1. Russian import conditions for animals and products of animal origin.

Postponed.

2. Information from Hungary on the Avian Influenza situation.

The Hungarian representative made a presentation on the latest outbreak of avian influenza in the Derekegyház-Órdöngős area. On 25 January the authorities were informed of increased mortality in a geese holding. On 26 January hundreds of geese showed nervous symptoms. In the flock, 9000 birds were stamped out the following day (6790 geese were destroyed and 2596 died during the day). Preliminary cleaning and disinfection of the farm was initiated. Protection and surveillance zones were established and clinic and laboratory investigations of farms in these zones were performed. Sampling was ongoing. 367 poultry in 4 backyard flocks located within 1 km radius from the affected holding were pre-emptively destroyed. On 30 January the National Reference Laboratory confirmed the second outbreak when at the same time the Community Reference Laboratory confirmed highly pathogenic avian influenza of subtype H5N1 for the first outbreak. Until 31 January, poultry in holdings located in the restricted zones showed negative results during surveillance. However on 2 February, the laboratory examination of the samples taken from geese in a holding within the surveillance zone (located at a distance of 9 km from the first infected holding), revealed a second outbreak. Until 5 February, no further suspicion was reported.

The Commission representative informed the Member States that the further characterisation of the virus carried out at the Community Reference Laboratory in Weybridge, have shown that the virus found in Hungary this year is slightly different than the virus detected in poultry or wild birds during 2006.
The British representative made a presentation on the avian influenza outbreak in Suffolk. On 1 February, a suspicion was notified in a multinational company's premises, when 860 birds were found dead out of a total of 159,000 turkeys present on this holding. On 2 February, 1,580 birds more were found dead and the remaining ones in the affected building were culled. On 3 February, the occurrence of H5N1 was confirmed. Protection, surveillance zones (Area A) and a further restricted zone (Area B) were established. By 5 February the culling of all birds from more than 20 sheds was completed. The necessary measures were taken to raise poultry keepers' and public awareness by providing information through the local and national media and to enhance biosecurity on poultry farms. The laboratory diagnosis showed that the virus is similar to the one recently isolated in Hungary. There was no movement of live poultry from the premises of the company in Hungary to the ones in the UK. The company has been cooperative and gave written assurances as regards the movement of people. It was speculated that the source of the disease might have been wild birds, as gulls were present on the roofs and around the holding. However, results from wild bird surveillance carried out in the UK and in particular in the outbreak area between October 2006 and January 2007 were negative.

The Commission representative thanked the British authorities for their early and decisive actions to contain the outbreak.

- The Commission asked the Member States to report which biosecurity measures they apply in relation to the avian influenza outbreaks in Hungary and the UK.

All Member States have raised the public awareness by organising meetings at various levels. Most countries had kept their measures in place while certain Member States have increased their biosecurity measures, such as The Netherlands where confinement of poultry on the whole territory has been decided as from 1st February. Hungary has introduced additional measures on its territory in relation to the current outbreak. Bulgaria has prolonged the confinement until the 15th of February.

The Commission urged all the Member States to be very cautious and keep under review their biosecurity measures since all outbreaks in the Community have appeared in areas previously identified as being at an increased risk for virus introduction.

3. Information from Italy on the Swine Vesicular Disease situation.

The Italian representative made a presentation on the situation in 2007. To date, 15 outbreaks were confirmed in the regions of Molise and Lombardia during 2007. In total, 12,293 animals were affected and stamped out. Italy took the measures as foreseen by Council Directive 92/119/EEC. Italy banned any movement of live pigs to other Member States or third countries from the affected provinces in the Northern regions.

3A. Information from Italy on the Buffalo Brucellosis situation in Campania.

Postponed.
4. Information from Greece on the sheeppox outbreak in Lesbos.

Postponed.

5. Information from Bulgaria, Hungary and Romania on the Classical Swine Fever situation.

Postponed.

6. Information from Germany, Italy and the Netherlands on their vaccination programmes against avian influenza.

The German representative gave a presentation on the field study investigating the efficacy of an inactivated influenza vaccine against HPAI of subtype H5N2 against avian influenza of subtype H5N1 in poultry. The study aims at: a) gaining experiences about possibilities for practical use and protective effect of H5 virus vaccines and b) determining testing and clinical surveillance methods for vaccinate populations and specific parameters of infection and immunology, challenge of vaccinated animals to check the protective effect of vaccination, data interpretation/statistics.

Results shall subsequently be published in a scientific journal. The study started in September 2006 and will be finished in September 2008. 3 holdings keeping different poultry species - laying hens, parent breeder geese and ducks for fattening shall be vaccinated. To date 2,400 chickens (in November and December 2006), and 800 geese (in December 2006 and January 2007) on two holdings have been vaccinated and samples taken before and 21 days after the first and the second vaccination are being tested.

The Italian representative reported on the implementation of the emergency vaccination programme during 1 January until 31 December 2006. Vaccination was applied in the regions of Veneto and Lombardy. In total, 5,168,000 doses of monovalent vaccine (H5N9) and 11,451,000 doses of bivalent vaccine (H5-H7) were used. The serological results of samples taken from sentinel birds placed in vaccinated flocks of laying hens, meat-type turkeys, capons and guinea fowl were all negative. The discriminatory tests applied in vaccinated meat turkey and chicken farms gave also negative results. Serological tests performed in non-vaccinated poultry of farms in the vaccination area proved also negative. The vaccination programme was ceased at the end of 2006 according to Commission Decision 2005/926/EC. Despite the fact that the costs of vaccination were high and a slight reduction in growth of vaccinated birds was observed, the programme was efficient to eradicate the two low pathogenic virus incursions of H7N1 and H7N3 virus strains from that densely populated poultry area. It was concluded that vaccination induced a high and long-lasting immune response in vaccinated chickens. Outbreaks of avian influenza of subtype H7N3 were detected on a few occasions in vaccinated turkeys and never in vaccinated layers, capons and cockerels.
The Commission representative explained that differences exist between the approach of many Member States concerning the co-financing of vaccination. The costs for vaccination are predominantly borne by the owner while the government finances intensified surveillance.

The Dutch representative made a presentation on the preventive vaccination against avian influenza. Vaccination has been applied twice in both, hobby and commercial poultry using an inactivated vaccine of H5N9 subtype. Movement restrictions applied for vaccinated animals. In total, 19,687 animals from 8 commercial farms and 22,300 from more than 1500 hobby flocks were vaccinated. Serological testing carried out in sentinels in vaccinated poultry flocks and in poultry of non-vaccinated commercial flocks have all proven negative. It was concluded that further research is needed to develop additional discriminatory tests for poultry species other than chicken and turkeys. Exhaustive wild bird surveillance has also proven negative.

7. Information from France on the plan for vaccination of ornamental birds against Avian Influenza.

Document SANCO/10048/2007 was distributed during the meeting concerning a request for the approval of a vaccination plan for ornamental birds in France.

The French representative made a presentation of their preventive vaccination plan for hobby birds offering an alternative to the confinement of birds indoors during high risk periods for infection with H5N1 avian influenza virus. Vaccination shall be performed in birds kept by individuals of a restricted list of bird species usually not kept and bred indoors. The programme should last for 1 year and an inactivated vaccine already used for zoo bird vaccination shall be applied. Vaccinated birds must be kept separated from non-vaccinated ones. The owner has to notify the veterinary local authority his intention to have his bird(s) vaccinated. Vaccination must be carried out by a veterinarian and the vaccinated birds must be registered. Certain provisions for the movement of the vaccinated birds and in the case a vaccinated bird is sold, the owner must inform the buyer about the status of the bird(s) and the requirements for its/their keeping. A report must be drawn up at the end of the vaccination plan listing the number of vaccinated birds, the number of vaccine doses used and remaining. Clinical and serological monitoring will follow the vaccination.

Although no principal objections to preventive vaccination were raised, Member States’ representatives wished to further discuss the presented plan. Questions concerned in particular the targeted group of birds, the logistical and administrative execution of the plan and the means and resources to register and perform testing of vaccinated birds in view of the traceability of their movements.

7A. Avian influenza surveillance reporting in poultry and wild birds in Member States. Revised reporting protocols for 2007. (Doc. SANCO/10818/2006 - Rev 3)
The Commission representative explained the minor changes to the reporting protocol for wild bird surveillance following the further consultation of the epidemiological working group led by the Community Reference Laboratory. However, during an upcoming working group on this issue Member States will have a further opportunity to discuss it.

8. Information from the mission carried out in Portugal to investigate an unconfirmed occurrence of *Aethina tumida*.

During the meeting, document SANCO/10038/2007 was distributed: Report on a suspected (but negative) small hive beetle (*Aethina tumida*) occurrence in Portugal.

9. 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 programme (not covered by Decision 2002/677/EC) in the territory of the Member States. (Doc. SANCO/10615/2006-Rev.5)

The Commission again urged those Member States which have not already sent their contribution to provide the required information as soon as possible in order to finalise the document.

The individual annual reports for 2005 on the Aujeszky's disease sent by Member States which have national eradication and monitoring programmes in place have been distributed during the meeting.

10. Information from the Commission on a draft Commission Decision amending the Appendix B to Annex XII to the 2003 Act of Accession as regards certain establishments in the meat, milk and fish sectors in Poland. (Doc. SANCO/10827/2006)

In Poland, certain establishments (listed in Appendix B to Annex XII to the 2003 Act of Accession) benefiting from a transitional period, have completed their upgrading process and are now in full compliance with Community legislation according to an official declaration from the Polish competent authority. Furthermore, certain establishments have ceased their activities for which they have obtained a transitional period and therefore, should be deleted from the list of establishments in transition.

The Commission with this draft decision proposes the deletion of these establishments from the list of establishments in transition.
11. 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.

Document SANCO/10042/2007 – Rev.3 a draft Commission Decision amending Decision 2006/415/EC concerning certain protection measures in relation to highly pathogenic avian influenza of the subtype H5N1 in poultry in Hungary and the United Kingdom was distributed during the meeting.

Following the development of the epidemiological situation in Hungary, the extent of the areas and the duration of the measures as established in Decision 2006/415 as last amended, have to be modified. Similar provisions should also be laid down in relation to the outbreak in Suffolk, UK. It is therefore appropriate to amend Decision 2006/415/EC accordingly.

Vote: unanimous in favour.


Commission Decision 2007/31/EC lays down transitional measures as regards the dispatch of certain products of the meat and milk sectors from Bulgaria to other Member States. These products shall only be dispatched from those processing establishments listed in the Annex of Commission Decision 2007/31/EC.

Bulgaria is carrying out an assessment of all processing establishments in the meat and milk sectors. In this context Bulgaria has requested to delete certain establishments of the list of the Annex of Commission Decision 2007/31/EC. Therefore, this Annex should be amended accordingly.

Vote: unanimous in favour.


Regulation (EC) No 998/2003 lays down the animal health requirements applicable to the movement of pet animals including cats and dogs (and ferrets), which are subject to special rules because of the potential rabies risk they present.
With regard to movements from third countries, the Regulation provides for the establishment of a list of third countries with equivalent status to Member States where rabies is concerned. Those countries are listed in Part C of Annex II to the Regulation, while Article 10 of the latter lays down the requirements for inclusion on the list. Malaysia has requested that its country be listed in Part C of Annex II. The risk of rabies entering the Community as a result of movements from Malaysia is no higher than the risk associated with movements between Member States. Therefore, Malaysia should be included in the list set out in Part C of Annex II to Regulation (EC) No 998/2003.

Since Bulgaria and Romania have been Member States since 1 January 2007, in the interest of clarity of Community legislation it is necessary to remove references to those countries from Part C of Annex II to Regulation (EC) No 998/2003 with effect from the date of accession.

Vote: qualified majority in favour by 335 votes, one Member State absent, Poland represented by the Netherlands.

14. Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Decision concerning measures to prevent the spread of highly pathogenic avian influenza to birds kept in zoos and approved bodies, institutes or centres in the Member States and repealing Decision 2006/474/EC. (Doc.SANCO/10654/2006-Rev.1)

Vote: postponed.


Commission Decision 92/452/EEC establishes the lists of embryo collection teams and embryo production teams approved in third countries for export of bovine embryos to the Community and 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.

New Zealand and the United States of America have requested that amendments be made to the entries for those countries on those lists as regards certain embryo collection and production teams. New Zealand and the United States of America have provided guarantees regarding compliance with the appropriate rules and the embryo collection teams concerned have been officially approved for exports to the Community by the veterinary services of those countries. Decision 92/452/EEC should therefore be amended accordingly.

Vote: unanimous in favour, Poland represented by Austria.
16. Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Decision amending Decision 2003/467/EC as regards the declaration that certain provinces or regions of Italy are free of bovine tuberculosis, bovine brucellosis and enzootic bovine leucosis and that a region of Poland is free of enzootic bovine leucosis. (Doc. SANCO/10020/2007 – Rev.1)

Commission Decision 2003/467/EC of 23 June 2003 established the official tuberculosis, brucellosis and enzootic-bovine-leucosis-free status of certain Member States and regions of Member States as regards bovine herds, in accordance with Council Directive 64/432/EEC.

Unlike a few Member States that complied with an officially free status when joining the EU, those previously infected Member States eradicated the diseases in the framework of eradication and monitoring programmes co-financed by the Community in accordance with Council Directive 90/424/EEC. Member States or regions with an officially free status benefit from easier trade conditions for bovine animals and enhance food safety as regards raw-milk products.

The competent authorities of Italy and Poland submitted to the Commission documentation as regards certain provinces and regions of their respective Member State, demonstrating compliance with all the conditions required for an officially free status for bovine tuberculosis, bovine brucellosis and enzootic bovine leucosis.

The purpose of this Decision is to amend the relevant Annexes of Decision 2003/467/EC to take account of the officially free status for the disease and the regions notified to the Commission by Italy and Poland.

Vote: unanimous in favour, Poland represented by Austria.

17. Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Decision concerning a financial contribution from the Community towards a baseline survey on the prevalence of Salmonella in turkeys to be carried out in Bulgaria and in Romania. (Doc. SANCO/04060/2006 – Rev.3)

In order to control salmonella and other specified food-borne zoonotic agents, a Community target shall be established for the reduction of the prevalence of salmonella in populations of turkeys by 12 December 2007. Comparable data on the prevalence of salmonella in populations of turkeys in Bulgaria and in Romania also needs to be available. Such information is not at hand and a special survey should therefore be carried out to monitor the prevalence of Salmonella in turkeys over a suitable period. A baseline survey on Salmonella in turkeys is carried out by the other Member States between October 2006 and September 2007.

This draft Decision establishes the requirements for a technical survey aiming at estimating the prevalence of Salmonella spp. in flocks of turkeys in Bulgaria and in Romania. It also lays down the scope and conditions of the financial assistance from the Community to Bulgaria and to Romania for the implementation of the survey.

Vote: unanimous in favour.
18. Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on draft Commission Decision concerning a financial contribution from the Community towards a baseline survey on the prevalence of *Salmonella* in slaughter pigs to be carried out in Bulgaria and in Romania. (Doc.SANCO/04073/2006 – Rev.3)

In order to control salmonella and other specified food-borne zoonotic agents, a Community target shall be established for the reduction of the prevalence of salmonella in populations of slaughter pigs by 12 December 2007. Comparable data on the prevalence of salmonella in populations of slaughter pigs in Bulgaria and in Romania also needs to be available. Such information is not at hand and a special survey should therefore be carried out to monitor the prevalence of *Salmonella* in slaughter pigs over a suitable period. A baseline survey on Salmonella in slaughter pigs is carried out by the other Member States between October 2006 and September 2007.

This draft Decision establishes the requirements for a technical survey aiming at estimating the prevalence of *Salmonella* spp. in herds of slaughter pigs in Bulgaria and in Romania. It also lays down the scope and conditions of the financial assistance from the Community to Bulgaria and to Romania for the implementation of the survey.

**Vote: unanimous in favour.**

19. Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Decision on a financial contribution from the Community towards emergency measures to combat avian influenza in the United Kingdom in 2006. (Doc.SANCO/3193/2006 - Rev. 2)

This draft Decision has been withdrawn from the agenda.

20. Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Decision on a financial contribution from the Community towards emergency measures to combat avian influenza in Denmark in 2006. (Doc. SANCO/3286/2006 - Rev. 2)

This draft Decision has been withdrawn from the agenda.

21. Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Decision on a financial contribution from the Community towards emergency measures to combat avian influenza in the Netherlands in 2006. (Doc. SANCO/00048/2007 - Rev. 1)

This draft Decision has been withdrawn from the agenda.
22. Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Decision on a financial contribution from the Community towards emergency measures to combat avian influenza in France in 2006. (Doc. SANCO/3197/2006 - Rev. 2)

This draft Decision has been withdrawn from the agenda.

23. Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Decision on a financial contribution from the Community towards emergency measures to combat avian influenza in Germany in 2006. (Doc. SANCO/3272/2006 - Rev. 2)

This draft Decision has been withdrawn from the agenda.

24. Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Decision on a financial contribution from the Community towards emergency measures to combat avian influenza in Hungary in 2006. (Doc. SANCO/00044/2007 - Rev. 1)

This draft Decision has been withdrawn from the agenda.

25. Exchange of views and possible opinion of the committee on a draft Commission Decision amending Decision 2005/760/EC as regards certain protection measures in relation to highly pathogenic avian influenza and imports of birds other than poultry into the Community. (Doc. SANCO/10010/2007 – Rev.1)

Commission Decision 2005/760/EC concerns certain protection measures in relation to highly pathogenic avian influenza in certain third countries for the import of captive birds into the Community and is applicable until 31 March 2007. A draft Regulation laying down stringent measures for such imports has been endorsed by the Member States experts in SCoFCAH. This Regulation will be applicable from 1 July 2007, once it is adopted by the Commission. In the light of the current world animal health situation regarding avian influenza, imports of such birds should not take place without stringent import requirements. With this draft Decision, the Commission proposes therefore to prolong Decision 2005/760/EC until 30 June 2007.

Vote: unanimous in favour.


Commission Decision 2003/804/EC is laying down animal health conditions and certification requirements for imports of molluscs, their eggs and gametes for further growth, fattening, relaying or human consumption. Commission Decision 2003/858/EC is laying down 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 human consumption. These two decisions refer to third countries on a list established by Commission Decision 2006/766/EC as regards the authorisation for importation into the Community of live molluscs and fish products intended for human consumption.

According to Commission Regulation (EC) No 2076/2005, Member States may in a transitional period ending on 31 December 2009, under certain conditions authorise the import of bivalve molluscs and fishery products as regards public health aspects from the countries listed in that Regulation. Imports from these countries may only be marketed on the domestic market of the importing Member State or Member States allowing the same import.

Decisions 2003/804/EC and 2003/858/EC should also permit import from countries listed by Regulation (EC) No 2076/2005 and therefore, should be amended accordingly.

Vote: qualified majority in favour by 335 votes, one Member State absent, Poland represented by the Netherlands.

27. Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Decision amending Annex E to Directive 92/65/EEC to include additional health measures for the trade in live bees, and to update the health certificate models. (Doc. SANCO 10766/2006 – Rev.7)

This proposal concerns part 2 of Annex E to Directive 92/65/EEC, which lays down the model certificate for intra-Community trade in live bees (Apis mellifera). In this health certificate, there are no animal health requirements as regards the small hive beetle (Aethina tumida) or the Tropilaelaps mite (Tropilaelaps spp.), as these infestations have never been recorded in the Community. However protection measures on the importation of live bees from third countries have been laid down in Decision 2003/881/EC. Despite these measures, should these pests be introduced into the Community, it is important that additional precautionary measures are in place to limit the spread of the disease throughout the Community. It is therefore proposed to review the certificate for intra-Community trade of live bees in order to introduce animal health requirements concerning the small hive beetle and the Tropilaelaps mite infestations. According to this draft proposal, in case of an outbreak, the movements of live bees (Apis mellifera) from infected areas will be limited and the restricted area should have a radius of at least 100 km around the infected premises. In addition, the models for the certificates for intra-Community trade should be compatible with the electronic Trade Control and Expert System (TRACES).
Therefore, all the certificates in Annex E to Directive 92/65/EEC should be amended in order to facilitate the operation of TRACES.

This document has been discussed during the previous meeting of this Committee on 11 December 2006. Member States then agreed with this proposal and commented on some technical parts of the certificate. This new version of the proposal includes the modifications proposed by the Member States.

Following the discussion of the proposal by the Member States, the Commission agreed to consult EU bee experts to verify the validity of the requirements proposed and to inform the Committee should these requirements need to be modified in view of further technical evidence.

**Vote: unanimous in favour, Poland represented by Austria.**


Postponed.

29. Exchange of views on a draft Commission Decision on the implementation of survey programmes for avian influenza in poultry and wild birds to be carried out in the Member States in 2008 and amending Decision 2004/450/EEC as regards requirements for the content of application for the Community financial contribution to the implementation costs of those programmes. (Doc.SANCO/10007/2007)

This draft proposal relates to the application of survey programmes for avian influenza in poultry and wild birds to be carried out in the Member States in 2008. All Member States wishing to apply for financial assistance concerning their programmes, they should send their application latest by the 30th of April 2007. Any comments by the Member States should be sent to the Commission by email in order to be included at the proposal which will be presented for an opinion before the end of February.

30. Exchange of views 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). (Doc. SANCO/10022/2007)

The Commission asked the Member States to send any comments on the document by email. An updated version will be presented on the next meeting of this Committee for an opinion.
Miscellaneous

- During the meeting Document SANCO/10044/2007 was distributed: "Report from Botswana lifting the Foot-and-mouth disease restrictions". The Member States were requested to send their comments by email to the Commission services.