SUMMARY REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE FOOD CHAIN AND ANIMAL HEALTH HELD IN BRUSSELS ON 07 OCTOBER 2013
(Section Animal Health & Welfare)

Chair.: Mr. A. Laddomada, Mr. A. E. Fuessel.

All Member States were present.

A.1 Information from Italy on the situation as regards highly pathogenic avian influenza of the subtype H7N7.

The Italian representative made a summary presentation on the eradication of six outbreaks of highly pathogenic avian influenza of the H7N7 subtype that have occurred between 14 August and 5 September in the region of Emilia Romagna in the provinces of Bologna and Ferrara. All checks in poultry holdings located in the protection and surveillance zones established around these outbreaks have been finalised and the last restrictions in relation to these zones will be lifted on 8 October. In addition, Italy is finalising checks on all laying hen farms of the same company in 8 different regions and on all laying hen holdings in areas with a high density of poultry holdings.

A.2 Information from the EU reference laboratory on surveillance for avian influenza in poultry and wild birds.

The expert from the EU Reference Laboratory for avian influenza presented the results of the surveillance for avian influenza in poultry and wild birds carried out by Member States during 2012 according to the guidelines laid down in Commission Decision 2010/367/EC.

For the surveillance in poultry holdings ten Member States followed a risk-based sampling approach, while the other Member States used a representative sampling method. In total, 29,404 poultry holdings were sampled with Laying Hens (conventional and free-range) being the most frequently sampled poultry category and making up 30.0% of the holdings sampled, followed by Backyard Flocks (19.4%) and Chicken Breeders (17.9%). 40 holdings were serologically positive for avian influenza of the subtype H5 (0.14% of holdings sampled), including one holding that was also seropositive for subtype H7. From the 22 out of 40 holdings that underwent follow-up testing, one of them tested positive for subtype H5 by PCR indicative for an active infection. Four holdings tested serologically positive for subtype H7 (0.01% of holdings sampled), including one holding that was also seropositive for subtype H5. Of the four holdings reported to be seropositive, three
underwent follow-up testing for the presence of active infection and one of these tested positive for subtype H7 by PCR. The detection rate in Breeder Ducks (8.5%) and Breeder Geese (2.6%) was considerably higher than for other poultry categories across the EU. Fattening Ducks had the third highest detection rate at 0.8%.

Surveillance for avian influenza in wild birds focuses on sampling and testing of wild birds found dead. A total of 6,508 wild birds were tested during 2012 and no H5N1 highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) virus was detected in the Union. Low pathogenic avian influenza (LPAI) viruses of subtypes H5 or H7 were detected in three of the birds sampled by passive surveillance in Hungary. These were two Mallards (Anas platyrhynchos) and one Black-crowned Night Heron (Nycticorax nycticorax).

A.3 Information from the Member States (Italy, France, Spain) on the bluetongue situation.

The Italian representative made a presentation updating on the bluetongue (BT) situation, highlighted the presence of BTV-1 in Sardinia, Sicily, Lazio and Tuscany, presented the related restriction zones and explained that the recent evolution of bluetongue in Sardinia confirms that in this island the conditions exist for major epidemic waves of disease that are particularly difficult to control. The discussion of the Committee focused on the vaccine (its effectiveness, population coverage, vaccination strategy and availability). The Commission's representative was concerned by the delay in implementing an effective vaccination campaign.

The French representative updated on the BTV-1 situation in Corsica clarifying that Corsica was already a restriction zone for BTV-1 and that susceptible animals were not allowed to move to the continent. The vaccination campaign had already been planned so to be concluded by the end of the year.

The Spanish representative indicated that no viral circulation was detected for BT in 2013 in Spain.

A.4 Information from the Commission and exchange of views on the West Nile Fever situation in the Member States.

The Commission's representative gave an update on the West Nile Fever (WNF) situation in humans and animals in the Union. As of 3/10/2013, 686 WNF cases (203 in the EU and 483 in neighbouring countries) have been confirmed in humans since the beginning of the 2013 transmission season which is from June to November. This compares to 937 cases (244 in the EU and 693 in neighbouring countries) recorded during 2012. Currently affected Member States are Croatia, Greece, Italy, Hungary and Romania. The European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control produces weekly updates on human WNF cases and risk maps:

As regards WNF in animals, during 2013 Member States have notified 38 cases of WNF cases in horses via the Animal Disease Notification System (ADNS)
according to EU legislation (Directive 2009/159/EC). These cases were reported by Greece (8), Italy (20) and Spain (10). Member States must investigate suspect cases in horses according to the legal requirements. In addition to this passive surveillance system, different additional surveillance strategies are used in particular in Member States where humans or horses have been affected by WNF. These comprise sero-surveillance of sentinel horses and sentinel chickens in risk areas, investigations of mortalities in birds and entomological studies. In the event of new cases in humans and horses, the different types of surveillance are enhanced dependent on the epidemiological situation. As regards the need for a harmonised surveillance strategy throughout the EU, Member States' general feeling was that surveillance activities for WNF should be seen in the context of the on-going disease prioritisation exercise. Only a very targeted approach in close collaboration with the public health authorities could be envisaged, bearing however in mind that intervention possibilities are very limited. Authorised vaccines are available to protect horses, but not for humans.

A.5 **Protective measures against African swine fever in the Member States (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland).**

Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia updated on the protective measures applied in their territories against African swine fever (ASF).

Latvia made a presentation on the surveillance activities performed in domestic pigs and in wild boars, on the cleaning and disinfection procedures carried out at the borders with Belarus and with the Russian Federation. They reported also on the checks on passengers’ luggage carried out in the airports and at the borders. As regards the vehicles’ cleaning and disinfection at the borders, they foresee problems in winter, due to the freezing of the water. A long-term solution could be the construction of hangars.

The Lithuanian representative made a presentation on the control measures applied at the border with Belarus as regards the cleaning and disinfection of vehicles and on the checks applied on the passengers' luggage. Furthermore, they presented the use of a synthetic repellent for wild boar to be used as a mitigation measure for ASF. The repellent has been used at the border with Belarus in order to avoid the entry of wild boars attracted by maize or by other crops fields.

The Estonian representative updated on the controls performed at the border with Russia and on the surveillance activities carried out in Estonia.

Due to time restrictions, Poland didn't report on the issue however, they have made their presentation available to the Committee.

A.6 **Information from Greece and Bulgaria on the sheep and goat pox situation.**

Greece and Bulgaria have presented the current situation as regards sheep pox in their country. 12 outbreaks have been notified in Greece between 13 August and 4 October 2013, all in the region of Thracies, at the border with Turkey. Another suspicion is currently under investigation in another region. Concerning Bulgaria, a first outbreak of sheep pox has been notified on 25 September 2013 in the Burgas region, at the border with Turkey, and another outbreak has been detected
on 4 October in Blagoevgrad region, at the border with Greece. Greece and Bulgaria have taken measures in the framework of Council Directive 92/119/EEC of 17 December 1992. The Commission is following the situation very closely in order to assess the necessity or not of complementary measures.

A.7 Information from Austria, Bulgaria, Italy and Slovenia on the implementation of their rabies co-financed programmes in 2012.

The representatives of Austria, Italy and Slovenia made presentations on the implementation of their rabies co-financed programmes in 2012.

Austria: The country is free from rabies since 2008, and 2012 was the last year of implementation of oral vaccination thanks to the favourable situation in neighbouring Slovenia and Italy.

Bulgaria informed the Committee on the implementation of the rabies oral vaccination during 2012. Only one case of rabies was detected in western Bulgaria in 2012. The Commission welcomed the fact that since 2011 no interruption to the bi-annual oral vaccination campaigns has occurred and acknowledged the improvement of the situation in the vaccinated areas. Nevertheless, concerns were expressed regarding the low level of passive surveillance that is in place in the country over the past years. This weakness does not allow to interpret correctly the absence of reported cases in the largest part of the country and consequently draw conclusions on the real epidemiological situation in order to correctly define the areas that need to be covered with oral vaccination in the coming years.

Italy: Following the implementation of large scale oral vaccination campaigns since 2009 the disease has disappeared from north-eastern Italy since February 2011. From 2013 Italy has reduced the vaccination area to a narrow zone along the border with Slovenia.

Slovenia: Slovenia continued oral rabies vaccination in its whole territory in 2012. Following one year (2011) with no detected rabies case, 3 outbreaks of the disease were detected in 2012. One of the outbreaks, close to the Italian border, proved to be vaccine induced. The other 2 cases were located very close to the Croatian border in an area contiguous to a cluster of cases in the neighbouring country.

A.8 Information from Bulgaria, Germany, France, Luxembourg, Hungary, Romania, Slovenia and Slovakia on the implementation of their co-financed programmes for the control and monitoring of classical swine fever in 2012.

This item was postponed to the next meeting of this Committee due to time restrictions.

A.9 Declaration from Italy regarding their submission of a surveillance programme for IHN and VHS in a compartment/farm in Veneto region.

The Commission's representative informed about a submitted declaration from Italy regarding disease free status for IHN and VHS in the farm Azienda Agricola Troticoltura F.Lli Battocchi situated in the zone of the catchment area of river Rio
Fossalta in the region Venta. The disease free status has temporarily been suspended due to an outbreak of Infectious Hematopoietic Necrosis (IHN) in the farm in June 2013. The farm has now been emptied, cleaned and disinfected and breeding is put back into operation.


Non-compliant Member States who were present were asked to update figures presented in a table during the meeting. Some Member States gave updates on the situation during the meeting.

A.11 Information from Norway on a declaration of freedom from Infectious Salmon Anaemia (ISA) in compartment Reinvika in Nordland County and zone Øyerhamn in Hordaland County.

The Commission's representative informed about declarations submitted from Norway on two areas free of Infectious Salmon Anaemia (ISA). The first one is the compartment Reinvika, which consists of one brood stock site at sea within the municipality of Soerfold in Nordland County. Targeted surveillance has been carried out for more than two years without detecting the disease agent (HPR-deleted) on the farm. The testing rapport shows, however, that HPR0 strain of ISAV at one occasion is detected from one sample analysed by a non-accredited method.

The other area is the zone Øyerhamn, which is a land based hatchery reared farm within the municipality of Kvinherrad in Hordaland County. Prior to the introduction of new aquaculture animals with free status regarding ISA, the farm was emptied, cleaned and disinfected, followed by a period of six weeks falling.

A.12 Information on the Technical Working Group meeting on ISA carried out on the 2nd of October 2013. Brief report on conclusions and further work to be done.

The Commission's representative informed about the discussions and conclusions from the Technical Working Group meeting on 2 October 2013 on ISA. Setting up of the technical working group was proposed by the Commission at the previous meeting of this Committee in order to review the current EU legislations as regards ISA and bring it in line with the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) Diagnostic Code and Aquatic Manual. The discussion on this meeting was based on Commission working document SANCO/7128/2013, and the conclusions are to be found in "Report on the AD Hoc Technical Working Group", SANCO G2/KR/lp (2013) 3416919 - both documents delivered to the Member States during the meeting.

In the subsequent discussion the Commission announced that the further work on amending the EU legislation as regards ISA will be based on only listing Infectious salmon anaemia virus genotype HPR-deleted in Part II of Annex IV to Directive 2006/88/EC. Self-declarations as regards freedom of ISAV HPR0 will be made possible for the purpose of international trade; however barriers to intra-EU trade based on HPR0 IASV will unlikely be acceptable for the Commission.
B.1 Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Implementing Decision on the evolution of animal diseases in the Union and in third countries.

No item raised.

B.2 Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Implementing Decision concerning animal health control measures relating to classical swine fever in certain Member States.

The representative of the Food and Veterinary Office (FVO) of the Commission's Health and Consumers Directorate General presented the outcome of the audit carried out in Romania in September 2013 in order to evaluate the implementation of the classical swine fever (CSF) surveillance programme. It was concluded that the implementation of the official controls are largely done in accordance with the programme and it is highly unlikely that the CSF virus has circulated in Romania in the last year. The commercial holdings visited showed a high level of biosecurity and the risk of CSF transmission to other Member States from Romanian commercial pig holdings appears to be negligible. However, some risks still persist in the backyard system. In fact, in backyards there is a wide spread of non-compliance with requirements on identification and registration of pigs and notification and registration of animal movements. The surveillance carried out in backyards could be based by design misconceptions and implementation gaps. A limited implementation of passive surveillance in certain counties with a significant pig population was also noted. As regards the wild boar, the competent authorities have a limited enforcement powers on the management of the privately run hunting areas. The Romanian competent authority should address the weakness detected by the FVO and to refine the proposal for the 2014 control and monitoring programme for CSF.

The Commission's representative presented the draft Commission Implementing Decision and explained that the aim of this text was to review, modernise, simplify and streamline the provisions applicable for regionalization as regards CSF in EU territories where wild boar are involved in the epidemiology. The text contains a single annex instead of three different parts as the current Decision 2008/855/EC contains and focuses on derogations for pig meat produced in high biosecurity commercial holdings subjected to enhanced surveillance. Member States made some comments that will be considered when finalising the draft that will be submitted for opinion in one of the future meetings of this Committee.

Vote postponed

B.3 Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Implementing Decision amending Annex I to Decision 2009/177/EC as regards disease-free status for the whole continental territory of Denmark for viral haemorrhagic septicemia and disease-free status for the whole territory of Ireland for Koi herpes virus disease.

The Commission's representative presented the draft Implementing Decision for discussion and asked Member States for comments to be forwarded to the Commission within 10 days. The Commission also announced that a similar
declaration from the UK on disease-free status of the whole territory of Northern Ireland for Koi herpes virus disease (KHV) presented at the meeting of this Committee in March 2013 will be included in the draft Commission Implementing Decision. The text will be presented for vote at the next meeting of this Committee in November.

Vote postponed

B.4 Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Implementing Decision concerning preventive vaccination against low pathogenic avian influenza in mallard ducks in Portugal and certain measures restricting the movements of such poultry and their products.

The title of the draft Implementing Decision presented at the meeting has changed as follows:

Commission Implementing Decision approving a preventive vaccination plan against low pathogenic avian influenza in a holding keeping mallard ducks in Portugal and certain provisions for their movements and products thereof.

The Commission's representative reminded that this draft Implementing Decision has been discussed at the previous meeting of this Committee on 10 and 11 September 2013 (see item C.2 of the agenda of that meeting). Its purpose is to approve a preventive vaccination plan to be implemented in one holding keeping breeding mallard ducks located in the region of Lisboa e Vale do Tejo, Ribatejo Norte in Portugal. The plan is a continuation of previous preventive vaccination plans submitted by Portugal and shall be implemented until 31 December 2014.

Vote taken: unanimous in favour.


The title of the draft Implementing Decision presented at the meeting has changed as follows:


The Commission's representative reminded that this draft Implementing Decision has been discussed at the previous meeting of this Committee on 10 and 11 September 2013 (see item C.3 of the agenda of that meeting). Its purpose is to prolong the measures laid down in Decisions 2005/734/EC, 2006/415/EC and 2007/25/EC as regards avian influenza. The above measures shall be prolonged until 31 December 2015, as outbreaks of highly pathogenic avian influenza of the subtype H5N1 in wild birds and in poultry continue to occur in third countries thereby posing a risk to animal and human health within the Union.
Vote taken: unanimous in favour.


The purpose of this draft Implementing Decision is to amend the model health certificates I, II and III (intra-Union trade in ovine and caprine animals for slaughter, fattening and breeding) set out in Annex E to Directive 91/68/EEC.

These model health certificates were most recently amended by Commission Implementing Decision 2013/445/EU. In the process of this amendment, the possibility to move, under certain conditions, breeding sheep and goats to Member States with an approved control programme for classical scrapie was erroneously omitted and certain references to Regulation (EC) No 999/2001 need to be reviewed to remove any ambiguity. Additionally, there is a need to ensure consistency of terminology in all model health certificates, set out in Annex E to Directive 91/68/EEC. Therefore, the whole Annex E to Directive 91/68/EEC should be amended.

The voting was postponed due to some concerns of two Member States’ delegates in relation to the construction of the point II.9 of the model health certificate for intra-Union trade in ovine and caprine animals for breeding (Model III). It was decided that the text mentioned above should be analysed one more time to eliminate any ambiguity.

Vote postponed

B.7 Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Decision establishing the financial contribution by the Union to the expenditure incurred in the context of the emergency measures taken to combat avian influenza in Germany in 2011.

This item was withdrawn from the agenda.

B.8 Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Decision establishing the financial contribution by the Union to the expenditure incurred in the context of the emergency vaccination plans against bluetongue in Spain in 2007 and 2008.

The purpose of this Implementing Decision is to fix the amount of the financial contribution from the Union to Spain towards the expenditure that was incurred for compensation and operational costs in taking emergency measures to eradicate bluetongue in 2007 and 2008.

Vote taken: unanimous in favour.

The Commission’s representative presented a new version (revision 2) of the draft Implementing Regulation and explained the changes introduced into the document in comparison to the previous version which was discussed at the meeting of this Committee on 10 and 11 September 2013 (see item C.1 of the agenda of that meeting).

Revision 2 was prepared to take into account the comments and suggestions of the Member States on revision 1 and was already distributed to the Member States by mail on 12 September 2013.

Following the discussion with Member States, it was decided that there is a need of one more Expert Group meeting on Horse Identification to be able to discuss in detail all the provisions proposed in the proposed draft Implementing Regulation. The meeting of the group in question will take place on 31 October 2013. It was also said that there is a possibility of presentation to be made by the Commission on technical possibilities to exchange data between central databases.

C.2 Exchange of views of the Committee on a draft Commission Regulation amending Regulation (EU) No 142/2011 as regards the processing, use and disposal methods of certain rendered fats and the conditions for the introduction of such rendered fats into the Union.

The Commission's representative presented revision 9 of the draft Regulation and explained the changes introduced into the document in comparison to the previous version which was presented at the last meeting of this Committee on 10 and 11 September 2013 (see item B.5 of the agenda of that meeting).

M.1 Information from the Commission on the killing of stray dogs.

Member States were informed of a letter sent by Commissioner Borg to the Romanian Minister for Health with regard to the killing of stray dogs. It was highlighted that though this issue falls outside the scope of EU legislation, international standards do exist. Member States were reminded of the OIE recommendations that consider euthanasia as a measure to be taken only in combination with other measures to control stray dog populations, and only as a last resort.

M.2 Used cooking oils and blood and blood products.

Document SANCO/7129/2013 was distributed by the Commission during the meeting, with title: "Working document - Information on imports from third countries of used cooking oils and blood and blood products". The Commission's representative presented the document and informed that a guidance document on the subject is currently under preparation, to be further discussed at the next meeting of this Committee in November.