SUMMARY RECORD
OF THE
STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE FOOD CHAIN AND ANIMAL HEALTH
HELD IN BRUSSELS ON 13-14 September 2005
(Section Animal Health and Welfare)

President: Bernard Van Goethem and Alberto Laddomada

All the Member States were present.

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

Bluetongue (BT)

Portugal

The Portuguese delegation distributed and presented a brief characterization of the Bluetongue situation in Portugal. No additional outbreaks of BT were recorded. The report contained the results of serological and entomological surveillance. All results of the serological surveillance were negative. The Portuguese informed the Committee that risk areas are fully covered and that trials with inactivated vaccine were started in August. The Commission requested Portugal to send all information on new inactivated vaccines to MS concerned (Italy, Spain and France) and to the Commission.

Spain

The Spanish delegation distributed and presented the “Situation of Bluetongue in Spain”. Outbreaks (virus circulation on sentinel cattle) were registered in Andalucia and Extremadura and the disease did not progress. Mid-September 2005 the number of total outbreaks was 42 within the restricted area. No outbreaks occurred in non restricted areas. Spain has established a vaccination strategy by using a live vaccine for sheep. A large field trial has been carried out on BT inactivated vaccine and it is analysed whether these types of vaccines can be effective in bovine animals. Spain will provide the MSs and the Commission with the results of the analyses.

More information can be found on the Spanish surveillance programmes by consulting the following URL: http://rasve.mapya.es/Publica/noticias/Noticias.asp

See also point 26.
Classical Swine Fever (CSF)

Slovakia
Not discussed.

Rabies

Germany

The German delegation circulated and presented “Rabies Control in Germany”. There is a favourable evolution of the situation. The last case was discovered 1 August in Rhineland-Palatinate. In Hessen the situation has improved compared with the previous year: Only five cases were discovered in foxes. In Rhineland-Palatinate the peak was reached in the first quarter of 2005 with 23 cases between January and April. There is a significant decline in the occurrence of rabies cases due to repeated vaccination carried out in Rhineland-Palatinate.

2. Information on the ongoing Commission initiatives to elaborate a Community Action Plan on Animal Welfare

The Commission presented and distributed an “Outline on the drafting of a first European Action Plan on Animal Welfare”. The first ever Action Plan is to cover a coherent Community policy with transparent perspectives in the field of animal welfare and animal protection. A Web based consultation will be organised at the end of October 2005 to support the Commission work on this initiative. The Action Plan is expected to be submitted to the European Parliament and to the Council of Ministers in the form of a Communication from the Commission by the end of 2005. Moreover, an inter-ministerial conference is going to be organised at the end of March 2006.

3. Information on avian influenza from - the Commission (on the situation in Asia)

Further to the proposal from the United States concerning an international partnership on Avian influenza the Commission (DG RELEX) informed the Committee about the context in which the US initiative is taking place. During a first meeting OIE, FVO, WHO, the World Bank and the US government exchanged views about global action plans and integrated national plans in countries at risk. The Commission generally welcomes the US initiative on global threat and calls for more emphasis regarding affected countries and countries at risk. The Commission will insist on a practical roadmap: Priorities will be to address a preparedness plan, to address the surveillance problem and to develop tools to combat AI on a long term basis. The Commission is working with the major donors and partially with the World Bank to establish an effective coordination mechanism in order to implement a multi donor trust fund.

“AI in Kazakhstan – OIE mission carried out from 6 to 11 September 2005” was presented to the Committee. Seven AI outbreaks were notified in 4 regions of Kazakhstan in July until August 2005. The Central Veterinary Department
requested an OIE mission to assess the epidemiological situation, audit animal health policies for diagnosis and control and to recommend further actions. Major drawbacks were identified in the laboratories e.g. a lack of reference materials to be used for PCR reactions. Moreover, complete data about sequencing were not provided and the identification of virus strains isolated in some outbreaks was not confirmed by using the standard OIE procedures. The OIE thus recommended that the Chief Veterinary Authority should identify one National Reference Laboratory. Permanent links must be created between OIE Laboratory network and veterinary laboratories in Kazakhstan in order to provide reagents, training and exchange of technical and scientific information. AI diagnostics should be in accordance to OIE standards.

Moreover, the Commission distributed a “Report on the avian influenza situation in South Africa”.

- the Member States

The Dutch delegation gave a presentation on their measures taken in relation to AI. In response to the outbreaks that occurred in Russia (Siberia) an Expert Committee gave a unanimous opinion on 15 August 2005 to take immediate action. Thus, a specific preventative measure to keep free range poultry indoors took effect on 22 August. The Netherlands are currently fine-tuning the measures and consider building bird nets around farms to prevent a possible outbreak of avian influenza brought in by migratory birds.

The German delegation explained to the Committee that similar measures to the ones in the Netherlands have been implemented at certain areas of this territory. Germany has notified to the Commission that a regulation concerning increased monitoring of wild birds and poultry is in force at federal level since 1 September 2005. Moreover, inspections at borders and bio-security measures at farms were enforced. In North Rhine Westphalia, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern and Lower Saxony legislation concerning a ban on keeping poultry outdoors is in force.

The Italian delegation informed the Committee that surveillance measures at borders were intensified and that a labelling measure was implemented.

The Commission noted the measures undertaken by the MSs and will check whether the measures comply with Community law.


The Commission distributed the conclusions of the SCFCAH expert working group meeting on AI on 25 August 2005 and 6 September 2005.
5. Results of the surveys for avian influenza in the Member States in 2004

Not discussed.

6. Information from the Member States on eradication programmes 2004

Bovine brucellosis, Bovine tuberculosis and Sheep and goat brucellosis 2004:

Lithuania

The Lithuanian delegation distributed and presented “Information on eradication programmes in 2004 in the Republic of Lithuania”. The situation as regards bovine tuberculosis is positive since all herds are free of the disease since 2002. Further, no cases of bovine and ovine/caprine brucellosis occurred since 1999.

CSF 2004:

Luxembourg

The Luxembourg delegation presented and distributed “The Situation of CSF in Luxembourg” on the eradication of CSF in wild boar. In 2004 and 2005 six vaccination campaigns were carried out.

See also point 28.

Lithuania

The Lithuanian delegation reported on the CSF situation in Lithuania. The last case of CSF was in 1992. Further, no cases of CSF in wild boar were detected in the last 30 years.

Belgium

The Belgium delegation updated the Committee on the situation of CSF. In 2002 a boar was positive in virology for CSF. In 2004 the monitoring for boar continued and no further cases were detected. Given these favourable results, the last remaining protection measures were lifted at the beginning of this year. Over the forthcoming months Belgium will continue to implement monitoring of boar in order to be sure that there is no more circulation of the virus.

Czech Republic

The Czech Republic distributed and presented the update of the CSF situation. The epidemiological situation is rather positive, since the last outbreak of CSF in domestic pigs was recorded in 1997 and in wild boar in 1999. CSF antibodies are still persisting in wild boar (11 positive serological findings in wild boar in 2004) and CSF is detected in surrounding countries. Therefore, a systematic surveillance of disease sources is carried out.
Germany

The German delegation distributed and presented a report “Eradication of classical swine fever in wild boar Rhineland-Palatinate-Germany, 2002-2005”. The last case of CSF in wild boar was detected in 2004 in Rhineland-Palatinate. Germany assumes that if the vaccine programme and the measures are continued in the next few years it will probably be possible to stamp out the residual CSF in the wild boar population.


The Commission distributed a letter requesting information from the MSs on the approval of zoos and other bodies, centres and institutes under Annex C of Council Directive 92/65/EEC.

8. Information and follow-up on animal health conditions and certification for importation from third countries of certain live animals covered by Directive 92/65/EEC.

The Commission distributed a letter requesting information from the Member States on the certification requirements for certain live animals from third countries under Directive 92/65/EEC.

9. Distribution of a list of Member States (or regions) officially free of bovine tuberculosis, bovine brucellosis, enzootic bovine leukosis, IBR, brucella melitensis and Aujeszky's disease or where approved Aujeszky's disease and IBR control programmes are in place. (SANCO/10574/2004 Rev.1, version of 13/09/2005)

Document SANCO/10574/2004 Rev.1, version of 13/09/2005 was distributed.


The Commission stated that data from 9 MSs is missing. These MSs were asked to send their data as soon as possible.

11. Distribution for information/Distribution pour information
• Report of a mission carried out to Bulgaria from 6 to 10 June 2005 in order to follow-up on the commitments given by the Bulgarian authorities in relation to the up-grading of certain classes of food establishments and the operation of controls on animal health (DG(SANCO)/7523/2005 – MR)

The report was distributed.

12. 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.

Not discussed.

13.

a) Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Decision concerning certain protection measures in relation to avian influenza in several third countries. (SANCO/10428/2005)

The Commission presented a draft proposal to the Committee to prolong the measures in place for Asia on account of avian influenza and to consolidate the different amendments to Decision 2004/122/EC.

Vote: Unanimously in favour.

b) Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Decision concerning certain protection measures in relation to avian influenza in Russia. (SANCO/10427/2005 rev 1)

The Commission explained that a separate safeguard Decision regionalising Russia has been drafted because Russia has provided further information indicating that the outbreak of AI has been contained in the regions (Federal districts) located to the east of the Ural Mountains. Therefore Russia can be regionalised for import of unprocessed feathers, only.

Vote: Unanimously in favour.

c) Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Decision laying down additional requirements for the surveillance of avian influenza in wild birds. (SANCO/10426/2005)

The Commission distributed document SANCO/10426/2005. The purpose of this draft proposal is to extend the requirements for wild bird surveillance, so that wild bird, hunting and other relevant organisations will be obliged to immediately notify national competent authorities of any abnormal mortality or significant disease outbreaks occurring in wild birds.
Vote: Unanimously in favour.

14. Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Decision approving the programmes for the implementation of Member States' surveys for avian influenza in poultry and wild birds during 2005, and laying down reporting and eligibility rules for the financial contribution from the Community to the implementation costs of those programmes. (SANCO/10373/2005)

The purpose of this draft decision is to approve Member States' individual surveillance plans for avian influenza, and to provide an initial €883,723 in co-funding for the avian influenza surveillance plans of the MSs for the period 1 July 2005 to 31 January 2006.

Vote: Unanimously in favour.

b) Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Decision amending Decision 2005/464/EC on the implementation of survey programmes for avian influenza in poultry and wild birds to be carried out in the Member States. (SANCO/10423/2005/rev2)

The main purpose of the draft decision is to change the date for which MS have to submit their monitoring programmes. Moreover, the Commission added the possibility to use PCR tests. Furthermore, some amendments on wild bird surveillance to the annexes were presented.

Vote: Unanimously in favour.

15. Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Decision amending Annexes I and II to Decision 2002/308/EC establishing lists of approved zones and approved farms with regard to one or more of the fish diseases viral haemorrhagic septicaemia (VHS) and infectious haematopoietic necrosis (IHN). (SANCO/10377/ Rev2/2005)

Through this draft Decision the Commission proposes some amendments of Annexes I and II to Decision 2002/308/EC. Italy, Finland, Germany and France have submitted justifications for obtaining the status of approved zones with regard to VHS and IHN for certain parts of their territories. The Annexes should thus be replaced.

Vote: Unanimously in favour
16. Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Decision amending Decision 2002/300/EC as regards the areas excluded from the list of approved zones with regard to Bonamia ostreae and/or Marteilia refringens. (SANCO/10378/Rev1/2005)

The Republic of Ireland and the United Kingdom have submitted to the Commission a notification of the presence of Bonamia ostreae. The area where the disease has been detected can therefore no longer be regarded as free of Bonamia ostreae. Decision 2002/300/EC should be amended accordingly.

Vote: Unanimously in favour

17. Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Decision amending Annexes I and II to Decision 2003/634/EC approving programmes for the purpose of obtaining the status of approved zones and of approved farms in non approved zones with regard to viral haemorrhagic septicaemia (VHS) and infectious haematopoietic necrosis (IHN) in fish. (SANCO/10379/2005/Rev.1)

The Commission explained that the document contains amendments that were made in the Annexes. The programmes applicable to Finland and Italy have been finalised and thus should be deleted from the respective Annexes.

Vote: Unanimously in favour

18. Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Decision amending Annex I to Decision 2003/858/EC establishing a list of territories from which importation of certain species of live fish, their eggs and gametes intended for farming in the European Community (EC) are authorised. (SANCO/10380/2005/Rev.1)

For the sake of clarity and to simplify the presentation the Commission proposed two amendments to the table in Annex I of Decision 2003/858/EC. The comment “carps only” has been replaced by “cyprinidae only” and all columns making reference to the specific diseases have been deleted.

Vote: Qualified Majority. UK abstained.


Not discussed.

20. Exchange of views and possible opinion on a draft Commission Decision laying down a list of third countries and veterinary certification conditions
for importation into the Community and transit of live poultry, wild bird (game) meat, hatching eggs of these species, meat including minced meat of poultry and ratites, eggs and egg products for human consumption and specified pathogen free eggs and amending Commission Decisions 93/342/EEC, 2000/585/EC and 2003/812/EC. (SANCO/10361/2005 rev5)

Not discussed.

21. Exchange of views and possible opinion on a draft Commission Decision establishing the animal health conditions and the veterinary certification requirements for imports into the Community of bovine embryos and repealing Decision 2005/217/EC. (SANCO/10225/2005/R1)

Not discussed.


The draft Decision was presented at the last SCFCAH of 7 July. Its aim is to amend the respective Annexes to Decision 2004/639/EC and Council Directive 88/407/EEC. Due to missing or incorrect information in the Annexes problems have arisen with imports of bovine semen from third countries.

The vote was postponed to the next SCFCAH.


The United States of America has requested that amendments be made to the list as regards entries for that country, notably the addition of one team and the deletion of one team.

Vote: Unanimously in favour

24. Exchange of views and possible opinion on a draft Commission Decision 93/195/EEC on animal health conditions and veterinary certification for the re-entry of registered horses for racing, competition and cultural events after temporary export. (SANCO/10335/2005/Rev. 1)
The intention of this draft Commission Decision is to have a standard model certificate for the re-entry of registered horses returning from the Olympic Games, including preparatory test events, and the Paralympics.

Vote: Unanimously in favour


Document SANCO/10245/2005 was presented at the last SCFCAH on 7 July. The purpose of this draft Commission Decision is that the Commission shall purchase foot-and-mouth disease virus antigens in the quantities and subtypes specified in the Annex. The Commission stated that at the next SCFCAH a new table will be distributed so that CVOs get an overview on the situation regarding the quantities and subtypes of FMD virus antigens that are in the antigen bank by the end of 2005.

Vote: Unanimously in favour


Subsequent to the outbreaks that were set out by the Spanish authorities the Commission proposed a draft Decision through which the restricted zone is extended.

Vote: Unanimously in favour

27. Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Decision concerning animal-health protection measures against swine vesicular disease in Italy. (SANCO/10238/2005)

The draft decision was discussed at the SCFCAH in July 2005. Since then no changes to the proposed measures were made. Only some minor amendments in wording were presented.

See also point 23 in the short report of July 2005.

Vote: Unanimously in favour

28. Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Decision repealing Decision 2003/136/EC on the approval of the plans for the eradication of classical swine fever in feral pigs and emergency vaccination of feral pigs against classical swine fever in Luxemburg. (SANCO/10397/2005)
Luxemburg has supplied information that classical swine fever in the feral pig population has been successfully eradicated and that the approved eradication plan no longer needs to be applied. Therefore the Decision 2003/136/EC can be repealed.

Vote: Unanimously in favour

29. Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Decision amending Decision 2001/618/EC to include the department of Ain, France in the list of regions free of Aujeszky’s disease. (SANCO/10398/2005) (see point 5 of SCFCAH of 12-13 May 2005)

France has submitted supporting documentation to the Commission as regards the Aujeszky's disease-free status of the department of Ain demonstrating that the disease has been eradicated from that department.

The Commission therefore proposed to amend Decision 2002/618/EC accordingly.

Vote: Unanimously in favour

29a. Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Decision amending Decision 93/52/EEC as regards the declaration that the province of Grosseto in the region of Toscana in Italy is free of brucellosis (B. Melitensis) and Decision 2003/467/EC as regards the declaration that France is free of bovine brucellosis (SANCO/10341/2005-Rev.3)

The purpose of this draft decision is to recognise the province of Grosseto officially free of brucellosis as regards ovine or caprine holdings. Moreover, France is officially declared free of bovine brucellosis. The Decisions 93/52/EEC and 2003/467/EC should thus be amended accordingly.

Vote: Unanimously in favour

30. Exchange of views on a draft Commission Decision on introducing supplement measures to control infections with low pathogenic avian influenza in Italy and repealing Decision 2004/666/EC. (SANCO/10395/2005)

Not discussed.

31. Exchange of views on a draft Commission Decision laying down the animal health conditions and certification requirements for imports of fish for ornamental purpose. (SANCO/10381/2005) (In addition, a Commission Staff Working Document will be distributed during the meeting)

The Commission distributed the Staff Working document SANCO/10393/2005 which includes an extract of existing animal health certificates for import of ornamental fish. After an expert working group meeting, the Commission drafted
SANCO/10381/2005, which proposes one certificate for cold water ornamental fish and one certificate for tropical ornamental fish. The Commission asked MSs to forward the draft decision to their respective experts, and forward comments by 1 October. A technical vote is foreseen at the next SCFCAH.


Not discussed.


The Commission presented document SANCO/10372/2005/Rev.1 and stated that it is necessary to harmonise the list of approved third countries, import conditions and model certificate for the importation of rodents destined for trade and to include these in Commission Decision 2004/595/EC. Moreover, Malta needs to be included in Article 1 and in the notes of guidance of the model certificate in that Decision, subsequent to the amendment of the list of the MSs which have been granted a transitional period. The Commission outlined that this draft and SANCO/10375/2005/Rev.1 (see following point) are interrelated and intend to cover all aspects of import and highlighted the differences between them. The Commission also asked MS to send information on their current practice regarding this issue.


The Commission presented document SANCO/10375/2005/Rev.1 and stated that it is necessary to harmonise the list of approved third countries, import conditions and model certificate for the importation of rodents destined for approved bodies and to include these in Commission Decision 2004/64/EC. Moreover, Malta needs to be included in the notes of guidance of the model certificate in that Decision, subsequent to the amendment of the list of the MSs which have been granted a transitional period. The Commission asked MS to send information on their current practice regarding this issue.


Not discussed.
36. Miscellaneous

UK - Information from the UK on the seminar 'Animal Health Risk at the Borders of the EU' in Cambridge

SI – Informed the Committee that Slovenia had been contacted by the US authorities concerning the international partnership on Avian and pandemic influenza

SV – Sweden asked for exemption of safeguard measures to bring in a special kind of species from Russia for a research project.

DK - Informed the Committee that it will perform a simulation exercise on FMD in collaboration with the Nordic countries.
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

Bernard Van Goethem
Acting Director