of avian influenza in the Netherlands and announced a high-level meeting on 28-29 April 2003 between the Commission and Russia.

N.B. The proposals on which the Committee expressed an opinion are subject to a defined procedure in relation to the formal adoption by the Commission.

Mission reports are available on the Internet at the following address: http://europa.eu.int/comm/food/fs/inspections/vi/reports/index_en.html

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