SUMMARY RECORD OF THE
STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE FOOD CHAIN AND ANIMAL HEALTH
HELD ON 18 JUNE 2008 IN BRUSSELS
(Section Biological Safety of the Food Chain)
(Section Animal Health & Animal Welfare)
(Section Controls & Import Conditions)

Chairmen: Eric Podelet, Willem Daelman, Alberto Laddomada and Paul Van Geldorp.

1. **Guidelines on the registration of national guides to good practice in accordance with Article 8 of Regulation (EC) No 852/2004 on the hygiene of foodstuffs (AB/BJ)**

   The present document aims at assisting the competent authorities of the Member States in sending their national guide to the Commission in a uniform way. It specifies the procedure and the relevant information to be transmitted. Transmission should be electronic by using the mailbox: Sanco-NationalguidesGHP@ec.europa.eu.

2. **Guide to good practice: Proposal from the European Natural Sausage Casings Association (TC)**

   The Committee was presented the proposal from the ENSCA for a guide to good practice on the application of the HACCP principles in the natural casings sector, in accordance with Article 9 of Regulation (EC) No 852/2004 on the hygiene of foodstuffs.

3. **Presentation by Cyprus on a PrP genotype project in goats**

   The Cypriot delegation presented the results of a two years study on a PrP genotype project in goats in order to determine the possible resistance to natural scrapie of caprine animals from certain genotypes.

4. **Annual Report on the monitoring and testing for the presence of TSE in the EU in 2007**

   In accordance with the requirements of Article 6.4 of Regulation (EC) 999/2001 the Commission presented the annual report on the monitoring and testing for the presence of TSE in the EU in 2007.

---

1 European Natural Sausage Casings Association: [www.ensca.be](http://www.ensca.be)
5. Progress report from the Community reference laboratory on small ruminant TSE cases where BSE cannot be excluded

The Commission informed about the state of play of certain ongoing further examinations of positive TSE cases in small ruminants, carried out according to the requirements of Annex X to Regulation (EC) 999/2001, where BSE could not be excluded. A progress report will be published on the website of Community reference laboratory for TSEs.

6. Information by the United Kingdom on the avian influenza situation. (MP)

The British representative made a presentation on the recent highly pathogenic avian influenza H7N7 outbreak in a free range holding of laying hens in Oxfordshire. On 2 June, avian influenza was suspected when the mortality of birds increased in the holding. On 3 June, H7 avian influenza virus was found and immediate protection measures were applied. The presence of highly pathogenic avian influenza was confirmed on 4 June and by the next day, culling of animals was completed. By 7 June preliminary cleaning and disinfection were also finalised. Laboratory investigations showed that the virus is similar to recent low pathogenic H7 avian influenza virus isolates from wild birds around Europe and previous from poultry during 2006/07 in the UK. Epidemiological investigations are still ongoing Results for clinical surveillance and laboratory investigations in holdings in the protection zone are all negative so far. The source of the disease is most likely to be either undisclosed avian influenza infection in poultry or avian influenza in wild birds or the surrounding environment. There is currently no evidence of further spread of the disease. Precautionary measures for the protection of the workers in the infected holding were also taken.

The Commission representative informed the Committee that on 6 June, following a written consultation procedure (Member States were consulted by fax and by email), a Decision was adopted by the Commission delineating the areas under restriction and thereby reinforcing the measures taken by the British authorities in relation to this outbreak.

7. Information by Slovakia on the classical swine fever situation. (JPV)

The Slovak representative briefly updated the Committee with regard to the outbreaks of classical swine fever in domestic pigs occurred in Slovakia in April. Following the confirmation of the outbreak, immediate appropriate measures applied. All animals were killed and cleansing and disinfection of the infected holding were completed. Clinical and laboratory examinations of animals in holdings within the restricted and protection zones gave negative results. All measures were lifted on 16 June.

The Commission representative explained that the situation in wild boar has not been favourable during the last few months in Slovakia and in Hungary. Therefore the Commission will present in the next meeting of this Committee a draft proposal in order to amend the existing restricted zones in relation to classical swine fever in both countries.
8. Discussion and possible agreement on a draft working document as regards a guidance document on the minimum requirements for Salmonella control programmes to be recognised equivalent to those approved for Sweden and Finland in respect of the food of animal origin concerned (Doc. SANCO/745/2008 Rev. 5) (KDS). The document intends to provide guidance on provisions in Regulation (EC) No 853/2004. (See point 8 of the 22 April 2008 SCFCAH)

The Commission presented a working document on a Guidance document on the minimum requirements for Salmonella control programmes to be recognised equivalent to those approved for Sweden and Finland in respect of meat and eggs of Gallus gallus. It was explained that, at their accession, special guarantees have been granted with regard to Salmonella for consignments to Finland and Sweden of certain meat, eggs, laying hens, breeding poultry and day-old chicks. The reason for granting special guarantees was the favourable epidemiological situation in Finland and Sweden and the strict measures they apply within their national control programmes.

According to Regulation (EC) No 853/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 laying down specific hygiene rules for food of animal origin and in particular Article 8, point 3 (b) thereof, the rules concerning special guarantees may be extended, in whole or in part, to any Member State, or any region of a Member State, that has a control programme recognised as equivalent to that approved for Sweden and Finland in respect to the food of animal origin concerned. This document has no formal legal status and in the event of a dispute, ultimate responsibility for the interpretation of the law lies with the Court of Justice.

DE insisted on an amendment of Article 8 to Regulation (EC) No 853/2004. The Commission replied that this can be considered in the long run by a co-decision procedure but not within the frame of the discussion on this guidance document.

All Member States expressed their agreement with the guidance document except DE who abstained.

Guidance document: consensus reached.


The Commission presented for technical agreement a draft Commission Regulation concerning approval of Salmonella control programmes in broilers and breeding and laying flocks of Gallus gallus in certain third countries in accordance with Regulation (EC) No 2160/2003 and amending Regulation [SANCO/10011/2007].
The purpose of the current draft Decision is to amend Regulation [SANCO/10011/2007] taking into account the requirements in Regulation (EC) No 2160/2003 as regards equivalent guarantees for *Salmonella*, in particular:

- Import of live breeding hens of *Gallus gallus* and hatching eggs thereof from Tunisia is prohibited;
- Import of live breeding hens of *Gallus gallus* and hatching eggs thereof from Croatia is re-authorised;
- Import of live laying hens and table eggs is prohibited from all third countries except from Croatia and day-old chicks from the United States;
- Import of live broilers is prohibited from all third countries except day-old chicks from the United States.
- The model veterinary certificate for import of slaughter poultry from third countries is amended.

A few technical comments from AT were taken into account.

All Member States supported the draft.

Technical agreement: in favour.

10. 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.


Commission Decision 2008/377/EC of 8 May 2008 concerning certain protection measures relating to classical swine fever in Slovakia was adopted in order to reinforce the measures taken by Slovakia with regards to outbreaks of that disease in that Member State.

Based on the results of the epidemiological inquiry carried out by the competent authorities in Slovakia the outbreaks of classical swine fever in domestic pigs have been eradicated and the results of the epidemiological enquiry suggest that classical swine fever has not spread further.

The Commission has therefore proposed to repeal Decision 2008/377/EC.

**Vote: unanimous in favour.**

The Malaysian authorities have requested the Commission on 17 June to delist the establishments authorised to export fishery products intended for human consumption from Malaysia into the EU. The Commission has already started the procedure delisting the establishments and they have informed the Member States that only consignments certified before 17 June could enter the EU. Member States should perform checks on those consignments before accepting them.

Vote: withdrawn.


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

Exchange of views and possible opinion on a Draft Commission Decision derogating from Decisions 2003/858/EC and 2006/656/EC and suspending imports into the Community from Malaysia of consignments of certain live fish and of certain aquaculture products.

In accordance with Council Directive 91/496/EEC necessary measures must be taken as regards the import of products from third countries that appear to involve any serious hazard for animal and human health. Commission Decision 2003/858/EC lays down the animal health conditions and certification requirements for imports of live fish, their eggs and gametes intended for farming, and live fish of aquaculture origin and products thereof intended for human consumption and establishes harmonised animal health rules for their importation into the Community. Commission Decision 2006/656/EC lays down the animal health conditions and certification requirements for imports of fish for ornamental purpose and establishes harmonised animal health rules for imports of ornamental fish into the Community. Furthermore, it lists the territories from which imports into the Community of such fish are authorised.

The results of the latest Community inspection visit to Malaysia have revealed serious shortcomings as regards registration of aquaculture farms, notification of diseases and official controls of animal health throughout the production chain of aquaculture animals and ornamental fish. Such shortcomings are likely to lead to the spread of disease, thus presenting a serious threat to animal health in the Community. Moreover, the inspection visit has also revealed a lack of proper controls by the competent authorities of Malaysia.

Therefore the Commission proposed to adopt, at Community level, protective measures applicable to the import of certain live fish and certain aquaculture products from Malaysia in order to ensure effective and uniform protection in all Member
States. Since 15 July 2008, Member States should suspend the import of certain live fish and certain aquaculture products from Malaysia.

Vote: unanimous in favour.


See agenda item 18.


See agenda item 18.


See agenda item 18.


See agenda item 18.


The Commission explained the inter-connectedness of these proposals and proceeded to introduce them in themes.

MS welcomed the proposals which are the outcome of long discussions in several working groups. In addition, they generally expressed their support to the proposed rules. Some MS had still some concerns. In particular, FI and ES considered the proposed rules on clean seawater to go beyond the derogation provided in the transitional arrangements. They would prefer using potable water only in establishments on-land. As regards eggs, DE reminded the delegates of its request to EFSA concerning storage temperatures of eggs and indicated its wish that these conditions might be harmonised at EU level. With regard to the use of slaughterhouse staff, DE considered that a reference to an examination should be added.

In introducing the two proposals, the Commission recalled the food scandals detected in cold stores in several Member States in 2005 and 2006, DE presentation of the problem in the SCFCAH on 18.09.2006, the ensuing survey of cold stores by Member States in 2007 and the report which revealed a number of problems, in particular labelling, identification and origin difficulties, absence of essential data concerning foods, and traceability. Most of the MS expressed their support for the proposal. Some of them even considered it as being necessary and providing a good control instrument. SE, NL and UK, on the other hand, were sceptical about the proposal.


This proposal is connected with the document discussed under the previous point of the agenda. A large majority of MS considered this proposal as being adequate. NL, SE and UK were also sceptical about this proposal.

Miscellaneous

• The Belgian representative informed the Committee that the Belgian Federal Agency for the Safety of the Food is organising an International Colloquium on "Emerging Animal Diseases from Science to Policy", on 17 October 2008, in Brussels. Information on the event was distributed during the meeting.

• The Commission briefly informed the Committee that information received by the United States' competent authority USDA/APHIS concerning the recent low pathogenic avian influenza H7N3 outbreak in Arkansas and the measures applied by them was forwarded to the Member States. The control measures applied in the US are deemed equivalent of those taken in the EU in cases of low pathogenic avian influenza outbreaks. No safeguard measures will be taken by the Commission with regards to this outbreak as we do not expect the USA to take safeguard measures for the EU in case of LPAI which indeed has not been done in the past. As of 1 January 2009, the new Regulation on the import of poultry from third countries will be applicable according to which third countries cannot certify freedom from low pathogenic avian influenza on their territory but only from highly pathogenic avian influenza. Laboratory investigations must be performed and give additional guarantees be given at farm level before sending any consignments to the EU.

• The Commission informed the Committee that following the agreement signed a few months ago with the Chinese authorities for exchanging avian influenza virus isolates, the Community's Reference Laboratory (CRL) has informed the Commission that the Chinese authorities have sent 10 samples; 5 of them appear to be of the highly pathogenic avian influenza subtype H5N1. The CRL will also send an equivalent
number of samples to the Chinese authorities. This mutual exchange of virus isolates was one of the conditions in relation to the adoption of the three Decisions voted in this Committee on 2/3 October 2007, under agenda items 9, 10 and 11. The Commission had made it clear that those 3 draft Decisions authorising China to export heat treated poultry meat products from the province of Shandong to the EU would be adopted by the Commission only after the receipt of the virus isolates by the CRL. The Commission noted that this condition in relation to the exchange of virus isolates is now fulfilled.

- **Bio-preparedness:** The Commission informed about the next meeting of the Bio-preparedness Sub-Group of the Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) Task Force to be held on 1-2 July 2008 in Brussels, organised by the European Commission's Directorate General for Justice, Liberty and Security (DG JLS). The theme for the discussion is "Threats to Animals". The meeting will be open to Member States experts and part of it also to stakeholders. For the preparation of this meeting, a draft discussion paper was prepared by DG JLS and this will be sent to all participants. The aim of the discussion paper is to identify concrete actions which need to be taken in prevention of threats to animals by biological agents and toxins. As regards the answers made by Member States and stakeholders to the Green Paper on Bio-preparedness, which was adopted in July 2007, the Commission intends to publish a synthesis shortly. It is on the basis of the work of the CBRN Task Force, the answers given to the Green Paper and the Conclusions on CBRN adopted by the Council in December 2007 that the Commission may bring forward a CBRN policy package in 2009. Member States will be kept informed of further developments as regards the animal health aspects of bio-preparedness in future meetings of this Committee.

- The Commission informed the Committee about the contamination with residues of veterinary medicinal products, in products of animal origin imported from China. Protective measures are currently in place by Commission Decision 2002/994/EC with regards certain products of animal origin imported from China. These products must be tested for the presence of chloramphenicol and nitrofuran and its metabolites by the Chinese competent authorities, prior to export. Decision 2002/994/EC has been amended to cover testing also for malachite green and crystal violet; applicable as of 1 July 2008. The Chinese competent authorities will issue a report on how the testing was done which will be accompanying the consignments together with the certificates. The last Food and Veterinary Office (FVO) mission on residues to China in March 2006 concluded that in overall there have been improvements in all areas. In 2007 and 2008, important numbers of RASFF notifications on Chinese products with residues contamination still occurred which undermines the effectiveness of the compulsory testing being made by the Chinese CA. Following those notifications, a meeting was held between the Commission and the Chinese Embassy in Belgium, aiming to ask for a comprehensive investigation in order to identify the origin of the contamination and of effective actions to prevent it. Member States were invited to strengthen the controls on imported products of Chinese origin in terms of laboratory analysis on residues and to communicate the results to its services. In combination with the results of the next FVO mission to China to be carried out in 2008, the Commission will be able to reassess the situation.
• The Commission informed the Committee about the lack of controls on environmental contaminants in fishery products imported from Mozambique and caught in Mozambique waters. An FVO mission on fishery products carried out in November 2007, found improvements in comparison to the previous mission carried out in April 2006. However, deficiencies were still found in the implementation of the programme for the monitoring of environmental contaminants. In response to that mission, the Mozambique authorities sent written guarantees on the future implementation of the monitoring plan in accordance with Community requirements; still to be implemented. Member States were invited to strengthen the controls concerning environmental contaminants in fishery products from Mozambique, in particular heavy metals, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons and dioxins and including the ones caught by Member States' fleet in Mozambique waters. These measures are temporary pending the results of the monitoring programme.

• The Commission reminded the Member States that Eritrea is listed in Annex II of Commission Regulation (EC) No 1666/2006, from which imports of fishery products consumption may be permitted. Countries listed in this Decision are under bilateral responsibility of Member States. Information was provided on the last FVO mission on fishery products carried out in February-March 2008 in Eritrea. The mission concluded that there is a failure in the control system in that country at approval and at inspection level. The CA sent to the Commission services documents attesting the suspension of two non compliant establishments and an action plan to address the deficiencies identified by the inspection mission. Commission request Member States importing fishery products from Eritrea to remove the two non compliant establishments from their national lists.

(signed)
Eric Poudelet
Acting Director

N.B. The proposals on which the Committee expressed an opinion are subject to a defined procedure in relation to the formal adoption by the Commission.