REPORT ON THE MEETING OF THE TASK FORCE FOR MONITORING ANIMAL DISEASE ERADICATION IN THE MEMBER STATES
BRUSSELS, 11 February 2011
REPORT ON THE MEETING OF THE TASK FORCE (TF) FOR MONITORING ANIMAL DISEASE ERADICATION IN THE MEMBER STATES
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Participants:

Representatives of Member States: AT, BE, CY, CZ, DE, EE, ES, FI, HU, IE, IT, LT, LV, PL, PT, RO, SI, SE, SK, UK.

Private Experts:
- S. Sternberger Leverin, SE, (chairwoman of the tuberculosis sub-group)
- E. Stifter, IT (chairman of the bovine Brucellosis sub-group);
- M. Madsen, DK (chairman of the Salmonella sub-group);
- E. Niin, EE (chairwoman of the North Rabies sub-group);
- V. Moennig, DE (chairman of the Classical swine fever sub-group)

Commission (SANCO 04):
- J. Moynagh – Chairman
- L. Vandenberghhe
- V. Piazza
- P. Demetriou
- S. Idei
- A. Blass Rico

Commission (SANCO A4 - Informatics tools IT)
- A. Mathy,
- G. Seemel, Unit A4

J. Moynagh welcomed the delegations and the private experts. The agenda was adopted (see detailed agenda-Annex I). No suggestions for new items were proposed by the delegations.


Dr Ernst Stifter, IT (chairman of the Bovine Brucellosis sub-groups) presented the summary of the implementation of bovine brucellosis eradication programmes and the conclusions and recommendation of the meeting held in Santander.

CONCLUSIONS

- Considerable and ongoing reduction of Bovine brucellosis prevalence.
- The programmes implemented in specific high risk areas, including vaccination and other control measures, have proven to be effective in reducing prevalence.
• The recommendations made by the group in the last meeting in Santander (15 - 16 November 2004) have been largely implemented.

• The level of data collection and analysis has been improved.

• The group recognises the difficulty arising from the considerable resources required for testing of fattening herds, given that evidence from other Member States suggests that they play a minor role in the epidemiology of bovine brucellosis.

• The high proportion of culture negative herds suggests a possible relative increase in the rate of false positive reactors (FPSR) in the regions that are in the final stages of the eradication programme.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

• The group recommends that efforts in eradicating bovine brucellosis be continued and even intensified, vaccination should be maintained.

• The results of epidemiological investigations should be presented to allow a better understanding of the sources and routes of infection.

• Data about fattening herds testing should be made available by the Spanish authorities for consideration in the event of future changes in the legislation at EU level and to better focus the priorities of the eradication programme.

• Cases of FPSR should be investigated to clarify if their epidemiological characteristics are similar to those identified in other MS and to develop strategies at national level to manage them.


Dr Susanna Sternberger Lewerin, SE, (chairwoman of the tuberculosis sub-group) presented the summary of the situation as regard the implementation of the bovine tuberculosis eradication programme and the conclusions and recommendation of the meeting.

Since last visit in 2003; training activities, improvement of test performance, epidemiological studies, activities for wildlife and animal movement controls have been put in place. Stakeholder involvement, frequent testing and prompt actions have been achieved, but farmers lack motivation have been noticed.
Frequency of testing and age limit for testing are implemented based on results from past 2 years. All *M. bovis* isolates have been spoligotyped. 59 infected herds have been detected in 2009: 29 have been detected by testing, 30 at slaughter. In addition, 124 animals with suspect lesions at slaughter have been confirmed as TB positive (66 from test positive herds, 58 from herds where last test was negative).

In general, the situation has immensely been improved since 2003: databases, training activities, communication, stakeholder involvement, attention to wildlife, vigilance in testing are all very good.

**CONCLUSIONS**

- Make continuous use of collected data.
- Use indicators such as slaughterhouse submission rates, details of follow-up tests and testing history.
- Improve communication between NRL and Ministry as well as field staff.
- Propose actions to prevent transmission between cattle and wildlife.
- Verify absence of human cases.
- Investigate apparent increase in tuberculin reactors.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Make continuous use of collected data.
- Use indicators such as slaughterhouse submission rates, details of follow-up tests and testing history.
- Improve communication between NRL and Ministry as well as field staff.
- Propose actions to prevent transmission between cattle and wildlife.
- Verify absence of human cases.
- Investigate apparent increase in tuberculin reactors.

3. **INFORMATION ON THE MEETING OF THE “BOVINE TUBERCULOSIS”SUB-GROUPS OF THE TASK FORCE ON MONITORING ANIMAL DISEASE ERADICATION HELD IN BRESCIA, ITALY, ON 21-22 JUNE 2010.**

Dr Susanna Sternberger Lewerin, SE, presented the summary of the situation as regard the implementation of the bovine tuberculosis eradication programme in the different regions of Italy.
The following have been observed:

1. National trend of decreasing prevalence.

2. Some regions (Calabria, Campania, Puglia and Sicily) still high prevalence – Special Order in 2006.

3. 10 infected herds in OTF regions in 2009.

CONCLUSIONS

- Vast improvement since last meeting in 2002, with decreasing prevalence figures, several OTF regions.

- Improved computerisation, streamlining of compensation system and shorter removal times.

- Large regional differences, particular problems in southern regions, need for renewal of Special Order.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Collect data on slaughterhouse submission rates, follow-up tests etc in all regions.

- Keep testing in OTF regions, interval and sample based on regular epidemiological assessments (all herds tested within 2-4 years).

- Random sample (if not all herds yearly) AND risk based testing.

- Single test recommended (only bovine tuberculin).

- Continue use of γ-IF test as ancillary test.

- Continue wildlife monitoring and other activities in wildlife.

- Continue work towards national database and exchange of data with public health sector.

- Verify diagnostic ability for M bovis in humans and ensure tracing from human cases.

- Continue legal enforcement in relevant areas.

M. Madsen, DK, (Chairman of the sub-group) presented the summary of the conclusions and recommendation of the meeting explaining that the aim of the meeting held in Brussels was to share experiences as regards the implementation of the salmonella control programmes in Belgium and to identify areas where further efforts are needed.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Stakeholder cooperation:**

  There is an increasing and improving cooperation among stakeholders along the food chain, i.e. amongst the veterinary, medical and poultry industry sectors. The Belgian Zoonosis Centre is operational, and has so far only dealt with outbreak investigations.

  The subgroup recommended to intensify monitoring of trends and sources of human salmonellosis, using serotyping, phage typing, antimicrobial resistance and genotyping data where available, in order to better understand and possibly reduce food-borne salmonellosis originating from poultry.

- **Feed:**

  Introduction of *Salmonella* via poultry feed is still an important risk factor. In Belgium, the goal is to encourage the feed industry to share information on regular basis, e.g. on *Salmonella* findings in raw feed materials and process control samples.

  It is the recommendation of the subgroup that a decision tree for feed production process control based on HACCP principles should be developed and implemented, that monitoring results should be available to the poultry industry and the competent authority, and a so called 'approval' or 'certification system' for poultry feed producers should be implemented.

- **Vaccination:**

  The introduction of mandatory vaccination against *Salmonella Enteritidis* resulted in very significant reductions in human infection and in infected flocks, especially within the layer sector. The 'state of play' is steady for the past 2-3 years.

  It is the recommendation of the subgroup that vaccination against *Salmonella Typhimurium* (as well as *Salmonella Enteritidis*) should be promoted, and that good vaccination practice should be promoted in order to ensure comprehensive and efficient vaccination coverage against major zoonotic serovars.

- **Further progress:**

  1. Epidemiological investigations
  2. Combining and analysing information from various points along the food chain, in order to identify and eliminate sources of *Salmonella* contamination.
3. The validity of surveillance data is crucial
4. Increase in depth investigation of persistent contamination issues in poultry holdings, hatcheries and feed production facilities.

5. INFORMATION ON THE MEETING OF THE “RABIES” SUB-GROUP OF THE TASK FORCE ON MONITORING ANIMAL DISEASE ERADICATION HELD IN TARTU, ESTONIA, 8-9 NOVEMBER 2010.

E. Niiin, EE (chairwoman of the Northern Rabies sub-group) presented the main findings as regards the Estonian programme as well as the recommendations of the subgroup:

The oral vaccination strategy (OV), the rabies evolution in Estonia from 2006 to 2010 and future planning of the programme were presented.

CONCLUSIONS

- Estonia has implemented a successful OV program.

- The planning, organisation and elaboration of OV campaigns comply with the recommendations of the 2002 EC report.

- Monitoring and surveillance activities carried out correctly, confirming excellent results.

- The laboratory has good facilities, is sufficiently equipped, in good cooperation with the VFB.

- Decision to reduce the area of OV only to higher risk areas justified.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Reinforce efforts to establish cooperation/partnership with the Russian Federation to create vaccination belt along the adjoining RF territory.

- The sample size for the monitoring of ORV campaigns can be reduced; sampling could be restricted to OV areas.

- Efforts should be continued to increase number of animals submitted for rabies diagnosis (suspect cases, indicator animals) in the whole country.

- It is suggested to reduce the positivity threshold to the serological test used or to use other commercially available serological tests.
GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

• Building partnership between MS and neighbouring non-EU countries is highly desirable in region of Baltic States. Financing decision for MS programmes in 2011 introduces this possibility. Ukraine and Belarus are open to participate.

• Transboundary cooperation on OV has delivered favourable signals in the case of the Kaliningrad region of RF; important to continue co-operation without interruption.

• The re-emergence of the rabies in southern Poland shows the usefulness of maintaining surveillance awareness and should put all MSs on alert. The TF strongly suggests that Poland considering an emergency vaccination.


Prof. V. Moennig, DE (chairman of the Classical swine fever sub-group) presented the summary of the conclusions and recommendation of the three first meetings held by the sub-groups: the first one was held in Hannover in the Community Reference laboratory (CRL). This was the first meeting after creation of the subgroup in February 2009. The goal of the meeting was to get an overview of the situation in MS and do some forward planning. The second meeting was held in Bucarest on 10-11 November 2009.

The third meeting was held in Budapest, on 6-7 December 2010 and it was focused on the situation in Hungary and Slovakia and on the implementation of their eradication programmes: CSF outbreaks on both sides of the border and different control strategies.

CSF Situation Hungary

• First CSF cases in wild boar in 2007.
• Last CSF case in 2009 (seropositivity is declining rapidly).
• A total of 268 CSF cases (no domestic pigs affected).
• No emergency vaccination (vaccination plans have been designed for the worst case).
• A number of biosafety rules for wild boar and domestic pigs have been implemented.
• Shooting of young wild boar is financially rewarded.
• A bilateral working group (SK-HU) has been established in 2006.

CSF Situation in Slovakia

• First CSF case in wild boar in 1993.
• Last CSF case in wild boar in May 2008.
• Last CSF case in domestic pigs July 2008.
• 187 outbreaks of CSF in domestic pigs.
• 640 cases of CSF in wild boar.
• A number of biosafety rules for wild boar and domestic pigs have been implemented.
• Shooting of wild boar is financially rewarded.
• Oral vaccination of wild boar was implemented.
• Epidemiological link to outbreaks on Hungarian side of the border.

CONCLUSIONS

• Situation concerning CSF in wild boar is favorable in Hungary and Slovakia. There have been no new cases in the past 13 (Hungary) and 29 (Slovakia) months, respectively.

• (Molecular) epidemiological investigations showed that the outbreaks on both sides of the border were caused by the same virus.

• Granting adequate compensation/reward for the hunting of young and underweight wild boar was an effective method to reduce that part of the population. In addition more information about the prevalence of the infection can be collected.

• The disposing of viscera of shot wild boar as category I material was considered effective to reduce infective pressure.

• The regular bilateral meetings and cooperation on all levels is seen essential for the effective control of CSF in wild boar.

• Romania, Hungary and Slovakia consider participation in the EU wild boar data base as soon as the technical requirements are met at national levels.

• Standardization of laboratory diagnosis CSF in wild boar is identified as a problem.

• The existing "Guidelines on surveillance/monitoring, control and eradication of classical swine fever in wild boar (SANCO/7032/2010 (Rev 4))" are seen as a useful paper to help control CSF in wild boar.

RECOMMENDATIONS

• Transboundary connections on all levels should be maintained and established; joint simulation exercises are recommended on the basis of the updated national contingency plans.

• A method for standardization of laboratory test for CSF diagnosis in wild boar should be developed and added to the diagnostic manual.

• A workshop for the handling of the wild boar database should be held in 2011 (1 IT expert and 1 veterinary epidemiologist per country).
• Wild boar samples for trichinella tests could also be used for CSF-serology where applicable.

• Continued surveillance of wild boar and free ranging domestic pig populations in formerly infected and/or risk areas is recommended.

• Transboundary cooperation in case of disease outbreaks in border districts should be implemented in national contingency planning (if not already in place).

• The guidelines on surveillance/monitoring, control and eradication of CSF in wild boar should be reviewed and extended (SANCO/7032/2010)

On January 26th 2011 a bilateral meeting of Hungarian and Slovakian experts took place. The present epidemiological CSF situation in both countries was reviewed and it was agreed to regularly meet in order to improve mutual communication and information.

Then Prof. Moennig presented the **EC CSF in Wild Boar Surveillance Database:**

**Aim**

• Transparent representation of the epidemiological situation on CSF between the participating Member States (particulary along borders between MS).

• Up-to-date report of the course of infection in the different countries.

• Evaluation of the data in time and space considering the restriction and vaccination areas.

• Advantages in the scientific assessment of the disease situation in different regions.

  Easing the production of official reports.

**Implementation**

• Extension of the existing CSF in wild boar surveillance database of Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg and The Netherlands for all other MS with emphasis on currently affected countries, e.g. Slovakia, Hungary, Romania.

**Finally, the future activities of the group were presented:**

• Follow-up of CSF situations in Germany, Romania, Slovakia, Hungary, Bulgaria.

• Promotion and implementation of the wild boar database (e.g., workshops).

• Focus on the CSF situation in Western Balkan countries (next meeting of the subgroup in Serbia).
7. ON-LINE SYSTEM: SUBMISSION OF ERADICATION PROGRAMMES

A. Mathy and G. Seernel, Unit A4 (Informatics tools IT) made a presentation on the finalisation and modification of the web based interface for submitting programme applications (already started last year). The interface presents as a PDF document (one PDF document for each specific template for specific disease eradication programme, in total four PDF documents) which can be completed with the information that the MSs have to provide when making application for programme approval.

The PDF document for programme applications is based on the Annexes to Decision 2008/425/EC laying down standard requirements for the submission by MSs of national programmes for the eradication, control and monitoring of certain animal diseases and zoonosis for Community financing.

V. Piazza explained that those PDF documents have been modified in relation to those used last year in order to optimise the information already sent by MSs. The modified version will be send to the Member States at the latest by first half of March in order to give them the possibility to submit eradication programmes for 2012 via the on-line system.

P. Demetriou explained in details the modifications made to those pdf templates.


J. Moynagh presented shortly working document SANCO/10352/2011 on priorities for 2012 and timing 2011-201 (Annex II) and a preliminary proposal for the work programme for 2011; working document SANCO/10354/2011. Very important that TF meetings will be organised in some Third Countries (as agreed last year with the extension of the mandate of the TF).

Further contact with certain delegations that are asked to organise certain sub-groups needed in order to agree an appropriate dates. (see Annex III).

9. PROGRAMMES 2012: CLARIFICATION ON ELIGIBLE COST

As outcome of the last year meeting during which Spain presented a document on "efficiency assessment of the veterinary fund", during the SCOFAAH meeting in July, the Commission circulated to MSs a working document explaining more in details the eligible cost to be considered when an eradication programme is submitted. The document was agreed by the MSs and it has been included (Annex) in Commission Decision 2010/712/EC, approving the 2012 eradication programmes and their financial contribution from the Union.

L. Vandenberg clarified some of those costs (following a request from some MSs) and he made clear that eligibility rules have been clarified in the annex to Commission Decision 2010/712/EU. They apply from the 2011 programmes onwards. These rules do not differ significantly from the current practice during desk control and audits.
ANNEX I

TASK FORCE FOR MONITORING ANIMAL DISEASE ERADICATION

Annual meeting of the Plenary Task Force

Friday 11 FEBRUARY 2011, 9.30 H – 18.00H

Conference Centre A. Borschette – Rue Froissart 36 – Bruxelles – AB 4A

AGENDA

Introduction, opening:

James Moynagh: Head of Unit 04- Veterinary control programme

Points:

1. Reports of the subgroups:
   - Tuberculosis: Portugal and Italy (Chairwoman)
   - Bovine brucellosis: Spain (Chairman)
   - Salmonellosis: Belgium (Chairman)
   - Rabies: Estonia (Chairwoman)
   - Classical swine fever: Hungary (Chairman)


3. Programmes 2012: presentation of the modified pdf templates to submit programmes via on-line system

4. Programmes 2011/12: clarification on eligible costs

5. Miscellaneous
Animal disease eradication, control and monitoring programmes

Priorities for 2012 and timing 2011-2012
1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this document is to outline the steps which will be followed when considering the programmes submitted by Member States (MS) for co-financing by the European Commission in the context of Council Decision 2009/470/EC.

The individual approval of the programmes follows a well-defined timetable according to the Council Decision 2009/470/EC (annex).

1.1. Submission and approval of the programmes

Each programme has to fulfil the requirements (criteria) provided for by Commission Decision 2008/341/EC. Those criteria are specific for eradication programmes, monitoring/surveillance and control programmes.

The format to be used for the programmes to be submitted for 2011 is laid down in Commission Decision 2008/425/EC.

Programmes presented after the deadline of 30 April 2011 will not be taken into account for financing the following year (Article 27(2) of Council Decision 2009/470/EC).

Unit SANCO 04 (Veterinary Control Programmes) is responsible for the veterinary and financial assessment and management of the programmes. The unit will consult within the Directorate-General and the reports from SANCO F (Food and Veterinary Office) will be also considered.

The Commission can ask for additional information from the Member State if a programme proposed for co-financing does not contain all the requested information or if certain technical and financial amendments are necessary. The period for gathering all the information regarding the programmes shall end on 15 September 2011 [Article 27 (4) of Council Decision 2009/470/EC].

1.2. Monitoring the progress of the current programmes (2011)

The Commission will monitor and evaluate the programmes based inter alia on the following information:

- The intermediate technical and financial report of the programme as foreseen by Article 27 (7) of Council Decision 2009/470/EC, to be presented by 31 July 2011 by the Member State (Article 3 of Commission Decision 2008/940/EC and Article 19(c) of Commission Decision 2009/883/EC (Decision approving the individual programmes);

- Information from the Member States presented in the Standing Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health;

- Final reports, in accordance with Article 27 (7)(b) of Council Decision 2009/470/EC by 30 April 2012, on the technical execution of the programme accompanied by justifying evidence as to the costs paid by the MS (Requested by Article 19(f) of Decision 2009/883/EC);

- Final technical and financial report to be presented by 30.04.2011 on the execution of the 2010 programmes

- Reports based on on-the-spot inspections by the Food and Veterinary Office;

- Reports based on other on-the-spot inspections or audits;
- Reports based on the activity of the Task Force on monitoring animal disease eradication.

In order to maintain transparency, the Commission makes the approved programmes available on the SANCO website.

2. PRIORITY CRITERIA FOR ERADICATION CONTROL AND MONITORING PROGRAMMES OF ANIMAL DISEASES AND ZOONOSES

2.1. In prioritising the programmes for the allocation of EU funding we are giving weight to diseases of public health importance and those that have major economic impact due to trade implications. We are also taking account of the need to ensure continuity and achieve progress as well as the interest of each programme for the Union and the volume of available appropriations.

Certain monitoring programmes are compulsory such as TSE monitoring and AI surveillance. It is also compulsory to submit multi-annual technical programmes for the control of zoonotic salmonella in certain animal populations; however the possibility for co-financing is furthermore based on annual submissions under 2009/470/EC by the Member States.

In addition, we recommend to continue to submit multi-annual programmes for Rabies.

2.2. Union co-financing will not be granted for two particular situations:

- Programmes consisting of measures that are compulsory in Union legislation and not primarily aimed at eradication, such as those aimed at guaranteeing the health status of animals intended for trade.

- Programmes consisting of measures aimed at demonstrating the absence of a disease, aimed at obtaining the recognition of official freedom from the disease.

This approach is similar to that of recent years and is consistent with the approach to be outlined in the Communication on Community Animal Health Policy.
ANNEX

Timetable for submission, evaluation and approval of eradication, control and monitoring programmes of certain animal diseases and zoonoses

Procedure for the approval of programmes for 2012

30 APRIL 2011 Submission of the programmes by the Member States. The format to be used for the programmes is laid down in Commission Decision

The electronic version of the programmes should be submitted to the following electronic address:

SANCO-VET-PROG@ec.europa.eu

Please send one e-mail for each different programme indicating clearly in the subject the disease and the Member State or Accessing State.

However, we strongly recommend, as last year, to submit the programmes via the online system in operation from last year. The modified pdf templates to be used to submit the programmes will be send to all MSs by 31 of March.

No specific deadline: Request for additional information by Commission.

15 September 2011: End of the period for gathering information from MS.

October: Decision approving the programmes voted at SCOFAH

30 November 2011: Adoption of the Decision approving the programmes.
First evaluation (technical and financial) of the programme by the Member States to be submitted to Commission. Commission Decision 2008/940/EC lays down standard reporting requirements for programmes of eradication and control of animal diseases co-financed by the Community.

15 September 2011: Based on the information (both financial and technical [e.g. number of test performed, number of animals culled etc.]) on eligible measures to be taken by the end of the year) as well on the information of the intermediate report provided by the MSs, the Commission will probably proceed to the funding re-allocation with the aim of optimising the use of the resources and solving individual problems but taking into account the limitations as regards the number of transactions.

Programme 2010


30 October 2011: The Commission decides on the funding and information are given to the Standing Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health on the financial Decision taken.

Please, note that the documents (reports of the TF etc) and the legislation related to the programmes approved can be found at:

http://ec.europa.eu/food/animal/diseases/eradication/legisl_en.htm
ANNEX III

EUROPEAN COMMISSION
HEALTH & CONSUMERS DIRECTORATE-GENERAL

04 – Veterinary Control Programmes

SANCO/10354/2011
Working document

TASK FORCE
for monitoring disease eradication in the Member States

Draft Working plan year 2011

Possible TF meetings in Third Countries:
CSF: Serbia
Rabies: Kaliningrad
TB: Croatia

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