President: Alberto Laddomada.

All the Member States were present except Malta and Cyprus, Latvia represented by Lithuania.

1. Foot-and-mouth disease situation in the United Kingdom.

The UK representative made a presentation on the issue briefly informing Member States about the history of the outbreaks. To date, there have been a total of eight infected holdings. All are in the county of Surrey. All animals at the infected holdings were killed. There have been two phases to the outbreak. First, two cases to the south of the Pirbright site, detected on 3 and 6 August. Second cluster includes six cases to the north of the Pirbright site. The virus identified has been typed as O1 BFS, most likely originating from the Pirbright site. Strict national restrictions on the movement of susceptible animals were applied immediately as soon as the disease was confirmed. Protection (PZ) and surveillance zone (SZ) controls and surveillance have been applied. All movements of live animals from the infected holdings, PZ and SZ have been traced and no evidence of infection has been detected. Nationwide monitoring has not shown any further cases. The Protection Zone around the infected premises in the Surrey area has been lifted on 17 October 2007 following the completion of surveillance work and will now become part of the wider Surveillance Zone. The meeting was shown a map of the southern region of Great Britain indicating that there is a restricted zone in place consisting of 8 counties surrounding the surveillance zone in Surrey. Further activities include farm and market welfare inspections, abattoir ante and post mortem inspection, requirement in certain licences for veterinary inspection of livestock. Around 2 million animals have been inspected within the last 6 weeks. More than 12000 blood samples collected from susceptible species have been tested with negative results. According to the UK representative, the Surrey area is now considered to be on low risk level. It is highly unlikely that contaminated meat or other products are in circulation.
2. Information from Member States on the bluetongue situation.

**The Belgium** representative made a presentation on the issue. There are a total of 4,920 outbreaks confirmed till 17 October 2007 which include 2,323 outbreaks in sheep, 2,587 outbreaks in cattle and 10 outbreaks in goats. Outbreaks are located mainly in the western part of country. The number of outbreaks is much higher than in 2006.

**The Netherlands** representative made a presentation on the issue. On the 26th of July 2007 the first case of bluetongue was confirmed. At this moment there are over a 5,754 infected holdings – 2,682 cattle holdings, 3,047 sheep holdings and 25 goat holdings. Compared to the same period in 2006 there are a 10 times more vectors in the traps, more infected holdings and more infected animals, more severe clinical symptoms and more dead animals (sheep).

**The German** representative made a presentation on the issue. On the 18 October 2007 there are a total of 15.105 cases.

**The French** representative made a presentation on the issue. There are 5,916 cases so far. About 80% of them are cattle holdings. Outbreaks are located mainly in the northern part of country.

**The UK** representative made a presentation on the issue. As of 17 October 2007 there are 45 confirmed cases. 9 cases are still under investigation.

**The Denmark** representative made a presentation on the issue. The first outbreak began on 13 October 2007 in a sheep herd in Sakskebing on the island of Lolland. Bluetongue virus serotype 8 was confirmed by laboratory. Up to now there are 1500 cases, but only one sheep with clinical signs.

**The Portugal** representative made a presentation on the issue. First outbreak of bluetongue virus serotype 1 confirmed through RT-PCR on 21 September 2007 in the restricted zone for Bluetongue serotype 4, in the council of Barrancos, in the Region of Alentejo, following a clinical suspicion. Up to 18 October there are 44 outbreaks. All of them are located at the borders with Spain in the southern part of the country. Measures implemented include movement restriction, vector protection and RT-PCR testing.

**The Spanish** representative made a presentation on the issue. Up to now there are 2,943 affected farms in the regions of Andalusia, Extremadura and Castilla La Mancha.

**The Italian** representative briefly informed Member States about the situation in Italy. There are no cases of bluetongue serotype 1 mainly because of vaccination.

3. 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.

No item raised.

Following recent outbreaks of foot-and-mouth disease in Great Britain, Commission Decision 2007/554/EC of 9 August 2007 concerning certain protection measures against foot-and-mouth disease in the United Kingdom was adopted to reinforce the control measures against foot-and-mouth disease taken by that Member State. Decision 2007/554/EC lays down rules applicable to the dispatch from high and low risk areas in Great Britain of products considered safe that either were produced before the restrictions were put in place in the United Kingdom, from raw material sourced from outside those restricted areas, or that have undergone a treatment proven effective in inactivating possible foot-and-mouth disease virus.

In order to allow dispatch of fresh meat of the bovine, porcine, ovine and caprine species under specific conditions that ensures that the animals for slaughter are sourced from areas sufficiently distant to the outbreaks, a specific Annex III was introduced listing such areas. It is now appropriate to add additional areas to that Annex in order to further reduce the zone subject to restrictions as regards dispatch of meat.

In parallel to the dispatch of meat, it should also be allowed to dispatch frozen semen, ova and embryos of the bovine, porcine, ovine and caprine species from areas where there was no foot-and-mouth disease outbreak for at least 90 days, after the mandatory 30 days storage period during which the health status of the donors can be ascertained. Given the epidemiological situation in and regionalisation of the United Kingdom, and taking into account the conditions for the recovery of a foot-and-mouth disease free status, it is necessary to extend the application of Decision 2007/554/EC until 15 December 2007. Decision 2007/554/EC should therefore be amended accordingly.

Vote: in favour, 7 votes absent, Latvia represented by Lithuania.


Commission Decision 2007/25/EC lays down certain protection measures in relation to highly pathogenic avian influenza and movements of pet birds accompanying their owners into the Community. Avian influenza outbreaks caused by the highly pathogenic avian influenza strain H5N1 are still detected on a regular basis in certain member countries of the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE). The disease is therefore not yet contained globally. In order to prevent the spread of the avian influenza virus into the Community via pet birds it is therefore appropriate to extend the measures established by Decision 2007/25/EC until 31 December 2008.

Miscellaneous / Divers

The Slovenian representative informed Member States about a new outbreak of swine fever in Croatia just 5.5 km from the Slovenian border. This case was notified to the Commission.