President: A. Laddomada, J. Moynagh
All the Member States were present, Greece, Finland and Luxembourg were partly absent and not represented.

A. Points for vote

23. Exchange of views and possible opinion on a draft Commission Decision as regards the modification of certain programmes for the eradication and monitoring of animals diseases and for checks aimed at the prevention of zoonoses for 2008 and amending Decision 2007/782/EC as regards the reallocation of the Community's financial contribution to certain Member States for such programmes. SANCO/3385/2008 Rev 1.

Member States have submitted to the Commission programmes for financing annual disease monitoring and eradication programmes for the year 2007, according to Article 24 of Council Decision 90/424/EEC. These programmes were approved by Commission Decision 2007/782/EC, which also set the rate and maximum amount of the Community’s financial contribution for each programme.

Every year the Member States are requested to submit information as regards the amounts eligible for Community financing spent on each approved programme until the 31st August, their estimations on the total eligible amounts to be spent by the end of the year as well as any modifications they deem necessary on their programmes.

Based on the information submitted from the Member States for the programmes approved for the year 2008 and in order to improve the overall performance in the usage of funds for disease eradication and monitoring, the Commission presented the current proposal for the redistribution of amounts which the Member States are predicting to remain unused, towards programmes were it is expected that spending on eligible measures will be significantly in excess of the already allocated amount. This proposal also approves the modifications of five programmes as requested by the interested Member States.

Vote: Qualified majority in favour, 27 votes abstained, 23 votes absent.
C. Points for information

5. Information to the Member States on proposed reimbursements to be made in the framework of the 2007 eradication and surveillance programmes. (AS/TC)

The Commission representative presented the proposed amounts to be reimbursed to some Member States and explained that for two programmes the proposed amounts to be reimbursed appear as suspended because some information requested by the Commission is still pending. Member States were asked to send their comments by email.

7. Information from the Netherlands on the bluetongue situation.

The Netherlands reported about recent findings concerning BTV-6. On 24 October 2008 the Community Reference Laboratory (CRL) confirmed BTV-6 positive findings in cattle in the eastern part of the Netherlands (NL). This virus type has never reported in the EU before. The Netherlands have established containment zones of 50 and 150 km around the affected farms.

The German (DE) authorities have also established containment zones on their territory in North Rhine Westphalia and Lower Saxony.

On the day of the meeting of the SCoFCAH (28 October), the CRL informed the NL and the Commission that the BTV-6 from the NL shows a strong resemblance to the live attenuated vaccine that is produced in South Africa for administration in sheep. The only vaccines against bluetongue authorized in the Netherlands are inactivated vaccines against BTV-8. In fact, no live attenuated vaccines against BTV-6 are authorized in any EU Member State. The origin of the BTV-6 virus in NL is therefore unclear.

The Commission informed that a mission of the Community veterinary emergency team will be arranged to assist the NL authorities in their investigations. Pending the outcome of this mission and of further investigations, the NL and DE agreed to keep their current restrictions in place at least until the next meeting of the SCFCAH (11-12 November 2008).