Chair: B. Van Goethem.

All Member States were represented.

Croatia attended the meeting as an observer.

A.1 Introduction

See item B.1

A.2 Horse meat: state of play of the ongoing investigations in the concerned Member States

See item B.1

A.3 Exchange of view and discussion on appropriate response and future actions in relation to the findings of horse meat in food products

See item B.1

A.4 Information and exchange of views of the Committee on a draft Commission Implementing Decision as regards a Union financial aid towards a coordinated control plan with a view to establish the prevalence of fraudulent practices on the labelling of food containing beef

See item B.1

B.1 Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Implementing Decision recommending a coordinated control plan with a view to establish the prevalence of fraudulent practices in the marketing of foods containing beef

On 15 February 2013, in an extraordinary Standing Committee of the Food Chain and Animal Health (SCFCAH) convened by the European Commission, the Member States endorsed the coordinated plan announced by Health and Consumer Policy Commissioner Tonio Borg on Wednesday 12th February.

During the meeting, the Food and Veterinary Office made a presentation on the current situation in the EU horse meat market, together with the results of the
latest audits carried out in certain Member States. The Commission presented the state of play (Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed notifications) regarding fraud discovered in certain Member States involving the undeclared presence of horse meat in meat products supposed to contain only beef.

Some Member States presented results of on-going investigations.

All Member States recognised that the traceability system in the EU was functioning well. It was clear from their presentations that this crisis is clearly due to fraud perpetrated by a small number of food business operators.

Following inspections in certain Member States that revealed the presence of horse meat in foodstuffs supposed to contain only beef, results showed horse meat content of between 80% and 100%.

In the majority of Member States, investigations are currently being carried out by the relevant authorities, together with national police. Europol is also involved.

Regarding the action plan proposed by the Commission through a Recommendation and an Implementing financial Decision, the conclusion was that the plan, co-financed by the European Commission (75%), will start immediately for one month (and may be extended for a further two months) and consists of two actions:

• ascertaining whether unlabelled horse meat is present in foods inspected and
• the detection of possible residues of phenylbutazone in horse meat. This veterinary drug is illegal for use in food-producing animals, including horses.

For countries that may have difficulties carrying out the tests, the co-financing will also cover expenses for sending samples to other Member States for testing.

The plan for detecting unlabelled horse meat in certain food is to carry out tests, mainly at retail level, on foods destined for the final consumer and marketed as containing only beef (a total of approximately 2250 samples, ranging from 10 to 150 per Member State).

Regarding phenylbutazone, the plan envisages testing one sample for every 50 tonnes of horse meat.

The plan provides for regular reporting of results to the Commission, including information on sampling, type of analysis and follow-up controls. If phenylbutazone is detected in horse meat, the country where the animals concerned were certified for slaughter will also be reported.

One Member State expressed its disagreement on the proposal, and said it favoured carrying out the tests on live animals in the Member State of origin, not at the moment of slaughtering, if this is carried out in a Member State other than the Member State of origin.

The Commission pointed out that Regulation (EC) No 853/2004 requires food business operators operating slaughterhouses to request, receive, check and act
upon food chain information in respect of all animals, other than wild game, sent
or intended to be sent to the slaughterhouse. The information has to cover, in
particular, veterinary medicinal products administered to animals, together with
dates of administration and withdrawal periods.

29 April 2004 laying down specific rules for the organisation of official controls
on products of animal origin intended for human consumption requires inter alia
the official veterinarian to perform auditing and inspection tasks. In particular, the
official veterinarian has to check and analyse relevant information from the
records of the holding of provenance of animals intended for slaughter, including
food chain information, and to take account of the documented results of this
check and analysis when carrying out ante- and post-mortem inspections.

The Commission invited Member State's authorities to pay particular attention to
verifying records at the moment of ante-mortem inspection.

Vote taken: Consensus