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

The Cypriot representative updated the Members of the Committee on the evolution of the situation. No virus has been isolated so far, however, antibodies were detected. All animals carrying antibodies were culled for precautionary reasons. The Cypriot authorities worked in close cooperation with the European Commission and the Community Reference Laboratory and all actions taken have been based on the EU legislation and have been done in consultation with the Commission. Surveillance and protection measures have been taken only at the area which falls under the control of the government of the Republic of Cyprus.

The British representative briefly updated the Members of the Committee on the evolution of the situation. 51 days have passed since the last case was confirmed. Intensive surveillance has taken place and all surveillance activities within a radius of 150km from Pirbright have now been completed without further detection of the disease.

2. Avian Influenza situation in the United Kingdom.

The British representative made a presentation on the issue. On 11 November a suspicion of avian influenza was raised on a free-range turkey farm in Suffolk. Upon receipt of positive results for H5 the next day, protection, surveillance and a wider restricted zone were immediately established. On 13 November, the outbreak was confirmed. Contacts between the infected farm and other holdings within the protection and restricted zone have been identified and all poultry on these farms were culled. A second outbreak was confirmed on 19 November in one of the contact farms and existing zones were adjusted accordingly. The genetic analysis of virus isolated on the infected farm showed close similarities to the viruses isolated in the Czech Republic and Germany but was distinct from the virus isolated from the outbreak in the UK in February. The epidemiological
investigations indicate that the disease was spread by movements of personnel. Ornithological assessments and wild birds' surveillance are still underway.

Member States exchanged views and shared their experience as to what the first clinical symptoms are in infected turkeys and that farmers should be well aware of them and be on alert.

The Commission representative stressed out the importance of keeping high biosecurity standards at farms, especially in mixed ones which are considered as high risk ones.

3. Information by the Commission on the BT-net.

The representative of the Collaborating Centre for Veterinary Training Epidemiology, Food Safety and Animal Welfare (IZS Teramo) made a presentation on the BlueTongue NETwork application (EU-BTNET system). Commission Regulation (EC) No 1266/2007, on control, monitoring, surveillance and restrictions on movements of certain animals of susceptible species in relation to bluetongue, foresees the use of the already EU-BTNET system, when that Regulation will enter into force. The EU-BTNET system is a web-based system to collect, store, and analyse bluetongue surveillance data in the Member States as well as in certain third countries and it is an important tool for exchanging information on the disease, being a tool to facilitate safe movements of animals of susceptible species. The data to be inserted in the system will then be published in a form of monthly, six monthly and yearly reports.

4. 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.


Commission Decision 2006/415/EC concerning certain protection measures in relation to highly pathogenic avian influenza of the subtype H5N1 in poultry in the Community and repealing Decision 2006/135/EC lays down certain protection measures to be applied in order to prevent the spread of that disease, including the establishment of areas A and B following a suspected or confirmed outbreak of the disease.

In relation to the outbreak in the United Kingdom the Commission has adopted on 13 November 2007 Decision 2007/731/EC in order to amend the Annex to Decision 2006/415/EC accordingly.

These measures have now been reviewed by the Committee. The Commission proposed to amend Decision 2006/415/EC to take into account that a further outbreak has occurred
in the restricted area and that the delineation of the area under restriction and the duration of the measures should therefore be modified.

**Vote:** qualified majority in favour, 3 votes absent.


Commission Decision 2007/554/EC concerning certain protection measures against foot-and-mouth disease was adopted in order to reinforce the control measures applied by the United Kingdom following recent outbreaks of that disease in the country. That Decision is applicable until 15 December 2007. Since the adoption of an amending Decision, 2007/746/EC of 19 November 2007, the high risk areas defined in Annex I are greatly reduced and the larger part of Great Britain is considered a low risk.

On the basis of the evolution of the animal health situation in the United Kingdom, and in particular the results of the ongoing surveillance, it is now possible to further enlarge the area.

In order to allow the 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 laying down these specific conditions.

**Vote:** qualified majority in favour, 3 votes absent.

7. **Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Regulation concerning protection measures against equine influenza in certain third countries. (Doc. SANCO/10404/2007 – Rev.5)**

The Commission representative explained the changes introduced into the document in comparison to the previous version. Certain Member States requested more time to reflect on this issue in order to be able to give their opinion.

**Vote:** postponed.

8. **Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Decision concerning a financial contribution from the Community towards a survey on the prevalence of methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* in herds of breeding pigs to be carried out in the Member States (Legal basis: Council Decision 90/424/EEC). (SANCO/3100/2007 – Rev.2)**

Member States already agreed to carry out in 2008 a baseline survey for the prevalence of Salmonella in herds of breeding pigs in accordance with Decision 2007/636/EC. A potential new risk, in particular methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA), was detected recently in a limited number of Member States.
In order to increase awareness and to assess whether it is necessary to take measures to detect and control MRSA in order to reduce their prevalence and the risk they pose to public health, comparable data on the percentage of MRSA (ST398) infected holdings of breeding pigs in all Member States are needed.

The proposed Decision lays down rules on the financial contribution from the Community towards baseline surveys to be carried out in the Member States to assess the prevalence of Salmonella spp. ("the Salmonella survey") and MRSA ("the MRSA survey") across the Community in breeding pigs sampled at farm level. Given the importance of collecting comparable data on the prevalence of MRSA in breeding pigs in the Member States, the Member States should be granted a Community financial contribution for implementing the specific requirements of the survey.

This Decision should apply from 1 January 2008.

This draft proposal has already been discussed at the public health committee and in technical level. In case any of the Member States cannot do the testing due to the lack of a competent laboratory, a list of approved laboratories will be made available. When the study has finished, a report should be issued by the Member States.

Greece and Cyprus informed the Members of the Committee that due to some administrative problems the samples to be collected by their services will be sent to Italy for testing.

Certain Member States expressed the opinion that monitoring of MRSA can be added to Decision 2003/99 thus giving the flexibility to each Member State to develop their own programme according to its epidemiological situation. For that reason, they voted against this proposal.

Another Member State abstained because according to that Member State: a) the date of application for the MRSA surveillance programme should not be set as soon as the 1st of January 2008 for administrative reasons and b) this issue should be discussed with medical, pharmaceutical experts and the laboratories that will carry out the testing.

Some Member States asked the Commission to look into the possibility of increasing its financial contribution since the final costs for the carry out of the requested testing might be higher than the estimated costs.

The Commission stressed out the importance of those two studies for the public health. The results of the studies will be made available to the human medical sector in order to take the necessary measures if necessary. As far as concerning the costs and the request of the Member States to increase the financing, this would not be necessary as currently in Europe there are approved laboratories that can carry out the testing for the price of 25 Euro for which there is a 100% co-financing. The Commission also explained that the date of application of this proposal was set for the 1st of January 2008 since the surveillance for Salmonella will start on that date. Therefore, to facilitate the Member States by taking samples for both pathogens during the same visit of herds, the MRSA surveillance could be done simultaneously.

**Vote: qualified majority in favour, 3 votes absent, 39 votes against, 27 votes abstained.**

According to Council Directive 96/23/EC on measures to monitor certain substances and residues thereof in live animals and animal products, third countries have to provide to the Commission their residue monitoring plan for the current year and results from the previous year. The Commission must approve the submitted residues monitoring plans and draws up a list of third countries complying with the provisions of the Directive and therefore authorised to export to the Community.

A list of these third countries was adopted by Commission Decision 2004/432/EC and last amended by Commission Decision 2007/362/EC.

Since the last amendment of Decision 2004/432/EC, certain third countries have sent additional monitoring plans for certain animals or animal products. Following a positive evaluation of those plans by the Commission, the animals or animal products concerned should be added to the list. Furthermore, some other third countries which are currently listed for certain animals or animal products, did not submit to the Commission the requested residue monitoring plans and should therefore be deleted from the list. Some other countries although they have submitted the requested residue monitoring plans for certain animals or animal products, they should be deleted from the list since a Food and Veterinary Office inspection has revealed serious deficiencies concerning the implementation of their plans for the relevant animals or animal products.

Vote: qualified majority in favour, 3 votes absent.


Regulation (EC) No 318/2007 lays down the animal health requirements relating to the import of birds other than poultry (captive birds) and the quarantine provisions applicable to such imports after importation. In the Annex to this Regulation a list of quarantine facilities and centers as approved by the competent authorities of the Member States is laid down.

Spain has reviewed its approved quarantine facilities and centres and has sent an updated list of those quarantine facilities and centres to the Commission. The list of approved quarantine facilities and centres as laid down in Regulation (EC) No 318/2007 should therefore be amended.

Member States were asked to send any amended lists they might have before the next meeting of this Committee.
Miscellaneous

- **The Finnish** representative made a presentation on a rabies case in an imported puppy from India.

- **The Norwegian** representative informed the Members of the Committee on a suspicion of rabies in a fox. The fox was found ill and died later on. The results of the tests will be known on the first week of December.

- **The Slovak** representative made an oral presentation on a new case of classical swine fever. A young wild boar was shot in the already infected area on 8 November. Samples were sent to the National Reference Laboratory on 12 November and on 15 November, the case was confirmed.

- **The Swedish** representative provided brief information on a new Newcastle disease case in racing pigeons. Information on this issue has been sent to the Member States.

- The Commission asked the Member States that have not yet sent their new contingency plans for approval, to send them as soon as possible.

- The Commission has distributed during the meeting the "Equine influenza situation report No.82", sent by the Australian Government, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.