1. **Information from the Commission with regard to the *Salmonella* control in flocks of laying hens (KDS)**

The Commission drew the attention of the Member States to the provisions entering into force on 1 January 2009 in accordance with Annex II (D) of Regulation (EC) No 2160/2003, as amended by Regulation (EC) No 1237/2007, for *Salmonella* control in flocks of laying hens. Strict restrictions will apply for eggs originating from flocks with unknown health status, that are or are suspected of being infected with *Salmonella* Enteritidis or *Salmonella* Typhimurium. Furthermore no amendment will be made to the current provisions as concerns the marking of B-eggs, following consultation of the Member States at working group level.

2. **Guide to good practice for primary production - proposal from COPA-COGECA (TG)**

The Commission presented a proposal from COPA-COGECA\(^1\) for a European guide to good hygiene practice for primary production. COPA-COGECA widely represents, at European level, agricultural associations and cooperatives from all Member States. This Community guide attempts to consolidate existing national guides. The structure of the proposed guide was submitted to the support of the Committee. Belgium, the Netherlands, France, Germany, Spain, the United Kingdom and Portugal supported the development of the guide and wished to take part in the evaluation group. Sweden and Finland expressed their support to the initiative. The Commission thanked the committee for its positive response and will pass on the message to COPA-COGECA. The committee was further reminded of 3 guides that were being evaluated (cold storage activities, wholesale markets and egg products). Four other draft guides have already been accepted by the Committee and should rapidly be submitted for assessment (mineral water, collective catering, processed cheese, and casings).

3. **Exchange of views and possible opinion of the committee on a draft Commission Regulation amending Annexes VII and IX to Regulation (EC) No 999/2001 of the**

On 6 November 2008 the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) published an opinion on the human and animal exposure risk related to TSEs from milk and milk products derived from small ruminants. In that opinion, EFSA concluded that:

- classical scrapie can be transmitted from ewe to lamb via milk or colostrum;
- the use of milk and milk products from a flock with classical scrapie may carry a TSE exposure risk for humans and animals;
- the breeding programmes for scrapie resistance in sheep can be expected to reduce human and animal exposure associated with small ruminants dairy products;
- as regards the atypical scrapie, the apparent restricted dissemination of the agent in the organism of affected individuals could limit the transmissibility through milk.

In view of those new scientific elements and in particular the proven transmissibility of classical scrapie through milk from ewe to lamb, new protective measures in relation to milk and milk products coming from classical scrapie infected flocks should be adopted in due time in order to prevent the spread of classical scrapie to other ruminant flocks through feeding.

In order to ensure the same level of safety regarding imported milk and milk products of ovine and caprine origin, similar measures should apply to imports into the Community.

The committee thanked the Commission for this new revision of the draft where the provisions regarding milk and milk products intended for human consumption have been removed.

The Commission gave further clarification on comments with regard to disposal, co-financing, classification according to Regulation (EC) No 1774/2002 of milk and milk products coming from infected flocks, etc.

Some Member States stressed the implementing difficulties to be expected. The maximum 18 months period to destroy dairy flock affected by classical scrapie should nevertheless be maintained on basis of the precautionary principle and in order to accelerate the eradication of scrapie in infected flocks.

In reply to the French delegation, the chairman confirmed that discussions will continue as regards human food aspects.

The Commission recommended MSs to request, if necessary, co-financing to compensate for the destruction of milk through the Market Regulation, which is managed by DG AGRI.

To take into account the comments made by some MSs the draft proposal was amended and presented to the vote (SANCO/3660/2008 Rev. 8).
The French delegation made the following statement:

« Suite aux derniers avis scientifiques qui font état de la présence possible du prion dans les laits de petits ruminants atteints par la tremblante classique, la délégation française accueille favorablement l’adoption de nouvelles mesures de précaution visant à écarter des circuits de l’alimentation animale les laits et produits laitiers issus de ces animaux. Elle souhaite que des mesures complémentaires visant à sécuriser les circuits de l’alimentation humaine et à diminuer le risque d’exposition pour l’homme soient adoptées sans tarder. Elle invite par conséquent la Commission à présenter dans les meilleurs délais aux États membres une proposition en ce sens. »

Vote: in favour at the qualified majority (310 votes), 32 votes abstaining; PL was represented by AT, LT by LV; Malta was absent (3 votes).

4. Discussion and possible agreement: CRL-Listeria, Technical guidance document on shelf-life studies for Listeria monocytogenes in ready-to-eat foods (AH) (see point 4 of 14 October 2008 SCFCAH)


The Commission presented the latest changes made to the documents. A large consensus was reached on both guidance documents, which will be discussed at the Codex Committee on Food Hygiene, Session 40, to take place on 1-5 December 2008 in Guatemala.

6. Discussion and possible agreement on a draft Commission Statement concerning heat decontamination techniques (TG)

Canada and the European Union have been carrying out discussions in the framework of the Canada-EC veterinary agreement, in particular on certain heat decontamination techniques of carcasses, for which Canada is seeking approbation from the EC. In February 2008 a mission was sent to Canada to assess the issue. Another mission was sent to Denmark to examine the technique of hot water decontamination.

The Commission drafted a statement to meet the concerns of Canada (see Annex).

Finland disapproved the use of steam for surface decontamination and requested to bring the issue back to working group level.

Italy could not support the document as such decontamination method would diminish the current hygiene levels.

Some Member States were reserved as regards the purpose of such a statement. With this statement the Commission aims at clarifying that the use of such a technique may be allowed without altering the existing hygiene measures, and at reaffirming that the use of chemical decontaminants is forbidden.

4 http://www.codexalimentarius.net/web/archives.jsp?lang=en
A general consensus with all other Member States was reached on the proposed draft statement which will be fine-tuned at the request of Finland and Italy. Canada will be informed of the outcome of the discussion.


The Commission presented the proposal for further discussion. Its purpose is to extend derogations to Regulation (EC) No 2160/2003 in the form of transitional arrangements. It is intended to take a vote on the proposal at the 16 December 2008 SCFCAH meeting. The adoption should occur in spring 2009.


The purpose of this proposal is to extend to Denmark the same special guarantees which were granted to Finland and Sweden concerning *Salmonella* spp. for consignments to Denmark of table eggs. Denmark has indeed provided a *Salmonella* Control Programme for table eggs which is considered equivalent and in line with the "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*". Four Member States could not agree with the proposal on the principle because they were concerned that it might create different situations within the Community, where rules should be harmonised. It is intended to take a vote on the proposal at the 16 December 2008 SCFCAH meeting.

(signed)
Eric Puidelet
Director
STEAM DECONTAMINATION TECHNIQUE


The Commission considers that the use of steam to remove surface contamination on carcases may be allowed provided that:

- the water used for the steam production is potable, as laid down in Article 3(2) of Regulation (EC) No 853/2004;

- the steam application does not result in any irreversible discolouration of the meat; and


HOT WATER DECONTAMINATION TECHNIQUE

The issue of hot water decontamination will need further investigation with the Member States before taking any official position on the matter.

Reminder

It should be remembered that the use of chemical substances for the removal of surface contamination (antimicrobial treatments) in the production of meat is not permitted under EU law.