SUMMARY RECORD OF THE
STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE FOOD CHAIN AND ANIMAL HEALTH
HELD IN BRUSSELS ON 2 & 3 SEPTEMBER 2008
(Section Animal Health and Welfare)
(Section Controls and Import Conditions)

President: Alberto Laddomada.

On 2 September: all the Member States were present.
On 3 September: Lithuania was partly absent but represented.

Representatives of the Community Reference Laboratory VLA Weybridge were present during the discussion of items 3A and 3B.

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

The Commission provided the Member States with the latest information as regards the Russian import requirements. Details were given on the conditions of implementation of the memorandum of 2 September 2004 concerning veterinary certification of EU exports to Russia, in particular on listing of EU establishments.

2. Bluetongue: information from the Member States on the epidemiological situation and on vaccination.

The Belgian representative made a brief presentation on the issue. In 2008, there were only 3 outbreaks until end of August. There is an ongoing vaccine programme and in total 1,901,449 vaccine doses have been distributed in cattle, deer, goat and sheep population. Vaccination will continue in September and October.

The Czech representative made a presentation on the issue. In total in 2008, 3 outbreaks occurred until end of August. Serological and entomological surveillance are ongoing. Emergency vaccination is implemented on the whole territory of the Czech Republic since 20 August and will finish at the beginning of 2009. Vaccination covers all bovine, sheep and goats older than 3 months and it is compulsory. The restricted zone will be re-demarcated accordingly.

The Danish representative made a presentation on the current situation in Denmark. One outbreak notified in 2008. The vector free period ended on 8 April and since end of April, beginning of May, there is a high number of vectors trapped. Vaccination
started on 23 July. Vaccination of cattle, sheep and goats started in July and will finish at the end of September.

The German representative informed that there are fewer cases in 2008 in comparison to 2007. Some cases notified during the first trimester of 2008 linked to old infections. Until the end of May, 27 new infections occurred and a further 524 between June and August. The outbreaks located in the lower Saxony area, Bavaria. Compulsory vaccination is ongoing for beef and currently about 70 percent of the animals are covered. No significant adverse reactions to the vaccine.

The Spanish representative made a presentation on the issue. In 2008, until end of August, a total number of 333 outbreaks of serotype 1 occurred mainly located in Asturias and Cantabria. Vaccination against bluetongue of serotypes 1, 8 and 4 in the restriction areas is ongoing aiming to cover more than 9 million of bovine and about 24 million of ovine. Although there are no outbreaks in Catalonia, preventive vaccination currently applies. The reason for this decision is to protect animals in farms in Spain when animals from neighbouring Member States are introduced.

The French representative made a presentation on the issue. There are currently three zones established related to bluetongue. The bigger one is for BTV8, covering most of the country, the one for BTV1 near Spain and the smaller one covers BTV1, 2, 4 and 16 in Corsica. In 2008, 8,804 holdings were infected with BTV8 and 206 with BTV1, mainly sheep holdings. Due to the spread of the disease in southern France, the BTV1 and 8 zones were extended. Although BTV8 occurs in the centre of France, it is spreading in the south were BTV1 exists. 26 million of vaccine doses were made available for the vaccination of cattle against BTV8 and 10 million for the vaccination of small ruminants. The intention is to cover the whole territory of France however it is not compulsory except for animals intended for intra-community trade. Vaccination against BTV1 is compulsory in the restricted zone and for this purpose, 3.5 million of vaccine doses where made available for the vaccination of cattle and 4 million for small ruminants. The French authorities intend to further extend the restricted area for BTV1 in order to prevent the spread of the disease by applying vaccination in that area. For the moment there is limited availability of the vaccine against both serotypes 1 and 8 and the authorities are looking into the possibility to get the vaccine via laboratories in other Member States.

The Italian representative informed that there is no virus circulation and the epidemiological situation is stable. Vaccination against BTV8 is ongoing and will finish by the end of the year.

The Luxembourg's representative informed about 7 new outbreaks notified in August in herds were vaccination was not completed, in non-vaccinated animals. Vaccination is compulsory in Luxembourg with the exception of the animals younger than 3 months old. Until 1 September 2009, 60% of bovine and 80% of ovine are vaccinated. Vaccination will finish by December.

The Dutch representative made a presentation on the issue. The first positive case in 2008 occurred on 1st of August and until the end of September, there are 23 sheep and cattle infected holdings. The holdings are located in the south, center and north of the country. Vaccination started on 10 May aiming to cover 80% of the population susceptible to bluetongue. All vaccines distributed have been used. Animals intended for intra-community trade are vaccinated.
The Austrian representative informed that there is no positive case however there were two suspicions with negative results. Despite that Austria is free from the disease and there are no protection zones, surveillance is ongoing. Preventive vaccination in cattle and sheep is compulsory and until 31 October, 5 million of vaccine doses will be distributed.

The Polish representative informed that in 2008, until 26 August, 26 animals were found positive to PCR test. Vaccination is not applied however monitoring and surveillance are ongoing. A restricted zone in the area bordering Germany and the Czech Republic is established.

The Portuguese representative made a presentation on the issue. There is no evidence of BTV4 circulation however there were 13 BTV1 outbreaks in 6 ovine and 7 bovine holdings. The vaccination campaign against BTV4 is ongoing since 10 January 2008 covering 87% of the holdings and against BTV1 since 15 November 2007 covering 78% of the holdings.

The British representative presented a map showing the protection zone in relation to BTV8 in the UK and Wales. In 2008, except from 140 cases linked to virus circulation in 2007, no new cases detected. Sheep and cattle recently moved from BTV8 restricted zones of other Member States into the BTV8 restricted zone in the UK were found positive after testing them in the UK. All animals are alive although under restriction and the consignments are further investigated. The protection zone was then extended covering part of Wales and therefore, vaccination applied in that area as well. The vaccination campaign against BTV8 is organised by the farmers on a voluntary basis and 70% of the holdings applied it. The British authorities are testing all ruminants introduced from continental Europe into the UK, because they mainly concern of possible introduction of BTV1, in which case measures should be taken.

The German representative asked the Commission to further assess the systematic controls carried out by the British authorities, since this could be an infringement of Community veterinary law.


Document SANCO/10285/2008 – Rev.2: "Annual report 2007 – Details of the occurrence of diseases listed in Annex E (I) to Directive 64/432/EEC and of any other disease 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)". Two Member States have sent information to the Commission concerning infectious bovine rhinotracheitis and bovine tuberculosis which however is not yet included in the report.
Document SANCO/10288/2008 – Rev.1: "The results of screening for *Brucella melitensis* carried out during 2007 in the Member States or regions thereof officially-free of brucellosis (*B. melitensis*). All Member States provided necessary information and this report has been finalised.

Document SANCO/10574/2004 – Rev.8: "List of Member States (or regions) officially free of bovine tuberculosis, bovine brucellosis, enzootic bovine leukosis, IBR, *Brucella melitensis* and Aujeszky's disease or where approved Aujeszky's disease and IBR control programmes are in place". The document lists all the basic Commission decisions in which all Member States or regions thereof officially free from various diseases are mentioned.

During the meeting, certain maps were distributed showing the officially free and not officially free Member States or regions thereof with relation to the enzootic bovine leukosis, infectious bovine rhinotracheitis, Aujeszky's disease, *Brucella melitensis*, bovine brucellosis and bovine tuberculosis. Those were last updated on 6 August 2008. Member States were asked to send their comments on the maps by e-mail.

3A. Information from Member States on vaccine availability for avian influenza.

The Portuguese emergency vaccination plan against low pathogenic avian influenza has been finalised by 31 July 2008. The Portuguese authorities wish to continue vaccination, which could be approved under a preventive vaccination plan. A further amount of about 15,000 vaccine doses is needed, but the vaccine producer cannot supply these. For this reason the Portuguese authorities have asked the Commission to find out, if vaccine could be provided by other Member States.

The delegate of the United Kingdom stated that his authorities will provide the details of a vaccine producer who might be able to supply the Portuguese authorities with the necessary amount of vaccine doses. The French delegate informed that a certain amount of vaccine doses are still in stock in France. They have already expired but laboratory tests have demonstrated that the vaccine is still efficacious. France has recently promised to provide the vaccine to a third country, but will look into the possibility to provide some of it to the Portuguese authorities.

3B. Information by the Community Reference Laboratory on the surveillance for avian influenza in poultry and wild birds in the EU.

Document SANCO/2181/2008 was discussed during the meeting: "Annual Report on surveillance for avian influenza in wild birds in the EU during 2007". Wild bird surveillance and the reporting of the results have become compulsory since 2005 in the EU. The surveillance main objectives are: the early detection of H5N1 HPAIV in wild birds, the investigation of possible carrier or bridge species following an incident of H5N1 HPAIV and to continue a baseline monitoring of circulation of LPAIV H5 and H7 strains in wild birds.

The representatives of the Community Reference Laboratory VLA Weybridge, UK, presented the report. All Member States have reported results and a total of 79,392 wild birds were tested during 2007. H5N1 HPAIV incidents in 2007 were reported from only four Member States and were limited in time and locations. In total 329
cases were reported and from them, only 3 occurred in December, the rest occurred between June and September. Most incidents were detected through the finding of a dead swan spp. LPAIV of H5 was detected in 105 birds in ten Member States and LPAI H7 in seven birds in six Member States. The large majority of LPAI H5/H7 infections in 2007 were identified through active surveillance of HRS, especially dabbling ducks and swans.

The detection of incidents in wild birds without outbreaks in poultry illustrated the value and role of wild bird surveillance as a potential early warning system for the presence of H5N1 HPAI virus in a country.

The Commission representative asked the Member States to comment on the current surveillance for low pathogenic avian influenza in domestic poultry which is set according to the OIE rules. Member States should question the current system if this fits with the OIE rules on trade. Furthermore, they should reflect if what is done in each Member State will provide the necessary guarantees for third countries in relation to exports from the EU. A feedback from the Member States to the Commission would be appreciated on how the avian influenza surveillance scheme is perceived and accepted by the third countries to which Member States export. If any Member State has the opinion that more surveillance is needed in the frame of international trade the current approach could be changed. When the Commission will have received the requested information from the Member States, the issue will be further discussed.

3C. Exchange of views on the situation of the peste des petits ruminants (PPR) in Morocco.

The Commission informed the Member States on the outcome of the meeting organised by FAO for all Maghreb countries in Tunis and of the mission organised in Morocco during August 2008 by FAO's Crisis Management Centre. Following a number of outbreaks in Morocco, the authorities have created a vaccination plan to be applied in two phases. A vaccine is currently available. However, financial assistance is needed in order to allow the Moroccan authorities to cover the costs for the necessary amount of vaccine doses. Both the Commission and the FAO are looking into the possibility to provide financial assistance to Morocco in this regard. The Commission representative made a clear recommendation to the Member States to take the necessary precautionary measures against possible illegal introduction of small ruminants from Morocco into the EU.

Spain informed the Commission during the meeting that such measures are already in place in Spain and the relevant border inspection posts are taking the necessary steps.

3D. Update from Slovakia on the classical swine fever (CSF) situation.

The Slovak representative provided further information on the outbreak confirmed on 14 July 2008 and on which Slovakia reported already at the previous meeting of this Committee held on 23 July 2008. On 31 July final cleaning and disinfection of the backyard holding were completed. On 21 August all measures in contact farms outside of the protection zone were lifted. Serological monitoring and clinical
examinations of holdings in the protection zone have been completed and the measures in that zone are expected to be lifted after confirmation of negative results.

3E. **Declaration from UK of approved zone for VHS in accordance with Article 50 of Council Directive 2006/88/EC.**

In May 2006 the UK suspended its approved status for VHS for the whole of Great Britain (GB) following the identification of VHS at a single trout farm in North Yorkshire. All the necessary measures were taken and further investigations showed that the disease was restricted to the one affected farm. Since October 2006, a surveillance programme, approved by the Commission 2007/570/EC, started aiming to demonstrate freedom from VHS in order to re-establish the approved status for VHS across the whole of GB. No evidence for VHS was found and supporting evidence has been made available through electronic means to the Commission and the Member States.

In accordance with Article 50 of Council Directive 2006/88/EC the UK declared that the programme for the re-establishment of approved zone status for VHS as approved in Commission Decision 2007/570/EC has been successfully completed. A single approved zone for VHS now exists across the whole of GB.

Member States were reminded that they could commend on the British Declaration within 60 days. Then a Decision on this issue will be presented for an opinion in a future Committee.

3F. **Exchange of views on the implementation of Regulation (EC) No 1266/2007 on bluetongue.**

The Commission representative explained that according to Regulation (EC) No 1266/2007, animals could be moved freely within the same restricted zone from one Member State to another when both countries have restricted zones with relation to one bluetongue serotype only, and this serotype is the same in both countries. When a Member State has a restricted zone with relation to one serotype, and the country of destination has restricted zones with relation to two serotypes, one being the same as the exporting country, then this could be done freely. In the opposite case however, when animals are to be moved from a Member State where there are restricted zones for two different serotypes and the country of destination has only in relation with the one of the two serotypes, then the animals should fulfil the conditions of annex I of the Regulation for this particular serotype.

The issue of the implementation of that Regulation will be discussed during the Chief Veterinary Officers meeting in September.
4. **Information to the Member States on proposed reimbursements to be made in the framework of the 2007 eradication and monitoring programmes.**

During the meeting Member States have received information on proposed payments towards the 2007 avian influenza survey programme and the 2007 TSE eradication and monitoring programmes.

Furthermore, they were informed of a request to be sent to the Chief Veterinary Officers from the Commission, for providing information on the actual and likely use of Community funds in 2008 for programmes of disease eradication, monitoring and control. This will enable the Commission to reallocate funds ensuring additional funding for those that need it. The requested information should be communicated to the Commission before 23 September 2008.

4A. **Information from the Commission on reports received from the Member States in accordance with article 6(3) of Council Directive 98/58/EC and Commission Decision 2000/50/EC on minimum requirements for the inspection on holdings on which animals are kept for farming purposes carried out in 2006 and 2007.**

According to Commission Decision 2000/50/EC concerning minimum requirements for the inspection on holdings on which animals are kept for farming purposes, the Member States should present to the Commission by the end of April 2008 a report including the results for farming purposes. With regard to Bulgaria and Romania, the report should only include the results of the inspections carried out in 2007.

By the end of August 2008, the Commission has received reports from 15 Member States. Of these reports, two are covering only 2006, two only 2007 and one of the reports has accumulated data for 2006 and 2007. The Commission reminded all the concerned Member States to present a report that complies with the information specified in the Annex to Commission Decision 2000/50/EC as soon as possible. The Commission will send out a written reminder to all the concerned Member States in the end of this month.

Furthermore, the Commission reminded the Member States that from 1 January 2008, the Decision 2000/50/EC is replaced by the Commission Decision 2006/778/EC concerning minimum requirements for the collection of information during the inspections of production sites on which certain animals are kept for farming purposes. According to the new Decision, the Member States shall submit to the Commission a report concerning the information collected and recorded during inspections carried out in 2008 by the end of June 2009 at the latest.

Regarding the Annexes to Commission Decision 2006/778/EC, the Commission has received some comments from a Member State, referring to possible mistakes in the tables and asking for some clarifications. In order to ensure a harmonised implementation and get more information on possible problems regarding the implementation of the Decision, the Commission invited the Member States to provide their views after the first period of implementation. Furthermore, the Commission will set up an expert working group meeting on this issue when sufficient experience and knowledge is available.
4B. EU-Africa Strategy & first action plan 2008-2010.

A number of discussions have taken place at the Council adhoc group and the Commission inter-services levels agree coordination and ways of delivering. A joint EU-African Union taskforce took place in April, and an EU Implementation Team "Trade and Regional Integration" met on 24 July for an initial exchange of views on the state of play, priorities and working methods. The latter was attended by Belgium, France, Portugal, Italy and the Czech Republic.

A College-to-College meeting between the EC and African Union Commissioners will take place on 1 October to agree on early deliverables, including on the SPS aspects. This will be followed by a Commission Communication on implementation progress in early October, setting out the lessons learnt, the challenges and early deliverables. Among the early deliverables being considered by SANCO are the training, capacity building (harmonisation, regional integration), and information sharing (engaging African stakeholders) on EC's regulatory process.

Member States are encouraged to actively participate and contribute towards the work of the Implementation Team (the next meeting foreseen in early October, to be confirmed).


Training will be DG SANCO's key deliverable, worth €10million. Six capacity building activities on food safety in Africa are foreseen.

Four of the six activities will be implemented by the OIE as follows:

1. Evaluating the performance of veterinary services (15 countries), with follow-up gap analysis of needs and priorities (40 countries) and accompaniment measures (40 countries)

2. Improving the national/regional legal framework in relation to animal health/food safety (15 countries)

3. Strengthening capacity of laboratory technicians via twinning (10 laboratories)

4. Strengthening the capacity of all Chief Veterinary Officers and National Focal Points on international sanitary standards (all countries).

Two more activities will be implemented by a different contractor (being selected via a public contract notice) as follows:

5. "Training the trainers": 12 five-day regional workshops covering the 5 EPA Regions (including South Africa) and northern Africa

6. Strengthening the capacity of Small Medium Enterprises (SMEs) via targeted missions and ad hoc assistance. About 12 experts will be sent in about 26 countries in needs in the 6 Regions for a total of about 1,560 days to work
with the beneficiaries to address the deficiencies identified by the Food and Veterinary Office.

In addition, two one-day conferences are foreseen: an opening conference (Addis Ababa) to launch the programme in early 2009 and a closing conference (Brussels) to discuss the outcome and perspectives at the end of 2010.

4D. Exchange of views on measures which may be required to prevent the spread of bovine tuberculosis from areas with a high prevalence of the disease via intra-community trade in live cattle: outcome of the working group of 2 September.

During the meeting on 3 September, document SANCO/2872/2008 was distributed: "Report on the working group meeting on bovine tuberculosis" held on 2 September 2008. The working group of experts on bovine tuberculosis was organised by DG SANCO following the discussions during the extraordinary meeting of this Committee of 23 July 2008, on the findings of bovine tuberculosis (TB) in young calves introduced from the United Kingdom into the Netherlands via intra-Community trade. All Member States and some private experts were invited.

The purpose of the meeting was to explore with the Member States measures to prevent the spread of bovine tuberculosis from areas with high prevalence of the disease via intra-Community trade in live cattle, and in particular calves under 42 days of age that are statutory not subject to pre-movement testing. The Netherlands presented the situation and the measures taken due to the detection of TB positive calves below 6 weeks of age introduced via intra-Community trade to the officially TB free bovine herds at their territory. The United Kingdom updated the participants on the current situation as regards bovine tuberculosis on the territory of their country and on measures taken in relation to the breakdown in an officially tuberculosis-free herd of origin of the calves, found later TB positive in the Netherlands. The UK emphasised that this isolated incident was due to a case of bovine tuberculosis mastitis. The Commission gave a brief overview of the Community legislation on bovine tuberculosis noting that calves under 42 days of age are exempted for the requirement of the pre-movement testing and that in this case, current EU provision rely only on the status of the herd. In addition, the Commission presented for a discussion possible alternative provisions which could be implemented, either one at the time or in combination in order to prevent the spread of TB from areas with high prevalence of the disease via intra-Community trade in calves under 42 days of age.

There was a general consensus of the working group on the need to ensure that the officially bovine tuberculosis-free status is properly granted to the herds as this is the basic requirement in order to ensure safe trade, that the pre-movement testing is not suitable for animals younger that 42 days of age due to the lack of sensitivity of the test when used on these animals and that there is a need to have proportionate and effective measures in order to address the risk posed by these animals that cannot be tested before movement. Bovine animals for breeding and production less than 42 days old shall only be dispatched to other Member States if they come from an officially tuberculosis-free bovine herd and under certain conditions which are specified on the report.
Member States expressed the wish to further discuss this issue. The Commission will further study which measures may be required to prevent the spread of bovine tuberculosis from areas with a high prevalence of the disease via intra-community trade in live cattle, based on the report of that working group meeting.

5. 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.


Revision 1 of this draft was distributed and discussed during the meeting of this Committee held on 30 June and 1 July 2008 (see item 29). Then, the Commission asked the Member States to send their comments in order to take them into account when preparing an updated version of the draft with the intention to present it in a future meeting for an opinion. This new version of the draft includes the comments received by one Member State only. Furthermore, two working groups on bluetongue surveillance were organised by the Commission in order to discuss technical issues. The Commission tries to limit the obligatory requirements for monitoring and surveillance within and outside the restricted zones. This could be possible by sentinel surveillance. Furthermore, vector surveillance after the vector free period is only necessary in order to get as much data on how the vector population evolves during the whole year.

Some Member States did not agree with this approach as they believe surveillance of sentinels in the restricted or protection zones is difficult. Moreover, they would prefer to have research projects instead of vector surveillance when the vector free period is over and to be done on a voluntary basis and not being obligatory as in the draft. Flexibility concerning surveillance should be considered due to the different climate conditions in the Member States. Other Member States supported the proposal as it was amended and presented by the Commission.

The Commission will further amend the draft and present it in a future meeting of this Committee for an opinion.

Vote: postponed.
7. Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a Draft Commission Decision amending Decision 2008/XXXX/EC approving the emergency vaccination plans against bluetongue of certain Member States and fixing the level of the Community's financial contribution for 2007 and 2008. (Doc. SANCO/2253/2008)

Withdrawn from the agenda.

8. Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a Draft Commission Regulation laying down a list of third countries for imports and transit through the Community of meat of wild leporidae, farmed rabbits and wild land mammals and the veterinary certification requirements thereof. (Doc. SANCO/1823/2008)

This draft Commission Regulation was discussed during the meeting of this Committee held on 30 June and 1 July 2008, under agenda item 27. Some Member States have sent comments on that draft which were taken into account for the preparation of a new version that will be presented for an opinion at the Biological Safety section of this Committee to be held on 16 September 2008.

Vote: postponed.

9. Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Decision amending Decision 2007/777/EC as regards imports of certain meat products from New Caledonia into the Community. (Doc. SANCO/2171/2008 - Rev.1)

New Caledonia has requested the Commission to be authorized for imports into the Community of meat products prepared from domestic bovine animals and certain game and of certain parts of those animals. New Caledonia is already authorized for the importation into the Community of fresh meat of these species. Furthermore, the Commission has carried out an audit of New Caledonia which demonstrated that the competent veterinary authority of that country provides appropriate guarantees as regards compliance with Community legislation.

It is therefore appropriate to authorize the importation from New Caledonia into the Community of meat products prepared from domestic bovine animals and certain game and of certain parts of those animals without the application of any specific treatment for animal health reasons to such meat products.

Vote: qualified majority in favour, 27 votes absent, Lithuania represented by Latvia.

Withdrawn from the agenda.

11. Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Decision on financial aid from the Community for the second half of 2008 for certain Community reference laboratories in the field of animal health and live animals. (Right of scrutiny of the European Parliament) (Doc. SANCO/2463/2008 – Rev.1)

According to Article 28 of Council Decision 90/424/EEC Community reference laboratories (CRLs) in the field of health and live animals may be granted Community aid.

Commission Regulation (EC) No 1754/2006 lays down detailed rules for the granting of Community financial assistance to Community reference laboratories for feed and food and the animal health sector providing that financial assistance from the Community is to be granted if the approved work programmes are efficiently carried out and the beneficiaries supply all the necessary information within certain time limits. Financial assistance for the operation and organisation of workshops of CRLs should also be in conformity with the eligibility rules laid down in that Regulation. The Commission has assessed the work programmes and corresponding budget estimates submitted by the CRLs for the period from 1 July to 31 December 2008.

The purpose of this draft Decision is to provide Community financial assistance to enable four recently designated CRLs in the field of animal health and live animals to carry out their functions and duties for the second half of 2008.

Vote: unanimous vote in favour.

12. Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Decision approving the programme for the control of salmonella in broiler flocks of poultry (Gallus gallus) presented by certain Member States. (Doc. SANCO/1975/2008 – Rev.1)

The title and the number of the draft Decision presented at the meeting has changed from the one included on the agenda, to read as follows:

Draft Commission Decision approving certain national programmes for the control of Salmonella in flocks of broilers of Gallus gallus.

A Community target was established for the reduction of the prevalence of Salmonella enteritidis and Salmonella typhimurium in broilers at the level of primary production by Commission Regulation (EC) No 646/2007. In order to achieve that target Member States are to establish national programmes for the control of...
Salmonella in flocks of Gallus gallus and submit them to the Commission in accordance with Regulation (EC) No 2160/2003.

Certain Member States have submitted such programmes, which were found to comply with the relevant Community veterinary legislation and in particular with Regulation (EC) No 2160/2003. The purpose of this draft Decision is to approve those programmes.

Vote: unanimous in favour, Lithuania represented by Latvia.


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 2008/407/EC.

Since the last amendment of Decision 2004/432/EC, Israel has submitted a residue monitoring plan for farmed game, China for eggs and Ukraine for poultry, equidae and aquaculture. Following a positive evaluation by the Commission of these residue monitoring plans, the list of third countries authorised to export to the Community should be amended accordingly.

A Commission inspection to South Africa carried out from 2 to 7 July 2008 revealed that the 2007 to 2008 residues monitoring plan for both wild and farmed game has been implemented and that sampling in accordance with the residues monitoring plan for 2007 to 2008 was completed and the sampling in accordance with the residues monitoring plan for 2008 to 2009 is under way. Therefore, as the approved plans covering the years 2006 to 2007, 2007 to 2008 were implemented and as the laboratory analyses results were adequate, the overall situation regarding residue controls in farmed and wild game is satisfactory. Wild and farmed game, including ostriches, should therefore be included in the list for South Africa.

This draft Decision proposes to update the list of third countries complying with Directive 96/23/EC taking into consideration the points referred to above.

Vote: unanimous in favour.
13A. 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 administrative regions of Poland are officially free of enzootic bovine leukosis. (Doc. SANCO/2712/2008 – Rev.1)

Commission Decision 2003/467/EC establishes the official tuberculosis, brucellosis and enzootic-bovine-leukosis free status of certain Member States and regions of Member States as regards bovine herds. That Decision lists the regions of Member States declared officially free of enzootic-bovine-leukosis.

Poland has submitted to the Commission documentation demonstrating compliance with the appropriate conditions provided for in Directive 64/432/EEC as regards 29 administrative regions (powiaty) within the superior administrative units (Voivodships) of Mazowieckie, Podlaskie and Warminski-mazurskie in order that those regions may be considered officially enzootic-bovine-leukosis-free regions of Poland.

Following the evaluation of that documentation, those regions in Poland should be recognised as officially enzootic-bovine-leukosis-free regions.

Decision 2003/467/EC should therefore be amended accordingly.

Vote: unanimous in favour.


Annex C to Directive 64/432/EEC sets out the diagnostic methods for bovine brucellosis to be used for the control and eradication of that disease and for surveillance and monitoring, as well as for the establishment and maintenance of an officially brucellosis–free herd status and certification required for intra-Community trade in bovine animals.

Commission Decision 2004/226/EC approving tests for the detection of antibodies against bovine brucellosis within the framework of Directive 64/432/EEC approves certain tests for bovine brucellosis that may be used as an alternative to the mandatory serum agglutination test (SAT) for certification of bovine animals.

The purpose of this Decision is to remove the SAT test and to include fluorescence polarization assay (FPA) in Annex C to Directive 64/432/EEC and in Decision 2004/226/EC, as a standard test for brucellosis diagnosis in bovine animals for intra-Community trade following the European Food Safety Authority's scientific opinion on brucellosis diagnostic methods for bovines adopted on 11 December 2006 and in accordance with the Manual of Diagnostic Tests and Vaccines for Terrestrial Animals, Sixth Edition, 2008 of the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE). A transitional period of two years is allowed for those Member States which currently use the SAT test to continue to use it for the purpose of certification of bovine animals for intra-Community trade in order to enable them to adapt to new diagnostic methods.
Annex C to Directive 64/432/EC and Decision 2004/226/EC should therefore be amended accordingly.

Member States expressed concerns regarding the deletion of the SAT test from Annex C to Directive 64/432/EC as they find that test to be cost and technically wise effective. Member States also believe that the conclusion of EFSA that the SAT test is no longer suitable for testing bovine brucellosis is based on very limited research. Member States were asked to communicate to the Commission any comments on the draft Decision to be taken into account when amended and then presented in a future meeting of this Committee.

Vote: postponed.


Under Regulation (EC) No 1774/2002 on animal by-products not intended for human consumption, alternative methods of disposal or use of animal by-products may be approved by the Commission after consultation of the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA). Before a process can be approved, EFSA has to examine whether the process can be regarded as safe.

The purpose of the current guidelines is to assist the applicants in the preparation and presentation of their applications in order to facilitate their assessment by EFSA. The Commission and EFSA have jointly developed the current guidelines and highly recommend their use by the Member States.

Consensus reached.

13D. Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Regulation derogating from Regulation [SANCO/1140/2008] and suspending the imports into the Community from Malaysia of consignments of certain live fish. (Doc. SANCO/2771/2008)

The title and the number of the draft Decision presented at the meeting have changed from the one included on the agenda, to read as follows:

Draft Commission Regulation establishing special imports conditions for the imports of certain live fish sourced from Malaysia.

The results of the latest Community inspection visit to Malaysia have revealed serious shortcomings as regards registration of aquaculture farms, notification of diseases and official controls of animal health throughout the production chain of aquaculture animals and ornamental fish. Such shortcomings are likely to lead to the spread of disease, thus presenting a serious threat to animal health in the Community.

Because of the outcome of this inspection, Decision 2008/641/EC derogating from Decisions 2003/858/EC and 2006/656/EC and suspending imports into the
Community from Malaysia of consignments of certain live fish and of certain aquaculture products was adopted by the Commission on the 31\textsuperscript{st} July 2008. This Decision bans the imports of certain live fish of the \textit{Cyprinidae} family.

However, as from 1 November 2008, Commission Regulation (EC) No XXX/2008 (SANCO 1140/2008) implementing the new aquaculture Directive 2006/88/EC will become applicable. This Regulation will, inter alia, repeal Decisions 2003/858/EC and 2006/656/EC that are based on the old aquaculture Directive 91/67/EEC.

Therefore, to ensure that from 1\textsuperscript{st} November 2008, the restrictive measures already adopted with Decision 2008/641/EC continue to apply, it is necessary to derogate from Commission Regulation (EC) No XXX/2008 (SANCO/1140/2008) to make the provisions under the new legal regime and the old one consistent.

The purpose of this draft Commission Regulation is to derogate Commission Regulation (EC) No XXX/2008 (SANCO/1140/2008) accordingly.

Member States were asked to send any comments to the Commission with the intention to present this document for an opinion at the Biological Safety section of this Committee to be held on 16 September 2008.

\textbf{Vote: postponed.}


\textit{The title of the draft Decision presented at the meeting has changed from the one included on the agenda, to read as follows:}


Commission Regulation (EC) No 136/2004 lays down the procedures for veterinary checks at Community border inspection posts on products from third countries. It establishes a weight limit of 1 kg for the exemption from systematic veterinary checks for products destined for human consumption from approved countries or parts thereof. It also provides for certain derogations for small packages of products of animal origin introduced into Denmark, \textit{inter alia}, from Greenland and the Faeroe Islands, and with regard to certain fish introduced into Finland and Sweden from Russia.

Commission Regulation (EC) No 745/2004 lays down more specific measures with regard to imports of meat and meat products and of milk and milk products for personal consumption.

The requirements for the introduction of personal consignments of products of animal origin are laid down in several legislative texts and these requirements need to be easily understandable for travellers and the general public. It is therefore
appropriate to simplify and to bring together in one legislative text, the types and quantities of products of animal origin that may be granted an exemption from the veterinary checks laid down for non-commercial imports.

The purpose of this draft Regulation is to: (a) clarify that such provisions applying to meat and meat products and milk and milk products for human consumption apply to similar goods not intended for human consumption such as pet food which presents a similar risk; (b) add Croatia to the list of exempted countries as the animal health status of Croatia, a candidate country, may be considered to present a minimal animal health risk to the EU, and (c) allow certain animal products such as fish, and honey in limited quantities.

In addition, current provisions on the enforcement of these rules and on information to be provided to passengers in relation to the EC requirements applicable to personal imports would be strengthened.


Member States were requested to send any comments to the Commission as soon as possible since relevant informative publicity material should be prepared to be presented at the Veterinary Week (10-16 November 2008).


Commission Decision 2006/241/EC concerning certain protective measures with regard to certain products of animal origin, excluding fishery products, originating from Madagascar was adopted following the acknowledgment of serious deficiencies with regard to infrastructure and hygiene in meat establishments and the lack of guarantees of the efficiency of the controls carried out by the relevant competent authorities.

Following an inspection mission carried out in March 2007 in order to assess public health controls and the conditions for the production of fishery products in Madagascar, the Food and Veterinary Office considered that the follow-up information submitted by the Malagasy authorities was satisfactory and that the competent authorities of Madagascar are able to provide the appropriate safety guarantees that are necessary to allow imports into the Community.

The Malagasy competent authority for fish and fishery products has notified the European Commission that it also holds the responsibility to guarantee the safety of snails for human consumption. Since previously imported snails from Madagascar have not revealed any relevant public health threats, their import should be allowed.

Commission Decision 2006/241/EC should therefore be amended accordingly.
16. Exchange of views on a draft Commission Regulation amending Commission Regulation (Doc. SANCO/10011/2007 adopted by the Commission on 08/08/08) laying down a list of third countries, territories, zones or compartments from which poultry and poultry products may be imported into and transit through the Community and the veterinary certification requirements.

The title of the draft Decision presented at the meeting has changed from the one included on the agenda, to read as follows:

Draft Commission Regulation amending Regulation (EC) No 798/2008 laying down a list of third countries, territories, zones or compartments from which poultry and poultry products may be imported into and transit through the Community and the veterinary certification requirements.

Community provisions concerning health conditions for import from third countries and transit through the Community of poultry and certain poultry products are laid down in Commission Regulation (EC) No 798/2008.

Article (10) of that Regulation requires for an avian influenza surveillance programme to be in place for a period for at least six months in the third country, territory, zone or compartment. This requirement applies only to imports of live poultry and hatching eggs. The presence of a satisfactory avian influenza surveillance programme in the third country, territory, zone or compartment has to be indicated in Annex I to this draft Regulation.

The avian influenza programmes submitted by Argentina and Israel have already been approved by Commission Regulation (EC) No 798/2008.

Brazil, Canada, Croatia, and Switzerland have submitted their avian influenza surveillance programmes to the Commission for evaluation. The Commission has examined those programmes and they meet the requirements referred to in Article 10 of Regulation (EC) No 798/2008. Accordingly, those programmes should be indicated in Annex I to this draft Regulation.

Regulation (EC) No 2160/2003 on the control of Salmonella and other specified food-borne agents, lays down conditions for third countries with regard to the control of Salmonella. Admission to or retention on the list of third countries from which Member States are authorised to import the relevant animals and hatching eggs, is subject to the submission and approval by the Commission of a Salmonella control programme in the third country, equivalent to the control programme in the Member States. In addition, equivalent guarantees to Community provisions and testing for Salmonella in the flock of origin should be certified at import of live fowl (Gallus gallus) and eggs thereof.

Croatia and the United States of America have submitted their salmonella control programmes to the Commission for evaluation. Those programmes provide guarantees equivalent to the guarantees provided for in Regulation (EC) No 2160/2003 and should therefore be approved.

The model veterinary certificate for import from third countries of slaughter poultry and poultry for restocking game supplies other than ratites should also be amended.

The purpose of this draft Regulation is to amend Regulation (EC) No 798/2008 accordingly.
The Commission representative informed the Member States that Chile and South Africa have submitted their avian influenza surveillance programmes to the Commission for evaluation.

17. Exchange of views on a draft Commission Decision concerning animal health control measures relating to classical swine fever in certain Member States. (Doc. SANCO/2696/2008)

In relation to the classical swine fever situation in feral pigs in certain Member States the Commission has adopted several Decisions including Decision 2006/805/EC concerning protection measures relating to classical swine fever in areas of certain Member States. Those measures are related to the dispatch, movement and transit of live pigs and porcine semen and ova and embryos of swine from certain areas of those Member States.

The purpose of this draft Decision is, taking into account the different epidemiological situations regarding classical swine fever in Member States or areas, to define from which countries or areas following certain safeguard measures (i) live pigs may be dispatched to other restricted areas, (ii) fresh meat of pigs from holdings located in those areas, and meat preparations and meat products consisting of, or containing meat of those pigs may be dispatched to other Member States and (iii) from where neither live pigs nor fresh meat and meat products may be dispatched to other Member States.

This draft Decision also lays down the disease control measures concerning restrictions on the dispatch of live pigs, porcine semen and ova and embryos of swine within affected neighboring areas due to the fact that certain areas affected by classical swine fever in feral pigs are divided by national borders and are on the neighboring territories of two Member States. Moreover, it lays down the disease control measures concerning restrictions on the dispatch of fresh meat of pigs from holdings located in those Member States where the epidemiological situation of the disease in feral pigs and small back yard holdings is still a matter of concern, and meat preparations and meat products consisting of, or containing meat of those pigs.

Furthermore, holdings where no sufficient evidence can be given to exclude classical swine fever are not allowed to send pigs to slaughterhouses authorised to place fresh meat, meat preparation and meat products on the common market. Consequently, this draft Decision lays down clear conditions to exclude classical swine fever in a holding.

Decision 2006/805/EC has been amended several times. Therefore it is appropriate to repeal that Decision and replace it by this draft Decision.


Commission Regulation (EC) No 318/2007 lays down the animal health conditions for imports of certain birds other than poultry into the Community and the quarantine conditions applicable to such birds after import. Annex V to that Regulation sets out a
list of quarantine facilities and centres approved by the competent authorities of the Member States for import of certain birds other than poultry.

Italy has reviewed its approved quarantine facilities and centres and has sent an updated list of approved quarantine facilities and centres to the Commission.


Miscellaneous

Issues raised by the Commission:

- **Mortality of hollow oysters in France:** information which has been communicated to the Commission from the French authorities on the issue was distributed to the Member States. Since May 2008, mortalities of oysters were increased on the entire French coast, in all the stages of the production. Although the mortality rates in hatcheries are not of significance, the mortalities arise when the young oysters are put in open waters. Since July, the French authorities took several actions in order to look for the possible causes of the mortalities, to protect the consumers' health and to avoid the spread of the phenomenon. The results of the investigations so far do not indicate whether the origin of the phenomenon is the herpes virus OsHV-1, possibly associated with other agents, or if the mortality rates are increased also due to the combination of the virus with the environmental conditions met in 2008.

- **The rules on the application of organic fertilisers to land according to the animal by-products regulation:** a meeting between the Commission and technical experts held on 1 September 2008 to discuss a) the applicable processing method if such fertilisers are produced from mammalian processed animal protein and b) possible options for a more harmonised application of the rules of controls carried out with respect to such fertilisers especially at the level of farms. In relation to the first issue, the Commission gave its understanding of the current rules, that is, application of method 1 (treatment under pressure to 133°C) is compulsory when organic fertilisers are produced from mammalian processed animal protein, however, there is different interpretation of this by Member States. With regards the second issue discussed during that meeting, the conclusion was that controls should be intensified, harmonised to a greater extent and combined with controls carried out with respect to other health rules. Both issues will be further discussed in the framework of the future implementing rules on animal by-products.

- **Document SANCO/2801/2008 was distributed** for information: "Draft Commission Decision amending Council Decision 79/542/EEC as regards Brazil". Council Decision 79/542/EEC lays down animal and public health and veterinary certification conditions for the import into the Community of certain live animals and their fresh meat and sets out a list of third countries and parts thereof from which Member States are authorised to import fresh meat of certain animals. In July 2008, the status of free of foot-and-mouth disease with vaccination was reinstated by the OIE for the State of Mato Grosso do Sul, Brazil. The Commission therefore proposes with this draft Decision to re-include that State in the list of territories from which imports into the Community of fresh de-boned and matured bovine meat are authorised under conditions, taking into account the results of the inspections carried out in Brazil and
the free of foot-and-mouth disease status of that State. Decision 79/542/EEC should therefore be amended accordingly.

Issues raised by the Member States:

- **The Italian delegate** requested more information on the **outbreak of listeria in Canada** which involved human deaths. The outbreak has been linked to meat products made by Maple Leaf Foods who has recalled its products. The Canadian authorities have informed the Commission that those products were not exported into the Community but went for national consumption.

- **The Italian and the German delegates** requested information regarding a notification on the Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF) on **imports of pig meat from Chile**, contaminated with dioxins.

On 25 July 2008, the Chilean authorities informed the Commission of the presence of unacceptable levels of dioxins in pig meat which was imported into Korea early July 2008. The Chilean authorities identified the holdings from where the pig meat was exported and they immediately suspended the export of meat originating from these holdings. Investigations as regards the source of contamination were ongoing. From 1 June until 18 August 2008, 164 consignments of pig meat were exported from Chile to the Community. 6 of these consignments contained pig meat which according to the Chilean authorities might possibly contain dioxin levels not compliant with EU legislation (two were sent to Romania, one to Spain and 3 are on their way to Italy). The Spanish authorities blocked the consignments and they will be re-dispatched to Chile. The Romanian authorities have blocked the consignments and a decision has still to be taken if the lots will be re-dispatched to Chile or if they will be destroyed. The Italian authorities will refuse the import of those three consignments. The Commission representative stressed out that the Chilean authorities acted in an appropriate way and they are informing the Commission on any development. Furthermore, the Chilean authorities will communicate to the Commission their report regarding this issue, in particular as regards the source of contamination. This report will, upon receipt immediately be provided to the Member States.

The Commission has asked the Member States to carry out strict checks on consignments of pig meat from Chile and to redirect their ongoing programme for the control of dioxins in food to the control of the presence of dioxins in pig meat already imported from Chile and eventually other possibly contaminated products of animal origin imported from Chile. The results of the controls should be reported to the Commission through the RASFF without delay.

- **Slovenia** asked the Commission to make a statement that the Commission will look into the **applications of any of the new Member States for the annual monitoring BSE surveillance programme**. After the amendment of the BSE regulation, there is now the possibility for the new Member States to apply for an annual surveillance programme for BSE. For the 15 old Member States, an EFSA opinion is available and the issue will be discussed at the next meeting of the Chief Veterinary Officers in September.
The Commission replied that pending the opinion of EFSA on the applications of new Member States for the monitoring BSE surveillance programme, it was not in a position to make a statement; however, this will be discussed in the future once EFSA's opinion is available.

- **Austria raised the issue of the import of products from China that might contain heparin natrium:** following a written request for clarification from the Austrian authorities, the Commission representative asked for further information and announced an answer in writing.

- The German and Danish representatives informed about a **bilateral agreement between the Danish Veterinary and Food Administration (DVFA) and the Bundesministerium für Ernährung, Landwirtschaft und Verbraucherschutz (BMELV) on a simplified certification regime for equidae moving along the borders between the two Member States.** This agreement is in accordance with Article 6 of Council Directive 90/426/EEC on animal health conditions governing the movement and import from third countries of equidae, the competent authority in Member States of destination may grant or limited exemption in respect of movement of equidae in areas near internal borders of the Community.

- **Germany** raised the issue of the delay of the publication of a Decision (draft (SANCO/10018/2007) in the official journal which already entered into force on 1 July 2008. The Commission representative explained that this delay occurred due to the fact that the text of the Decision is very long and all linguistic versions of this must be ready before being published.