EUROPEAN COMMISSION

HEALTH & CONSUMERS DIRECTORATE-GENERAL

SANCO G – D(2011) 623719

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE FOOD CHAIN AND ANIMAL HEALTH HELD IN BRUSSELS ON 30 JUNE & 1 JULY 2009

(Section Animal Health and Welfare)

(Section Controls and Import Conditions)

Presidents: Alberto Laddomada and Francisco Reviriego.

All the Member States were present. Lithuania was partly absent.
A representative from the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) attended the meeting.

1. Exchange of views on the novel A/H1N1 influenza virus.

Document SANCO/6211/2009 was distributed and presented by the Commission during the meeting. It is a working document on surveillance and control measures for the novel A/H1N1 influenza virus in pigs and is the outcome of a meeting held on 9 June 2009, with the participation of public and animal health experts and representatives from third countries. On 10 June, the Chief Veterinary Officers asked the Commission to ensure better exchange of information in case the virus enters the farms in the EU. As a first step, the Commission addressed the issue of surveillance and then produced the referred document. Its purpose is to provide guidance to the Member States on the appropriate measures to implement under different epidemiological scenarios, promoting a harmonised approach for dealing with the situation as regards a) surveillance/monitoring for novel influenza A(H1N1) virus in the pig populations and b) the possible control measures to be put in place if the novel influenza A(H1N1) enters EU pig farm(s). The key principles to be taken into account for any kind of measure related to the novel virus to be implemented are vigilance, proportionality and flexibility. It was emphasised that the novel influenza A(H1N1) is primarily a human disease.

Member States welcomed the document and will communicate it to their experts for any comments. The Commission informed of its intention to further discuss the document with stakeholders on 9 July, to amend it taking into account their comments and the comments of the Member States and present it at the next meeting of this Committee on 14 July.

1A. Update on the low pathogenic avian influenza situation in Italy.

The Italian representative made a presentation updating the Committee on the low pathogenic avian influenza situation in Italy.

The Spanish representative made a presentation on the first low pathogenic avian influenza H5 detection in a fattening duck holding in Spain, in the region of Navarra. The birds had been received from France and then found positive during routine sampling performed within the frame of the surveillance programme. Immediate measures were applied for the control and eradication of the disease. Further epidemiological investigations are ongoing. The French authorities were informed by the Spanish authorities and investigations are ongoing in the holdings which had supplied the birds to the Spanish farm.

2. Update from the Member States on the bluetongue situation.

The French representative made a presentation providing updated information since the last meeting of this Committee, on the bluetongue epidemiological situation in France in 2009.

3. Information from Northern Ireland on the Aujeszky's disease situation.

The British Delegate made a presentation on the progress made regarding the Aujesky's disease eradication programme in Northern Ireland, briefly summarising the report which was sent to the Commission by the UK in relation to this disease.

3A. Information from Italy on the swine vesicular disease situation.

The Italian representative made a presentation, updating the Committee on the swine vesicular disease (SVD) situation in Italy in 2009. Italy has requested the Commission to include the region of Abruzzo in the Annex I to Decision 2005/779/EC, to be considered as free from SVD. The Commission has requested Italy to provide further information on the measures taken and their results in that region in June.

4. Information from Ireland and Poland on their application for freedom from bovine brucellosis.

The Irish and **Polish** representatives made presentations providing information on the eradication of bovine brucellosis in their countries over the years. Both Member States declared themselves free from that disease.

The Commission's representative congratulated both Member States and thanked the task force for bovine brucellosis (made by Commission officials and Member States' experts) for the work done aiming at eradicating that disease.

5. Information from the United Kingdom on the application for freedom from bovine tuberculosis in Scotland.

Postponed.

6. **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. (Docs. SANCO/5491/2009; SANCO/5492/2009; SANCO/10574/2004 – Rev. 10)**

   The Commission's representative reminded three Member States and Norway to communicate the missing information so that document SANCO/5491/2009 could be finalised. The document is the draft annual report for 2008 providing details of the occurrence of diseases listed in Annex E (I) to Directive 64/432/EEC 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 EU Member States, Norway and Switzerland.

   One Member State was reminded to send the missing information so that document SANCO/5492/2009 could be finalised. The document includes information on the results of screening for *Brucella melitensis* carried out during 2008 in the Member States or regions thereof officially free of brucellosis (*B. melitensis*).

   Document SANCO/10574/2004 – Rev.10 was distributed by the Commission. This document includes the 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.

7. **Information from the Commission on reports received from the Member States in accordance with article 8 of Council Directive 64/432/EEC and articles 73(3) and 79(4) of Council Directive 2003/85/EC on national stocks of FMD antigens and vaccines and FMD real-time alert exercises carried out in Member States in 2007.**

   The Commission's representative reminded seven Member States to communicate their reports to the Commission.

8. **Information on marking of bovine semen in the Member States, Norway and Switzerland. (Doc. SANCO/5490/2009- Rev. 4)**

   The Commission's representative informed that document SANCO/5490/2009 – Rev.4 is the final version of the document which includes information on the characteristics and form of marking bovine semen straws in EU Member States, Norway and Switzerland.

9. **Declaration from Germany of a VHS/IHN/KHVD free compartment in accordance with Article 50 of Council Directive 2006/88/EC.**

The Commission's representative informed the Member States that the declaration will be made available on the Commission's website by the end of the day. Member States could send any comments by email within the next two months.

10. Declaration from Slovenia of a surveillance programme with regard to VHS/IHN in accordance with Article 50 of Council Directive 2006/88/EC.

The Commission's representative distributed the declaration during the meeting and informed that it will be made available on the Commission's website by the end of the day. Member States could send any comments by email within the next two months.

11. Declaration from Spain of several VHS and IHN free compartments in accordance with Article 50 of Council Directive 2006/88/EC.

The Commission's representative informed the Member States that the declaration will be made available on the Commission's website by the end of the day. Member States could send any comments by email within the next two months.

12. 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.

12A. Information on the Community-funded OIE Regional Meeting on Animal Welfare, Istanbul, Turkey, 16-17 July 2009.

The Commission's representative informed that the official invitation to the OIE European Regional Meeting on Animal Welfare, Istanbul – Turkey, 16-17 July 2009, has been sent to the Member States. The meeting is organised with the support of the Turkish Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs. The programme of that meeting was distributed by the Commission during the meeting.

12B. Identification of animal welfare experts in the Member States to be included in the TAIEX experts database to contribute to technical assistance initiatives.

The European Commission has been providing technical assistance for the implementation of the "acquis" to its beneficiary countries through the TAIEX instrument since 1996. The Commission works with a short list of experts and given that currently the requests for assistance from TAIEX countries have been increased, the Commission would like to invite Member States' experts to be registered in the TAIEX experts' database in order to provide assistance to the TAIEX countries. Information was distributed by the Commission during the meeting regarding the types of events and the role of an expert, remuneration and logistics and registration in the expert database.

13. 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.

14. Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a 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 as regards Newcastle disease. (Doc. SANCO/4694/2009 – Rev.2)

The title of this draft Regulation has changed from the one included on the agenda, to read as follows:

Draft Commission Regulation amending Annex I to 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.

Parts of the territory of Brazil and the territories of Canada, Chile, Croatia, Israel and the United States of America, are currently listed in Regulation (EC) No 798/2008 and therefore authorised for the importation of live poultry, poultry meat, ratites, ratite meat and hatching eggs of poultry into the Union.

Those six third countries apply control measures for Newcastle disease equivalent to those implemented by Member States in accordance with Directive 92/66/EEC, including placing areas in their territory under official restrictions in the event of an outbreak of that disease. Taking into account the equivalency of the control measures for Newcastle disease and the capacity of those third countries to effectively deal with an outbreak of that disease as well as the findings of and the follow-up actions to inspection missions to these countries, it is appropriate to provide for specific certification requirements as regards freedom from that disease.

Brazil and Israel have already been recognised as applying equivalent control measures for Newcastle disease in relation to the importation of fresh poultry meat into the Union.

For the importation of live poultry, poultry meat, hatching eggs of poultry, ratites and ratite meat into the Union, the entries in Parts 1 and 2 of Annex I to Regulation (EC) No 798/2008 should be amended, so that in case of future outbreaks of Newcastle disease in any of those six third countries, importation of those commodities may continue from the parts of those third countries that have not been placed under official restrictions due to that disease. Furthermore, the veterinary certificate for imports of poultry meat set out in Part 2 of Annex I to Regulation (EC) No 798/2008 should be amended in order to allow imports of that commodity obtained from slaughter poultry originating from another third country listed in that Regulation.

By Commission Regulation (EC) No 411/2009 amending Regulation (EC) No 798/2008, disease control measures applied by Canada for low pathogenic avian influenza have already been recognised as equivalent. It is therefore appropriate for reasons of consistency to align these certification requirements with those of the present draft Regulation.

Annex I to Regulation (EC) No 798/2008 should therefore be amended accordingly.

Vote: unanimous in favour.

15. Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Regulation amending Commission Regulation (EC) No 1266/2007 on bluetongue as regards the minimum requirements for bluetongue monitoring and surveillance programmes and the protection against vector attacks. (Doc. SANCO/5759/2008)

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

A draft Commission Regulation amending Regulation (EC) No 1266/2007 as regards protection against attacks by vectors and minimum requirements for bluetongue monitoring and surveillance programmes. (Doc. SANCO/5759/2008 – Rev.2)

This draft Regulation provides for alternative surveillance strategies to be implemented by Member States and protection of animals against vector attacks. These issues have been discussed in previous meetings.

Experience has shown that the measures aimed at preventing the exposure of animals to vectors can be difficult to apply. However, under certain conditions, in establishments such as artificial insemination centers or quarantine stations, it may be possible to prevent the exposure of animals to vectors. The protection against attacks by vectors should not solely depend on the use of insecticides and/or repellents but should also require that the animals are kept inside a vector proof establishment where additional measures, in particular a combination of appropriate physical barriers and chemical (insecticides and/or repellent) treatments, are taken to prevent contact between the animals and the vectors.

Certain derogations are established from the general requirement laid down in Regulation (EC) No 1266/2007 that animals and vehicles must be treated with insecticides or repellents for all transit movements.

The final important amendment to the Regulation concerns the possibility to use alternative strategies to surveillance with sentinel animals which provide the same level of guarantees on demonstrating the absence of virus circulation. This allows more flexibility in the design of the bluetongue monitoring and surveillance programmes that are in place in the Member States, and specifically as regard the demarcation of "lower risk areas".

The Commission representative explained that these are short term changes to the Regulation. By the end of this year the Commission and the Member States shall work on a more thorough review of the bluetongue strategy.

The **Czech** representative made a statement:

"The Czech Republic has two comments to this point for the „vector proof establishment“:

1. *We understand the reason for “vector proof establishment” in point 2 of the Annex III, but in points 3 and 4 we find sufficient using of repellents and serological or virological testing. To have the “vector proof establishment” in each holding which wants to trade the unvaccinated animals complicates the trade, especially during the season of pasture.*
2. *To have a trap in each holding which is interested in trade (estimated number of these holdings in the Czech Republic – 3000) is not possible. The trap is tool for us to know, when the vector free period starts and ends – it means when vectors are circulated. It is the tool of entomological monitoring, not for certification. Also to wait for results of entomological monitoring in each trap for certification is impossible."*

The **French** representative made a statement:

"La France vote en faveur de la modification du règlement 1266/2007 relatif à la fièvre catarrhale ovine (FCO) présentée au SCOFCAH AH du 1er juillet 2009 sous la référence SANCO/5759/2009 Rev2.

La France souhaite ainsi répondre aux inquiétudes exprimées par certains états membres en matière d’échanges intra communautaires de ruminants domestiques vis-à-vis de la FCO, et indiquer que ce projet de texte correspond à une meilleure adéquation avec les connaissances acquises sur la maladie au prix de grandes difficultés pour les filières d’élevage depuis l’introduction du sérotype 8 et l’extension du sérotype 1 dans l’Union européenne (UE).

Pour autant, tout comme la Pologne et l’Allemagne, la France s’interroge sur la faisabilité pratique et les coûts financiers des établissements indemnes de vecteurs.

La France compte donc sur la Commission européenne pour continuer à faire évoluer la réglementation relative à la FCO en fonction de l’évolution des connaissances scientifiques et de la situation sanitaire dans l’UE."

The **German** representative made a statement:

"Germany votes against SANCO/5759/2009, point 15 on the agenda of SCOFCAH meeting of 1 July 2009. A definition/description of "vector proof establishments", is missing as well in the EU-legislation as in the OIE-code. However, such a definition is crucial to apply the regulation comparably in the MS. Without such a definition, the requirements for laboratories, e.g. S4, are regarded to ensure "vector proof" conditions. This seems not to be applicable under farming conditions. The lack of this definition is a severe deficiency, which endangers harmonized conditions throughout the EU."

The **Hungarian** representative made a statement:

"Hungary can't support the proposed change in Article 9 because we find that this suggestion doesn't provide enough quarantine in use of transport of live animals. We think that the definition of vector proof establishment is not detailed enough and it should be placed to the main body of the legislation and not in the recitle."

The **Irish** representative made a statement:

"As the Commission proposal does not include the requirement for negative PCR test within 7 days of movement to a BT free country or area, which Ireland has sought on several occasions to protect such countries or areas, Ireland is voting against the proposal However, it supports the general principles behind the proposal as it represents a strengthening of the existing rules on movement."

The **Polish** representative supported the draft regulation but with the following statement:

"The record currently in force: "protected against attacks by vectors" should not be changed, because protecting the animals with insect repellents and insecticides seems to be the only possible way of protecting them from the attack by the vector of the disease.

On the territory of the Republic of Poland there are no "vector proof establishments", because covering windows or doors for example with the nets protecting from insects will not eliminate the possibility of Culicoides getting into the rooms in which the animals are kept.

Additionally it should be noted that a lot of animals are kept outdoors during the period from spring to autumn, therefore it is not possible to fulfil the requirements of keeping them in "vector proof establishments".

In the opinion of Poland, the proposed modification of the Regulation may cause complications in trade in bovine animals and protests of breeders connected with different interpretation of the term under consideration and, in most cases, lack of possibility of fulfilling, even the minimum requirements in the scope of protecting the rooms in which the animals are kept, against Culicoides. Moreover, the breeders will protest against taking additional costs connected with installation of protective nets or traps for Culicoides in the establishments.

Thus, the Republic of Poland deems it is necessary to precise the definition of the "vector proof establishments", taking into account a possibility of protection of the establishments for animals and the costs of their adaptation."

Vote: qualified majority by 285 votes in favour, 24 votes abstained and 36 votes against.

16. Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Decision amending Decision 2008/965/EC on financial aid from the Community for the year 2009 for certain Community reference laboratories in the field of animal health and live animals. (Doc. SANCO/4900/2009)

Commission Decision 2008/965/EC granted Community financial assistance to Community reference laboratories, one of them being the Community Reference Laboratory (CRL) for avian influenza, for the work programme to be implemented in the period from 1 January to 31 December 2009.

Given the recent reports of the novel A/H1N1 influenza virus in humans in Mexico, USA and then elsewhere, and the first reported case of human-to-animal transmission of this particular new virus subtype in Canada, further investigation of infection dynamics, pathogenesis, host susceptibility and transmissibility of that virus is essential. These investigations should be incorporated into the 2009 annual work programme of the CRL for avian influenza. The Commission has assessed the amended work programme and corresponding amended budget estimates submitted by the CRL for avian influenza.

Accordingly, an additional Community financial assistance should be granted to the CRL for avian influenza to carry out the complementary investigations on the novel A/H1N1 influenza virus.

Vote: unanimous in favour.

17. Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Regulation amending Commission Regulation (EC) No 1251/2008 as regards the list of third countries and territories from which crustaceans and ornamental aquatic animals may be imported into the Community. (Doc. SANCO/5322/2009 – Rev.1)

Commission Regulation (EC) No 1251/2008 lays down the conditions and the certification requirements applicable for the placing on the market and the import into the Community of aquaculture animals and products thereof. It implements Council Directive 2006/88/EC in this regard.

Annex III to that Regulation lists the third countries from which imports of aquaculture animals for farming, put and take fisheries and open ornamental facilities, and ornamental fish susceptible to one or more of the diseases listed in Part II of Annex IV to Directive 2006/88/EC and intended for closed ornamental facilities are permitted.

Based on the information provided by the Member States, the United States of America comply with conditions at least equivalent to those applicable for placing on the market, and thus imports of crustaceans for farming from this third country were authorised. In order not to unnecessarily interrupt these imports, the United States of America should be provisionally included in Annex III to Regulation (EC) No 1251/2008 pending the completion of the on-the-spot inspections provided for by Community rules.

In addition, Article 11 (2) of the said Regulation establishes that Member States can only authorise the imports of ornamental fish which are not of susceptible species to any of diseases listed in Part II of Annex IV to Directive 2006/88/EC, and ornamental mollusc and ornamental crustaceans intended for closed ornamental facilities from third countries or territories that are members of the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE). This is to ensure that relevant epidemiological data related to those animals is made available to all OIE members.

However, the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), an international organisation that provides policy advice to 22 Pacific Island countries and territories informed the

Commission that, whereas several of its members are not OIE members, they have a formal agreement with the OIE so as those non-OIE members can use OIE's disease reporting systems.

The purpose of this draft Regulation is to amend Commission Regulation (EC) No 1251/2008:

- to list USA in Annex III of the draft Regulation as a third country from which imports of crustaceans for farming shall be authorised;

- to amend Article 11 in order to allow the imports of ornamental fish which are not of susceptible species to any of diseases listed in Part II of Annex IV to Directive 2006/88/EC, and ornamental mollusc and ornamental crustaceans intended for closed ornamental facilities, from several third countries that are not OIE-members but have a formal agreement with the OIE to use the OIE's disease reporting systems. Those third countries are listed in Annex III to the draft.

Given that the transitional period, during which consignments of crustaceans for farming, put and take fisheries, and open ornamental facilities may continue to be imported in accordance with the regime in place before the entry into force of Directive 2006/88/EC, will expire on 30 June 2009, and in order to avoid interruption of trade, the Commission intends to ask the Member States to apply the draft Regulation voted at this meeting, immediately. For this purpose, a fax will be sent to the Member States.

Vote: unanimous in favour.

18. Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Regulation laying down animal and public health and veterinary certification conditions for introduction into the Community of raw milk and dairy products intended for human consumption and repealing Decision 2004/438/EC. (Regulatory procedure with scrutiny of the European Parliament and of the Council) (Doc. SANCO/4597/2009 – Rev.1)

The Commission's representative presented the draft Regulation and asked Member States to send any comments by email during the next few days with the intention to take them into account and if necessary prepare a new version of the document, then to be presented for an opinion at the meeting of this committee to be held on 14 July 2009.

Vote: postponed.

19. Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Decision implementing Council Directive 2008/73/EC as regards Internet-based information pages containing lists of establishments and laboratories approved by Member States in accordance with Community veterinary and zootechnical legislation. (Doc. SANCO/1178/2008 – Rev.3)

The purpose of this draft Decision is to implement Council Directive 2008/73/EC as regards Internet-based information pages containing lists of establishments and laboratories approved by Member States in accordance with Community veterinary and zootechnical legislation.

Intra-Community trade in certain live animals and their products is only permitted from establishments that comply with the relevant Community provisions and are approved for that purpose by the competent authorities of the Member State where they are located.

In accordance with Council Directive 2008/73/EC, Member States are to draw up, keep up-to-date and make the lists of approved establishments in the veterinary and zootechnical fields, as well as information regarding national reference laboratories and certain other laboratories that they have designated in accordance with the relevant Community provisions, available to the other Member States and the public.

In order to facilitate access to those lists by the other Member States and by the public, the lists should be made electronically available by Member States by means of Internet-based information pages.

The Commission shall assist Member States in making these lists publicly available by providing the Internet address of a website which shall display national links to Internet-based information pages of the Member States.

In order to facilitate the use of those lists, a model for the layout of the Internet-based information pages should be drawn up.

The Commission's representative reminded the Member States that this document was presented to this Committee already in October 2008 and explained the amendments which have been introduced into the document since then. This draft Decision should be presented for the opinion of the Standing Committee on Zootechnics and of this Committee, therefore, it will be presented for vote at the joint meeting of both Committees on 14 July.

Vote: postponed.

20. Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Decision amending Annex I to Decision 2004/233/EC as regards the entries for Germany in the list of laboratories authorised to check the effectiveness of vaccination against rabies in certain domestic carnivores. (Doc. SANCO/5638/2009 – Rev.1)

Decision 2004/233/EC authorising laboratories to check the effectiveness of vaccination against rabies in certain domestic carnivores, establishes a list of authorised laboratories in the Member States, on the grounds of the results of the proficiency tests communicated by the AFSSA Laboratory, Nancy, which is the laboratory, designated according to Decision 2000/258/EC, to appraise those laboratories for which Member States have submitted an application for approval to perform the serological tests to monitor the effectiveness of rabies vaccines.

Germany has requested that one laboratory be deleted from that list, as regards the entries for that Member State. Decision 2004/233/EC should therefore be amended accordingly.

Vote: unanimous in favour.

21. Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Decision amending Decision 2003/467/EC as regards the declaration that Ireland, Poland, the islands of Faial and Santa Maria in Portugal and the provinces of Santa Cruz de Tenerife and Las Palmas in Spain are officially free of bovine brucellosis. (Doc. SANCO/5493/2009)

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 Decision amending Decision 2003/467/EC as regards the declaration that certain Member States and regions thereof are officially free of bovine brucellosis.

Commission Decision 2003/467/EC establishes the officially brucellosis-free status of certain Member States and regions thereof in accordance with Council Directive 64/432/EEC, as regards bovine herds.

The competent authorities of Ireland, Poland, Portugal and Spain submitted to the Commission supporting documentation as regards certain administrative regions of their respective Member State and as regards Poland and Ireland concerning the whole of the territory of those Member States, demonstrating compliance with all the conditions required for an officially free status for bovine brucellosis.

The purpose of this draft Decision is to amend relevant Annexes to Decision 2003/467/EC to take account of the officially free status for the diseases and the administrative regions notified to the Commission by Ireland, Poland, Portugal and Spain.

Vote: unanimous in favour.

22. Exchange of views of the Committee on a draft Commission Decision approving the programme for the control of salmonella in turkeys presented by certain Member States. (Right of scrutiny of the European Parliament) (Doc. SANCO/5750/2009)

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 Decision approving certain national programmes for the control of salmonella in turkeys.

In order to achieve the Community target (established by Commission Regulation (EC) No 584/2008 implementing Regulation (EC) No 2160/2003) for the reduction of the prevalence of *Salmonella Enteritidis* and *Salmonella Typhimurium* in turkeys, Member States are to establish national programmes for the control of *Salmonella* in turkeys 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 national control programmes.

23. Exchange of views of the Committee on a draft Commission Regulation amending the Annex to Regulation (EC) No 21/2004 on the identification of ovine and caprine animals. (Doc. SANCO/5744/2009)

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

Draft Commission Regulation amending the Annex to Regulation (EC) No 21/2004.

Regulation (EC) No 21/2004 provides that each Member State is to establish a system for the identification and registration of ovine and caprine animals in accordance with the provisions of that Regulation. The aim of this draft Regulation is to amend the technical Annex to Regulation (EC) No 21/2004 in order to facilitate the implementation of electronic identification. The proposed amendments will allow Member States more flexibility to reduce administrative burden to animal keepers without lowering traceability standards.

The proposed text was sent to the Member States electronically in advance of the meeting. The Commission had already received some comments. The Commission's representative explained the changes introduced in the document after taking into account some of the Member States' comments and explained why others could not be incorporated in the document.

The approach of the Commission was generally welcomed. It could simplify a smooth introduction of electronic identification. Several Member States highlighted the need to stick to the deadlines agreed at the Council.

The Commission's representative noted that there is a large but not unanimous support on the proposal. The Commission intends to present the proposal for a formal opinion at the next meeting of this Committee.

24. Exchange of views of the Committee on a draft Commission Decision amending Decisions 2005/692/EC, 2005/731/EC, 2005/734/EC and 2007/25/EC concerning avian influenza as regards their period of application. (Regulatory procedure with scrutiny of the European Parliament and of the Council) (Doc. SANCO/6128/2009)

The Commission adopted several protection measures in relation to avian influenza, following the outbreak of that disease in south-east Asia that started in December 2003 and that was caused by a highly pathogenic H5N1 virus.

These measures are laid down, in particular, in Commission Decisions 2005/692/EC, 2005/731/EC, 2005/734/EC and 2007/25/EC, applicable until 31 December 2009. Outbreaks of avian influenza caused by the Asian strain of the virus continue to occur in third countries. The risk that the disease is spread from third countries to the Member States remains.

It is therefore appropriate to prolong the validity of those Decisions until 31 December 2010.

The Commission's representative presented the document and took note of the comments made by Member States.

Miscellaneous

- **The Swiss** representative has informed the Committee on an **outbreak of infectious bovine rhinotracheitis (IBR)** occurred during the 3rd week of June in cattle holding located in the canton of Jura. The affected holding has 248 suckler cattle and milking cows. Tests for IBR were applied due to two abortions. One case of IBR was confirmed, the animal has been destroyed. 225 animals were positive in the screening test applied to the whole herd. Results of the confirmatory tests are awaited. All animals found positive in the confirmatory test will be destroyed at the beginning of July. All necessary measures were taken. The source of the disease is still unknown.

  The Commission representative has reminded that according to the Agreement between European Community and the Swiss Confederation on trade in agricultural products[Annex 11, Appendix 2(I)(B)(6)], Switzerland has been declared as IBR-free and Swiss authorities are obliged to notify any change in the conditions on which recognition of that status was based. Moreover, an epidemiological investigation should be carried out and the Commission should be informed on the further findings. No measures are to be taken by the Community.

Issues raised by the Member States:

- **The British** representative asked the Commission to clarify whether **imports from China of chondroitin** or products containing this by-product are allowed into the EU.

  The Commission representative explained that such imports are not allowed when it concerns chondroitin obtained from bovine or ovine however it is allowed when it is obtained from fish. Further information is needed on this issue therefore EFSA will be requested by the Commission to provide such information.

- **The French** representative updated the Committee on the increased **mortality in young oysters**. Since the last meeting of this Committee, the French Food Safety Authority (AFFSA) has carried out an epidemiological study to find out the cause of the mortality. The study is still ongoing however the results until 26 June 2009 showed that there are probably two factors causing it; the infectious agents and environmental factors. The note which contains all relevant information on this issue, including the infected zones and the measures taken in these zones, sent by the French authorities to the Commission, has been distributed during the meeting.

  Although all other Member States that produce oysters are not affected, they should be vigilant.

- **The Swedish** representative informed the Committee that in view of the Swedish Presidency, the Chief Veterinary Officers of the Member States will receive in the next few days a plan of the forthcoming meetings organised by Sweden.

Issues raised by the Commission:

- On 1 July in the morning, the Commission's representative presented information on the glanders situation in Brazil sent to the Commission by the Brazilian authorities.

Document SANCO/6170/2009 was distributed and presented during the meeting. Member States were informed that it will be sent electronically together with the above mentioned information to the contact points of the Member States since later on the day they will be asked to vote on it informally, as the inter-services consultation had not been concluded for purely legal reasons.

Document SANCO/6170/2009: a draft Commission Decision amending Decision 2004/211/EC as regards the entries for Brazil and Mauritius in the list of third countries and parts thereof from which imports into the Community of live equidae and semen, ova and embryos of the equine species are authorised.

Directive 90/426/EC lays down animal health conditions for the importation into the Community of live equidae. It provides that imports of equidae into the Community are only authorised from third countries or parts of the territory thereof, which have been free from glanders for a period of at least six months and free of Venezuelan equine encephalitis for at least two years.

In September 2008, following the notification by Brazil of the confirmation of a case of glanders in a horse in the suburbs of São Paulo, the Commission adopted Decision 2008/804/EC excluding the State of São Paulo from the list of territories of Brazil set out in Annex I to Decision 2004/211/EC in order to allow the importation of equidae, their semen, ova and embryos to continue from the disease free parts of the territory of Brazil. In the light of the information and guarantees provided by Brazil, and taking into account that at least 6 months have elapsed since the case of glanders was detected, importation of equidae, their semen, ova and embryos from the State of São Paulo should be allowed. Decision 2004/211/EC should therefore be amended accordingly.

A veterinary inspection mission carried out in Mauritius recorded shortcoming that would require to limit the introduction into the Community of equidae from that country to imports of registered horses in accordance with the conditions laid down in Annex II(E) to Commission Decision 93/197/EEC on animal health conditions and veterinary certification for imports of registered equidae and equidae for breeding and production. Those conditions require amongst others a complete residence period of three months and a pre-export isolation in an approved isolation centre protected from vector insects to avoid the introduction of disease into the Community. The entry for Mauritius in Decision 2004/211/EC should therefore be amended accordingly.

Certain Member States, notably those that have movements of horses from the affected areas supported the Commission's proposal. Others had reservations pending further expert scrutiny. In the afternoon the Commission informed the Committee that a new inter-service consultation procedure was launched. The Commission intends to present this draft Decision for a formal vote at the meeting of this Committee to be held on 14 July 2009.

The Commission asked the Member States whether they would be ready to support such a draft. All Member States gave an informal positive opinion to the Commission.

- The Commission representative informed the Member States that an extraordinary meeting of this Committee will be held on 14 July 2009.

The following document was distributed during the meeting:

Document SANCO/10508/2004: Veterinary Services contact points trade problems (version 19 dated 24-06-2009). Member States were requested to check the information and inform the Commission in case of any mistakes. They should ensure that the coordinates of three contact points are included in the document.