SUMMARY REPORT OF THE
STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE FOOD CHAIN AND ANIMAL HEALTH
HELD IN BRUSSELS ON 10 JULY 2013
(Section Biological Safety of the Food chain)

Chair: K. Van Dyck

23 Member States were present. Denmark was absent and represented by Sweden. Bulgaria was absent and represented by Belgium. Hungary was absent and represented by Luxembourg. Portugal and Cyprus were absent and not represented.

A.1 Request of Denmark on special guarantees for Salmonella in chicken meat

Denmark presented a new request for special salmonella guarantees for its territory in the context of the broiler meat trade. It presented its national control programme and most recent prevalence data for the broiler meat production chain. Some Member States requested technical clarifications on the control programme. Denmark is still sending broiler meat from infected flocks for slaughter in other Member States, which makes certain Member States reluctant. The trade requirements that would apply if the special guarantee were granted were explained.

A.2 Presentation of the outcome of the questionnaire on verotoxigenic Escherichia coli (VTEC)

The Commission presented the results of the questionnaire sent to Member States to collect information on their approaches to managing VTEC infections in food. The information collected showed that Member States were willing to support a harmonised EU-level approach, though they had different views on which additional initiative would be best taken at EU level.

A.3 Update by the Commission and Member States on multinational foodborne outbreaks of Hepatitis A in 2013.

The Commission presented an update on the multinational Hepatitis A outbreaks that occurred in 2013, and informed meeting participants about certain links between the hygiene of food of non-animal origin and virus contamination. Several affected Member States presented their work on investigating the outbreaks and recalling possibly contaminated food consignments. A further technical discussion in an audio conference led by the Commission was proposed.
A.4 Information on the public health requirements (hygiene Regulations) and imports of food of animal origin into the European Union.

An overview of the public health requirements for importing food of animal origin was presented, with a focus on food for which the listing of third countries, model certificates and establishment had not been finalised yet. There were several requests for rewording/further clarification. One Member State contested the rules on placing crocodile meat on its market.

B.1 Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Regulation amending Annex II to Regulation (EC) No 853/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards the requirements concerning frozen food of animal origin (TECHNICAL AGREEMENT)

The amendment changes the meaning of ‘date of production’, from the date of harvesting of the fish or unprocessed fishery products to the date of cutting (filleting). It also clarifies that, in case of double freezing (e.g. of the fish and of the fillet made of it) the first freezing date must be mentioned to provide information on the total age of the frozen food.

Several Member States opposed the second amendment, which is considered essential by the European Commission. Some other Member States would prefer the rules for processed frozen food to be stricter than they currently are, to make information on the food’s total age available.

The Commission indicated that it might consider withdrawing the (whole) draft proposal.

Vote postponed

B.2 Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Implementing Decision amending Decision 2007/453/EC as regards the BSE status of Costa Rica, Italy, Israel, Japan, Netherlands, Slovenia and United States of America (see item C.3 of the SCFCAH of 17 June 2013)

The Commission presented the draft Implementing Decision containing update of the EU classification of countries according their BSE risk, reflecting the last World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) outcome on this matter. As regards Member States, this update will include Italy, Netherlands and Slovenia on the list of negligible BSE risk countries. As far as the third countries are concerned: United States, Japan and Israel will be included on the list of negligible BSE risk countries.

Vote taken: qualified majority (336 votes in favour, 16 votes absent).

B.3 Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Implementing Decision on harmonised monitoring of antimicrobial resistance in zoonotic and commensal bacteria (see item C.1 of the SCFCAH of 10 June 2013)
The Commission presented a proposal for harmonised monitoring of antimicrobial resistance (AMR). Some Member States made minor technical comments. Member States proposed to vote on the proposal in September, together with the vote on co-financing.

Vote postponed

C.1 Exchange of views of the Committee on a draft Commission Implementing Decision as regards a Union financial aid towards a coordinated control plan for antimicrobial resistance monitoring in zoonotic agents in 2014

The Decision provides 50 % co-financing for the draft AMR monitoring Decision in 2014 (see point B.3). Concerns about the € 50000 ceiling under the new Financial Regulation were expressed, in particular about co-financing with small Member States.

There was some discussion on using averages, which would result in less than 50 % co-financing in certain Member States, on the administrative burden and on excluding certain costs from co-financing.

These are general financial issues not specific to this proposal. There are also overall financial limits.

C.2 Exchange of views of the Committee on a draft Commission Regulation concerning the use of recycled hot water to remove microbiological surface contamination from carcasses

An exchange of views with Member States took place after the presentation on the scope of and conditions for using recycled hot water to remove microbiological surface contamination from carcasses. The main points concerned the rinsing of treated carcasses, labelling, and the method’s economic viability. A second discussion is planned for September.

M.1 Austria requested that certain establishments be excluded from the scope of Regulation (EU) No 210/2012 (approval of sprout establishments)

It was confirmed that excluding certain establishments from the scope of Regulation (EC) No 852/2004 also excludes them from the requirements of Regulation (EU) No 210/2012, which is an implementing act of the first Regulation. National rules must be laid down and Member States must notify the Commission about them.