SUMMARY RECORD OF THE
STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE FOOD CHAIN AND ANIMAL HEALTH
held in BRUSSELS on 27 November 2006
(Section Animal Health and Welfare)

President: Bernard Van Goethem and Alberto Laddomada

All the Member States were present.

1. Information from Bulgaria, Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and Spain on the bluetongue situation.

Bulgaria
The Bulgarian delegation gave an updated presentation of the BT epidemiological situation on its territory.
Serological tests, conducted under the 2006 BT surveillance programme, have revealed since 30 October 2006 positive results in cattle and goats in two villages from the Burgas region. In villages within 10 km from those outbreaks, additional blood samples were taken from animals, and tested on 5 November. The results were positive in 5 new villages.
Early November, the temperatures had substantially dropped, thus stopping the flight of culicoides. None were caught in the light traps in place. The origin of the disease has not been determined. Clinical examinations on sheep in the Burgas region showed no signs of BT. The report received from the BT CRL in Pirbright on 21 November confirms the presence of specific BTV antibodies and BTV-8 neutralising antibodies. However, the BT virus has not been isolated.

Belgium
The Belgian delegation presented the BT situation as of 24 November 2006. 677 BT outbreaks have been confirmed in sheep and cattle, whereas 5 holdings are under BT suspicion. Culicoides are still being caught but in rather small numbers, only a few last week. They are systematically tested for virus detection by CODA. A training session was given to help people recognise culicoides.

France
The situation as of 27 November 2006 was presented by the French delegation. Five BT outbreaks have been confirmed in the following departments: Nord, Aisne, Ardennes and Meuse.
- 2 clinical confirmed BT outbreaks in cattle: cases 1 and 4
- 3 confirmed BT outbreaks, no clinical signs, via random testing in high-risk areas: cases 2, 3 and 5 (ELISA & PCR positive)
- 98 undermined suspicions
- 1 suspicion still under investigation
A new restricted zone was established after the last outbreak (No 5), detected on 13 October. Serological surveillance was reinforced. On 13 November, a cow, the 6th
French case, was found. Entomological surveillance is ongoing to verify the absence of C imicola, to gather data on BTV-8 confirmed culicoides, to examine the season dynamics and find the virus in vector species. Traps were placed near the outbreaks but no culicoides were caught as nights have been cold.
The Commission suggested discussing the collected data during the workshop on 28 and 29 November.

Germany
The German delegation gave an updated presentation of their BT situation. 817 outbreaks have been reported as of 27 November 2006. Cattle are the most affected population (over 500 holdings). The rest are mainly sheep. 9 outbreaks in wild ruminants were reported and none among goats. The development of the disease reached its highest peak in October. The last 6 outbreaks have been reported within the last 3 days. The restricted zones, limited to the east by the border, have been extended in the three other directions: north, west and south.

Italy
Italy made a presentation on the BT situation in Sardinia, update of 23 November. The BT epidemic started in southern Sardinia on 1 October 2006. Since then, and as of 23 November, 142 BT outbreaks have been declared in the province of Cagliari, involving 29,039 animals. 2,064 animals have died, none were killed. 45 holdings were found SN positive for BTV1 and 51 holdings were found PCR positive. The virus was isolated and identified as BTV1, an exotic strain different from those which have affected Europe to date.
Serological surveillance in Sardinia is still ongoing and revealed over the past 60 days only 1 seroconverted holding, BTV2, in the province of Nuoro (centre of Sardinia). Entomological surveillance all over Sardinia during the past 60 days brought to light 21 holdings positive for C imicola and 19 holdings positive for culicoides spp. The strain might have originated from North Africa, transported by the insect vectors.

The Netherlands
The Dutch delegation presented an update of the BT situation as of 24 November. 446 holdings have so far been infected in the southern part of the Netherlands: 178 cattle holdings, 268 sheep holdings, 0 outbreaks in goats. On 19 October 2006, two 20km restricted zones were merged into one 20km zone "South Netherlands". Serological and virological surveillance are performed on cattle. Entomological surveillance (culicoid traps) is also in place, as well as additional measures such as enhanced clinical surveillance and wildlife monitoring.
Recently, a large number of culicoides were caught in traps, mainly in the southern part of the country, owing to mild autumn temperatures. Two weeks ago, an infected sheep was discovered in a zoo in Limberk. Nevertheless, a reduction of the number of new infections has been observed.

Spain
The Spanish delegation gave a presentation of the BT situation on its territory. A new outbreak was detected in a cattle sentinel holding in the Comarca "el Barco de Ávila", in the province of Ávila (east of Madrid), on 20 November 2006. Positive cases were also found in 3 regions of the province of Salamanca (east of Ávila). The virus has been identified as serotype 4. The vectors, culicoides imicola,
benefited from the good weather and winds as well as the rivers, and therefore spread quite easily. No culicoides have been discovered in the northern part of Spain. The restricted zone has been extended to include the newly infected area.

2. **Information by Italy on the swine vesicular disease situation.**

The Italian delegation made a presentation on the swine vesicular disease situation. During the first semester of 2006, 4 SVD outbreaks, affecting 229 animals, occurred in the south of Italy: 3 in Calabria (January and March) and 1 in Campania (June). During the second semester, in November, 12 SVD outbreaks were reported in the north of Italy, affecting 12544 animals: 5 outbreaks in Lombardia and 7 in Veneto. In Lombardia, the outbreaks were mainly in breeding farms (4/5). All had been visited by a dealer collecting culled sows or discharged animals. In Veneto, the outbreaks took place in dealers' premises (3) and in fattening farms (4). SVD was spread by the same dealer to 4 farms. One of the Veneto outbreaks is linked to an infected breeding farm of Lombardia, in the province of Brescia.

Tracing back of the SVD outbreaks is still ongoing. Restricted zones have been established in accordance with Council Directive 92/119/EEC. Italy confirms that in the five provinces concerned (Brescia, Bergamo, Verona, Padova and Vicenza), all the relevant sanitary and control measures have been adopted to prevent the spread of SVD to other regions, and intra-Community trade of live pigs has been prohibited from those provinces. In the remaining parts of Italy, live pigs destined for intra-Community trade undergo compulsory testing for SVD prior to dispatch.

3. **Information by Italy on the low pathogenic avian influenza situation.**

The Italian delegation presented the situation concerning LPAI outbreaks on its territory, all cases detected during routine monitoring. On 26 October 2006, an outbreak of LPAI was suspected in Tuscany in a game bird farm located in Grosseto (a wetland), and confirmed by the NRL as subtype H5 (RT-PCR) on 30 October. The sequence analysis of the cleavage site (PQRETR) confirmed the low pathogenic nature of the strain. Additional testing indicated that the virus does not belong to the N1 subtype. There are no industrial poultry farms within a 10 km radius. 10032 birds, mainly mallards, were tested positive. On 2 November, surveillance, control measures and a 1km restricted zone were applied in parallel with an epidemiological investigation and ongoing testing. Between 6 and 9 November, all the birds on the farm were stamped out.

Two possible secondary outbreaks were reported: the first one in Pisa, where domestic mallards had died, and the second one in Livorno. Both were reported on the basis that the birds had been tested seropositive. The virus has not yet been isolated. However, to avoid any risk, all the birds from both farms were slaughtered and a restricted zone has been established.

On 10 November, an LPAI outbreak was suspected in Lombardia in a game bird farm located in a wetland in the province of Milano. It was confirmed on 13 November by the NRL. There were no clinical signs and the virus has not been
isolated yet. All serum samples (30) tested revealed H1 (H5) positivity. But real-
time PCR gave negative results for all samples (30 serum, 20 organ and 5 faeces pools). There are no industrial poultry farms within a 10 km radius. On 13 November, the same measures as in Tuscany were applied, except for a wider restricted zone of 3 km decided by the local veterinary authority of Lombardy.

4. **Information from Sweden, the United Kingdom, Bulgaria, Romania, Estonia and Latvia on the Newcastle disease situation.**

**Sweden**
The Swedish delegation informed the Committee of an outbreak of Newcastle disease which was confirmed, on 16 November 2006, in a poultry holding of egg producing flocks (32,400 birds), in Kimstad in the county of Östergötland, southeast of Sweden. The suspicion, notified on 14 November, was based on changes in the egg production the week before. The affected premises have been depopulated. There are no commercial poultry holdings within 10 km. All the necessary measures according to Directive 92/66/EEC have been taken. There are currently no further suspected or confirmed ND outbreaks in Sweden. All regions, except the county of Östergötland, are still considered as ND-free.

**United Kingdom**
The British delegation gave a presentation on a ND outbreak, confirmed on 13 October 2006 in East Lothian, Scotland. The illness was first noticed on 8 September in a flock of around 15,000 partridges reared for restocking game. On 11 October, a laboratory investigation detected PMV in the samples taken. Movement restrictions were immediately put in place, an on-site investigation was completed, further samples were collected and the ND contingency plan was activated. On 13 October, ND was confirmed: PMV-1 isolation with a virulent motif at the cleavage site plus positive serology. Restricted zones were established. The holding was depopulated and the preliminary disinfection was completed on 18 October. No further signs of Newcastle disease have been found and all ND restricted zones have been lifted on 18 November 2006.

**Bulgaria**
The Bulgarian delegation made a presentation of their Newcastle disease situation as of 20 November 2006.
Three ND outbreaks occurred in 2006, in 3 separate districts: in Blagoevgrad on 23 January, in Burgas on 17 April and in Kardjali on 21 July. Exports of live poultry, ratites, farmed and wild feathered game and hatching eggs, and meat products of these species was suspended from those affected areas as well as in the district of Vratsa. Serological and virological tests were conducted throughout the year.
The latest outbreak, on 20 November 2006, occurred in backyard holdings in the village of Vodniantsi, municipality of Dobrichka, district of Dobrich. The rapid development of mortality and evident clinical signs lead to suspicions of ND in poultry. On 22 November, the samples from 4 hen carcasses tested by real time PCR showed positive results for ND. All necessary measures were put in place by the national veterinary services in accordance with Community legislation. A temporary suspension of exports to the EU from that area is in place. The epidemiological investigations, conducted on 22 and 23 November in all the
villages from the 10km surveillance zone, revealed no clinical signs of ND or unusual mortality among birds. On 26 November, final laboratory tests gave positive results for ND.

**Romania**
The Romanian delegation presented their Newcastle disease situation. Two ND outbreaks have been confirmed in commercial farms located in Ialomita county in the south of Romania. Immediate measures were set up in both farms. The outbreaks are under control and an investigation has revealed that the disease has not spread any further. A vaccination campaign is still ongoing.

**Estonia**
Estonia informed the Committee on the Newcastle disease situation. The first case occurred in the north of Estonia, in Harjumaa county, in a wild pigeon and was confirmed on 16 October. There are no poultry farms in the surrounding area. In the 10km area, there are 28 backyard poultry farms which have all been inspected. No clinical signs or unusual symptoms were found. No restrictions were thus applied. The isolate has 97.6% homology with an isolate from a pigeon from Kuwait tested positive in quarantine in the UK in 2005. A suspicion was reported in Põlvamaa county, in the south of Estonia. Antibodies for ND were detected in 7 hens on 25 October. Additional testing was performed with 200 blood samples and 5 cloacae samples and further tests were performed on the 7 hen samples. However, no virus was detected and restrictions were then lifted. In Järvamaa county, in the centre of Estonia, Newcastle disease virus was detected in three wild pigeons. The samples examined were found positive for Paramyxovirus-1 by virus isolation on 21 November 2006. There are currently no more suspected or confirmed ND outbreaks among poultry in Estonia.

**Latvia**
An outbreak of ND was detected in wild pigeons. Latvia sent information on this finding to the Commission last week. The virus has been isolated. Commercial poultry farms are undergoing a vaccination programme for ND.

### 5. Information from Bulgaria and Romania on the classical swine fever situation.

**Bulgaria**
The Bulgarian delegation presented their CSF situation as of 27 November 2006. There has been no increase of morbidity or mortality among pigs, nor any suspicion of CSF in Bulgaria. The National Veterinary Service is carrying out surveillance and eradication programmes in domestic pigs, as well as a two-phase vaccination programme in wild boars. Illegal pig breeding settlements have been discovered in four regions of Bulgaria. 1689 pigs were slaughtered.

**Romania**
The Romanian delegation gave a presentation on the CSF situation in domestic pigs and wild boar.
In 2006, 716 outbreaks of CSF have been reported throughout 35 counties affecting a total of 6813 domestic pigs and 9 wild boars. The outbreaks occurred mainly in backyard premises with a limited number of pigs. The emergency vaccination plan, approved for 1 year, will start on 1 December 2006 and the Commission has accepted to provide for free 1 million doses of conventional vaccine and an important amount of marker vaccine. The vaccination of wild boars will start in spring 2007. Wild boars from three counties are affected by CSF at the moment.

Decisions 2006/800/EC and 2006/802/EC, which approve respectively the Bulgarian and Romanian eradication plans on CSF, were adopted on 23 November 2006. The Commission asked Bulgaria and Romania to amend their eradication programmes with measures in relation to products for personal consumption carried by passengers or travellers. Both countries must therefore provide guarantees on the controls and checks carried out for this purpose.

6. **Information from Ireland on the bonamiosis situation in Ireland.**

The Irish delegation gave an update of the bonamiosis situation on their territory. An outbreak was detected in Loch Foyle, on the border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, in spring 2005. The most likely means of contamination could be the unauthorised movement of mussels from a non-approved zone in the western part of Ireland. A mussel consignment may have contained oyster spat and thence been contaminated.

7. **Information from the Commission on reports received from the Member States in accordance with article 8 of Council Directive 64/432/EEC on the details of the occurrence of diseases listed in Annex E (I) thereof, and of any other diseases covered by the additional guarantees provided for by Community legislation, and of monitoring or eradication programmes (not covered by Decision 2002/677/EC) in the territory of the Member States (SANCO/10615/2006-Rev.2).**

The Commission informed the Committee on the reports submitted by Member States providing details on the occurrence of diseases and on monitoring and eradication programmes (see title). The Commission, however, still awaits the reports from Hungary and Malta. In addition, France's report on Aujeszky's disease (AD) has not been provided yet.

As regards Aujeszky’s disease, Commission Decision 2001/618/EC lays down criteria on the information that the Member States should provide, in particular in Annex IV to that Decision. Therefore, information of the occurrence or non-occurrence of that disease must be provided by all Member States, while details of the monitoring and eradication programmes in place must be provided by each Member State, whether it is listed or not in Annex II of the Decision.

The Commission will send a reminder to all the Member States which have not submitted the relevant reports, when AD monitoring and eradication programmes are in operation.

Austria raised a typing mistake on page 14 of document SANCO/10615/2006-Rev.2. In the footnote relating to Austria, the figure "5.707" should state instead "5.797". The Commission will amend it with the new revision.
8. Distribution of CD with Member States applications for VHS/IHN approval of fish farms and zones and annual reports of the National Reference Laboratories for fish diseases and molluscs diseases meetings.

Member States are requested to send their comments on the applications by mid January 2007. A draft Decision with these applications will be presented to the SCFCAH in March 2007.

9. Cooperation between ESTAT and SANCO on data in relation to food safety.

The Commission received a letter from Eurostat enquiring about the possibility of having access to data from all Member States in relation to food safety and in particular, the movement of animals within the Community, restrictions on movements, control checks, using the TRACE system. This data would be requested by Eurostat once a year. It would be compared or cross checked with other sources, such as the information received from customs, and corrected if necessary.

All Member States were in favour of the proposal to communicate aggregated and anonymous data from TRACES to Eurostat.

9A. Distribution for information of the Programme of inspections 2007 by the Food and Veterinary Office.

This document sets out the inspection programme of DG Health and Consumer Protection for 2007, with a detailed plan for January to December. It is estimated that around 260 inspections will be completed in this 12 month period. DG SANCO's inspection plan must remain flexible to enable it to respond to emergencies, other urgent issues and unforeseen circumstances. An update of the programme will therefore be presented in June 2007.

10. Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on draft Commission Decisions on the evolution of animal diseases in the Community and in third countries.

The Commission services introduced the following draft measures:


Commission Decision 2005/393/EC demarcates protection and surveillance zones in relation to bluetongue in Member States where bluetongue has occurred and where the eradication of the disease has not yet been achieved.

On 20 November 2006, Spain informed the Commission that serotype 4 virus had been detected circulating in a peripheral area of restricted zone E. Consequently that zone should be extended, taking into account the data available on the ecology of the vector and the current meteorological situation.
On 21 November 2006, Germany informed the Commission of new outbreaks of bluetongue in Lower Saxony. In view of those findings, it is appropriate to amend the demarcation of the restricted zone in Germany.

Early November 2006, following the notification of BT outbreaks in Italy of a new serotype, by Decision 2006/858/EC a new restricted zone G has been added to Annex I to Decision 2005/393/EC to include the three concerned provinces of southern Sardinia. However, the reference to this zone in the respective provisions of Decision 2005/393/EC has not been added. Therefore, for clarity, the list of zones referred to in Article 2 of Decision 2005/393/EC should be completed.

The purpose of this Decision is to amend Decision 2005/393/EC accordingly.

Vote: Unanimously in favour.


Commission Decision 2005/648/EC was adopted in 2005 following an outbreak of Newcastle disease in the region of Vratsa. The Decision suspends the importation of live poultry, ratites, farmed and wild feathered game and hatching eggs, fresh meat and meat preparations and meat products from Bulgaria.

Bulgaria notified another outbreak of Newcastle disease in the district of Dobrich. Bulgaria has applied the necessary disease control measures and has sent further information on the disease situation to the Commission. Taking account of the current epidemiological situation in Bulgaria regarding Newcastle disease, it is appropriate to limit the suspension of imports to those regions of Bulgaria that are directly affected and/or at risk from Newcastle disease.

The municipality of Dobrichka is therefore added to the Annex of Decision 2005/648/EC.

Vote: Unanimously in favour.


Commission Decision 2005/692/EC lays down certain protection measures in relation to avian influenza in several third countries.

On 25 November 2006, South Korea confirmed an outbreak of highly pathogenic avian influenza caused by the H5N1 strain in a poultry farm in the south of the country. Under current Community legislation, South Korea is only authorised to export to the Community raw pet food and unprocessed feed material containing any parts of poultry, eggs for human consumption and non-treated game trophies from any birds. Considering the animal health risk of introduction of HPAI into the Community, it is appropriate to immediately suspend imports of these products from South Korea.

Decision 2005/692/EC should therefore be amended accordingly.

Vote: Unanimously in favour.
11. **Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Decision amending Decision 2002/613/EC as regards the approved porcine semen collection centres of Canada (SANCO/10734/2006).**

Commission Decision 2002/613/EC establishes a list of third countries, including Canada, from which Member States are to authorise the importation of domestic animal semen of the porcine species. Canada has requested that an amendment be made to the list of semen collection centres approved under Decision 2002/613/EC as regards entries for that country. Canada has provided guarantees of compliance with the appropriate rules set out in Directive 90/429/EEC, and the new centre to be added to the list has been officially approved for exports to the Community by the veterinary services of that country. Decision 2002/613/EC should therefore be amended accordingly.

Vote: Unanimously in favour.

12. **Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Decision amending Decision 92/452/EEC as regards certain embryo collection and production teams in the United States of America (SANCO/10735/2006).**

Commission 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, provides that Member States are only to import embryos from third countries where they have been collected, processed and stored by embryo collection teams listed in that Decision. The United States of America have requested an amendment to the list as regards the address of one centre. The USA have provided guarantees of compliance with the appropriate rules set out in Directive 89/556/EEC, and the embryo collection team concerned has been officially approved for exports to the Community by the veterinary services of that country. Decision 92/452/EEC should therefore be amended accordingly.

Vote: Unanimously in favour.

13. **Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Decision amending Decision 2000/666/EC on the requirements for import of captive birds (SANCO/10776/2006-Rev.2).**

Following the spread of avian influenza HPAI H5N1 of the Asian lineage to Europe by migratory birds, and the case of avian influenza H5N1 detected in a quarantine facility in the UK, the Commission adopted Decision 2005/760/EC banning import of captive birds from all third countries, because of the animal and public health risks. To make a risk inventory, the Commission, on 25 April 2005, requested the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) to provide a scientific opinion on the risks posed by the import of wild caught and captive bred birds from third
countries. Following this request, EFSA adopted on 27 October 2006 a scientific opinion on the animal health and welfare risks, associated with the import of wild birds other than poultry into the Community. Decision 2000/666/EC lays down the animal health requirements and the veterinary certification for the import of birds, other than poultry, including quarantine conditions. Taking account of the conclusions and recommendations laid down in the EFSA scientific opinion, the measures as laid down in Decision 2000/666/EC should be revised. Because of the many changes foreseen, it is appropriate to repeal and replace Decision 2000/666/EC by this draft Decision.

Certain Member States asked that the vote be postponed to the next meeting in order to examine the document more thoroughly. The Commission accepted while insisting on a necessary adoption by the beginning of 2007. Member States may send any comments they have to the Commission by e-mail.

The vote was postponed.

14. Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Decision on certain protection measures in relation to HPAI and movements of pet birds accompanying their owners into the Community (SANCO/10768/2006-Rev.1).

The measures taken in 2005 following the spread of HPAI H5N1 of the Asian lineage include amongst others Commission Decision 2005/759/EC concerning certain measures in relation to the movement from third countries of pet birds accompanying their owners. This decision applies until 31 December 2006. New cases of avian influenza caused by the Asian strain of the virus are still being reported in certain member countries of the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), and the situation caused by this particular threat is still unclear. Therefore, the restrictions concerning the movements of pet birds accompanying their owners into the EU should be continued. Since its coming into force, Decision 2005/759/EC has been amended several times. For the sake of clarity of Community legislation, Decision 2005/759/EC should be repealed and replaced by this draft Decision. It is furthermore appropriate to prolong the application of the measures relating to the import of pet birds until 31 December 2007.

Vote: Unanimously in favour.


Directive 91/496/EEC provides for veterinary checks in respect of animals from third countries entering the Community. Directive 97/78/EC provides for
veterinary checks on certain products of animal origin and certain plant products introduced into the Community from third countries.

All animal products imported from third countries must be examined by an official veterinarian working at a border inspection post. All consignments are described according to their Combined Nomenclature (CN) code, an internationally recognised coding system for goods of all types, including animal products. This Decision lays out, in table form, the CN code in numerical order as used by customs services, alongside certain relevant veterinary legislation. This CN code allows customs and other authorities to clearly identify the products that must be examined under veterinary check procedures.

Regulation (EC) No 853/2004, laying down specific hygiene rules for food of animal origin, does not apply to food containing both products of plant origin and processed products of animal origin, named "composite products". The animal product content of certain composite products does nevertheless pose a potential risk to the animal health status of the Community. Such consignments must be properly certified and subjected to veterinary checks on import into the Community.

There are also certain composite products which, from their processing or limited content of animal product, pose a negligible animal health risk and may thus be imported on the basis of controls. In addition to the principles laid down to help define such products, for clarity and harmonisation, a non ambiguous list of these exempted foodstuffs is also given in Annex II to this draft Decision.

This measure sets uniform conditions for the whole Community regarding import requirements for composite products, thus avoiding trade distortion and potential animal health risk to the Community.

On 20 December, a working group will be held to discuss the certificates that accompany composite products subject to veterinary checks. Member States are welcome to communicate their comments or any difficulty they might encounter.

The vote was postponed.

16. **Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Decision approving contingency plans for the control of avian influenza and Newcastle disease (SANCO/10659/2006-Rev.1).**

The Commission briefed the delegates on the main details of the public procurement procedure which was conducted for the evaluation of certain contingency plans for the control of avian influenza, Newcastle disease, foot and mouth disease and classical swine fever (see also point 17 and 18), submitted for approval by the acceding States of Bulgaria and Romania. The Commission also informed on the results of the evaluation and the legal requirements for the approval of these plans.

The contingency plans for the control of avian influenza and Newcastle disease were proposed for approval in one draft Commission Decision which, for clarity, contains all such previously approved plans of the Member States. These contingency plans submitted by Bulgaria and Romania have been approved. The Commission hence proposed to repeal Commission Decision 2004/402/EC and replace it by this Decision.
Vote: Unanimously in favour.


The acceding States of Bulgaria and Romania submitted their contingency plans for foot and mouth disease (FMD) to the Commission for approval (see also point 16). The foot and mouth disease plans were proposed in one draft Commission Decision which, for clarity, also contains the previously approved FMD plans of the EUR10 Member States. As a result of the evaluation, the Commission approved Romania and Bulgaria's contingency plans for the control of FMD. It was hence proposed to repeal Commission Decision 2004/435/EC and replace it by this Decision.

Vote: Unanimously in favour.


The acceding States of Bulgaria and Romania submitted their contingency plans for the control of classical swine fever (CSF) to the Commission for approval (see also point 16). The classical swine fever plans were proposed in one draft Commission Decision which, for clarity, also contains the previously approved CSF plans of the EUR10 Member States. As a result of the evaluation, the Commission approved Romania and Bulgaria's contingency plans for the control of CSF. It was hence proposed to repeal Commission Decision 2004/431/EC and replace it by this Decision.

Vote: Unanimously in favour.

19. Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Decision concerning a financial contribution by the Community for the implementation of an epidemiological survey and bluetongue surveillance measures in the context of the emergency measures taken to combat this disease in Belgium, Germany, France, Luxembourg and the Netherlands in 2006 and 2007 (SANCO/10728/2006-Rev.2).

Council Decision 90/424/EEC on expenditure in the veterinary field provides in Article 3 for the possibility of granting a Community financial contribution for the eradication of certain diseases, including bluetongue. In order to prevent the spread of the disease as rapidly as possible, the Community shall contribute financially to the eligible expenditure incurred by the Member State in the context of the emergency measures taken to combat the disease. Harmonised and enhanced surveillance measures were put in place in close collaboration by Belgium, Germany, France, Luxembourg and the Netherlands to control the epidemic by carrying out epidemiological surveys and disease
surveillance measures, including laboratory tests for serological and virological surveillance and entomological surveillance.

The five countries asked for Community financial contribution, provided in Article 3, 2a of Council Decision 90/424/EEC, for the implementation of the emergency measures taken to combat the bluetongue disease on their territory in 2006 and 2007. The financial contribution shall be paid on the basis of submission of intermediate technical and financial reports, final technical and financial reports and the results of any on-the-spot checks.

Member States requested a couple of modifications to this draft Decision regarding the date of submission of the reports, which the Commission agreed upon. Therefore, in Article 3.2, the date of submission for the intermediate reports is replaced by 31 May 2007, and in Article 3.3, the date of submission of the final reports is replaced by 31 May 2008.

**Vote: Unanimously in favour, taking into consideration the modifications.**

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20. **Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Decision amending Decision 2006/875/EC (SANCO/10612/2006 -Rev.2) approving programmes for the eradication and monitoring of animal diseases, of certain TSEs, and for the prevention of zoonoses presented by the Member States for the year 2007 (SANCO/10740/2006-Rev.1).**

Decision 2006/875/EC, approving programmes for the eradication and monitoring of animal diseases, of certain TSEs, and for the prevention of zoonoses presented by the Member States for the year 2007, provides for the approval of the programmes submitted by the Member States that appear on the list of programmes established by Commission Decision 2006/687/EC.

For reasons of administrative efficiency, all expenditure presented for a financial contribution by the Community should be expressed in euro. In accordance with Council Regulation (EC) No 1290/2005 on the financing of the common agricultural policy, the conversion rate for expenditure in a currency other than the euro should be the rate most recently set by the European Central Bank, prior to the first day of the month in which the application is submitted by the Member State concerned.

Therefore, Decision 2006/875/EC should be amended accordingly.

**Vote: Unanimously in favour.**

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21. **Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Decision establishing an alternative health mark pursuant to Directive 2005/94/EC on Community measures for the control of avian influenza (SANCO/10580/2006-Rev.3).**

Directive 2005/94/EC provides for Community measures to avoid the spread of avian influenza. It foresees that fresh meat obtained from poultry originating from holdings located in the established protection zone does not enter intra-Community or international trade.
Directive 92/66/EEC lays down Community measures against the spread of Newcastle disease in poultry, such as the establishment of protection and surveillance zones and a prohibition on the transport of poultry meat in and from such zones, unless the transport is authorised by the competent authority under certain conditions.

As specified in both Directives, such meat must bear the health mark provided for in Annex II of Directive 2002/99/EC laying down the animal health rules governing the production, processing, distribution and introduction of products of animal origin for human consumption. Since operators and customers, in many Member States, have poorly accepted this special identification mark, commonly called "cross stamp", it is therefore the purpose of this Decision to determine an alternative health mark. This alternative health mark should however be clearly distinguishable from other identification marks to be applied for fresh poultry meat, such as under Regulations (EC) No 853/2004 and (EC) No 2076/2005. The mark proposed in this Decision has a square shape bearing inside the relevant country code and the approval number of the establishment.

The Commission highlighted the amendments, proposed by several Member States and already made to this Decision, extending the health mark to the Newcastle disease. The Legal Service's opinion is expected shortly and a new draft should be sent by 28 November to the Member States for further comments.

The vote was postponed.

22. Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Decision amending Decisions 2006/415/EC, 2006/416/EC and 2006/563/EC as regards the health mark to be applied to fresh poultry meat (SANCO/10587/2006-Rev.3).

Draft proposal SANCO/10580/2006 Rev.3 (which was then published as Decision 2007/118/EC) establishes a health mark to be used as an alternative to the one foreseen in Annex II of Directive 2002/99/EC, which is reportedly not well accepted by operators and customers.

Decision 2006/415/EC concerning certain protection measures in relation to highly pathogenic avian influenza of the subtype H5N1 in poultry in the Community, Decision 2006/416/EC concerning certain transitional measures in relation to highly pathogenic avian influenza in poultry or other captive birds and Decision 2006/563/EC concerning certain protection measures in relation to highly pathogenic avian influenza of subtype H5N1 in wild birds in the Community all require the identification marking of meat from poultry, farmed feathered game and other captive birds originating in restricted areas and destined for the national market.

Decisions 2006/415/EC, 2006/416/EC and 2006/563/EC shall therefore be amended to provide for the use of the established alternative health mark.

In addition, the Annex of Decision 2006/415/EC should be amended to take into account Hungary's notification to the Commission that, since 31 August 2006, all control measures in relation to an HPAI outbreak of the subtype H5N1 in certain duck and geese holdings have ceased.
A new draft shall be sent by 28 November to the Member States for further comments. The Committee will be asked to vote at the next SCFCAH scheduled on 1 December 2006.

The vote was postponed.


Council Directive 90/539/EEC lays down requirements for intra-Community trade in live poultry and hatching eggs and imports of those products from third countries. Member States must draw plans for the approval of poultry establishments participating in such trade. These plans must be submitted for approval by the Commission.

The Commission has already approved, as laid down in Decision 2004/835/EC, the plans submitted by the present Member States, except for Luxembourg.

Bulgaria and Romania shall accede to the Community on 1 January 2007 and have submitted for approval the plans for approving the establishments for intra-Community trade in poultry and hatching eggs. After examination, these plans fulfil the criteria laid down in Directive 90/539/EEC and should therefore be approved. For more clarity, Decision 2004/835/EC should be repealed and replaced by this Decision.

Vote: Unanimously in favour.


Decision 2005/731/EC lays down additional requirements for the surveillance of avian influenza in wild birds in particular as regards notification and investigation of increased mortality in wild birds.

Decision 2005/734/EC lays down biosecurity measures to reduce the risk of transmission of HPAI, caused by influenza virus A subtype H5N1, from birds living in the wild to poultry and other captive birds, and provides for an early detection system in areas at particular risk.

Both Decisions expire on 31 December 2006. As outbreaks of the Asian lineage of the avian influenza virus still occur in third countries, the threat to the Community has not diminished. It is therefore appropriate to prolong the validity of these Decisions until 31 December 2007 and to amend them accordingly.

Vote: Unanimously in favour.

Bulgaria has been granted transitional periods, by the Act of Accession, for compliance by certain milk processing establishments with the requirements of Regulation (EC) No 853/2004 laying down specific hygiene rules for food of animal origin. Certain establishments which are authorised to process non-compliant milk are listed in Chapter I, and certain establishments which are authorised to process, on separate production lines, both compliant and non-compliant milk, are listed in Chapter II, of the Appendix to Annex VI to that Act. A number of the establishments have ceased their activities and should therefore be deleted from that list.

In view of the evolution of the quality of raw milk, and the present proportion of production of raw milk in Bulgaria that does not comply with the requirements of Regulation (EC) No 853/2004, certain establishments should be included in the list set out in Chapter I. Furthermore, certain milk processing establishments in Bulgaria have the capacity and equipment to process compliant and non-compliant milk on separate production lines. Those establishments should be included on the list set out in Chapter II.

Therefore, the Appendix to Annex VI to the Act of Accession should be amended. For the sake of clarity, that Appendix should be replaced by the text in the Annex to this Decision.

**Vote: Unanimously in favour.**


The veterinary and sanitary certificates required by Community legislation for the introduction of live animals, semen, embryos and ova and products of animal origin into the Community are presented at the moment in various graphic models, laid down in dozens of fragmented provisions. To each different graphic model corresponds a substantial standardisation of content of the certificates, as far as the provided information is concerned. The use of the certificates by third countries' authorities will be greatly simplified by the standardisation of the existing models.

This standardisation proves to be essential for an efficient data transfer of certificates within the framework of the system implemented by Commission Decision 2003/623/EC on the development of an integrated veterinary data processing system called TRACES. The setting up of a harmonised template will accelerate and make administrative procedures easier at the border, allowing an automated transfer of data held in these certificates to the "Common Veterinary Entry Documents", as foreseen by Commission Regulation (EC) No 136/2004 laying down procedures for veterinary checks at Community border inspection posts on products imported from third countries, and Commission Regulation
(EC) No 282/2004 introducing a document for the declaration of, and veterinary checks on, animals from third countries entering the Community.

Certain Member States requested more time to examine the document.

**The vote was postponed.**

27. **Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Decision laying down transitional measures for products of animal origin introduced in Bulgaria and Romania before 1 January 2007 (SANCO/10793/2006-Rev.1).**

Certain products of animal origin, particularly in the meat sector, coming from third countries i.e. US, Canada and Brazil, and introduced in Bulgaria and Romania before the date of Accession of 1 January 2007, are not in compliance with the relevant Community rules. Some of those products have been released for free circulation while others are still under customs supervision. In order to facilitate the transition from the existing regime in Bulgaria and Romania to that resulting from the application of the Community veterinary legislation, it is appropriate to lay down transitional measures for the marketing of those products. Those non-compliant products should be placed only on the domestic market of Bulgaria and Romania or exported to a third country under appropriate conditions. After one year, products which have not yet been released for free circulation or been exported, and which remain in storage under customs supervision, should be destroyed.

**Vote: Unanimously in favour.**

28. **Exchange of views of the Committee on a draft Commission Decision concerning a financial contribution by the Community to Italy for the implementation of a system for collection and analysis of epidemiological information on bluetongue (SANCO/10785/2006).**

Bluetongue is a transboundary disease transmitted by insect vectors "culicoides spp". Individual national efforts are not sufficient for effective surveillance and control. The gathering and exchange of epidemiological information on bluetongue in the Member States is fundamental to establish the appropriate control measures for the disease and verifying their efficacy. The implementation of a Community surveillance network would enable an effective risk analysis on a Community scale and also reduce some of the costs that spare national systems would imply. In this context, an Italian institute is in the process of establishing a web-based Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to collect, store, and analyse bluetongue surveillance data. This system can be shared with other Member States and third countries, contributing to the development of Community legislation, in order to verify its validity as a tool to control the BT disease and better understand the disease dynamics and spread. A financial contribution should therefore be granted for that project. The Community shall pay the financial contribution under the condition that the actions planned have actually been carried out and that the authorities supply all the necessary information.