SUMMARY RECORD
OF THE
STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE FOOD CHAIN AND ANIMAL HEALTH
(Section Animal health and welfare)
(Section Biological Safety of the Food Chain)
HELD IN BRUSSELS ON 04-05 NOVEMBER 2003

President: Mr. Eric Poudelet for points 8, 18 and 22 to 26, Mr. Bernard Van Goethem for the other points.
All the Member States were present.

1. EXCHANGE OF VIEWS OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE EVOLUTION OF ANIMAL DISEASES IN THE COMMUNITY INCLUDING:

Classical swine fever in the wild boar

Belgium
The Belgian delegation circulated a report giving an overview of the results of the surveillance for classical swine fever in wild boar covering the period 01/01/2003-15/10/2003. In the infected area and the observation areas, 833 wild boar have been sampled, of which 36 have been found serologically positive. All the animals sampled had negative virology. Outside the areas mentioned before, 124 wild boar were sampled. None of the animals was found positive, nor serologically nor virologically.

France
France reported on the classical swine fever situation in wild boar in Moselle and Bas-Rhin (Vosges).

There has been no virus isolation in the Moselle area and the absence of seroconversion in the 80 wild boar sampled of less than 1 year of age led to conclude that there was no virus circulation in the area. The French delegate recalled that France had had no recourse to vaccination.

However, in the Vosges region, 14 animals out of 240 sampled were found serologically positive (6% of the population), 5 animals were found virologically positive. The delegate concluded that virus circulation was ongoing in that region.

France also outlined the intended measures following the new cases. The Commission recommended France to apply a clear strategy to control the disease in the Vosges and to also consider vaccination.

Germany
Germany reported a presumable new case of classical swine fever in a wild boar in Hessen. However, when further investigated, the results of the laboratory tests appeared to be negative. The preventive measures have therefore been lifted.

In the areas of Germany where vaccination has been applied the results of the last months suggest a clear improvement in the situation.
Luxembourg

Luxembourg reported 4 four cases of positive virology in the whole 2003, of which the last dates back to August 2003. The delegate indicated that the relatively high serology (50%) was due to the three vaccination campaigns which lead very rapidly to an increase of the seropositivity.

The Commission concluded that in general the results obtained are encouraging.

Low pathogenic avian influenza

Italy

Italy reported on the low pathogenic H7N3 epidemic, covering the period 10/10/2002-31/10/2003. To date, a total of 388 outbreaks have occurred, most of which are situated in Veneto (298) and in Lombardia (82). Most of the outbreaks (85.6%) were identified in meat turkey farms. The last outbreak has been notified on 30/09/2003.

The report also provided information on the vaccination programme carried out in accordance with Decision 2002/975/EC. Only 5 LPAI outbreaks were identified in non-vaccinated poultry flocks located in the vaccination area. No outbreaks of LPAI virus infection were ever detected in vaccinated layer, capon and cockerel flocks.

The Italian delegation also gave an outline of the long-term control strategy in the Veneto region.

Italy tabled a request to review Decision 2002/975/EC in relation to certain aspects of the Italian vaccination programme and a request to amend Annex IV to the same Decision, in particular the rules for restocking of poultry farms in the vaccination zone.

The Italian delegation also informed the Committee that a new LPAI virus strain (H2N2) was isolated from meat turkeys, in the Cremona province (Lombardia). Stamping out was carried out on 27/10/2003 and restriction measures as laid down in Decision 2002/975/EC were enforced. The holdings within a 10-km radius around the outbreak are monitored. There is no evidence of further spread. Tracing of the infection source is in progress. The H2N2 infected farm is located in the same area where H7N3 seropositive flocks were detected in August 2002.

West Nile Fever

France

France reported on one confirmed human case of West Nile fever and of 3 confirmed cases in horses. The report included the results obtained from the epidemiological surveillance carried out over the period 2001-2003 and the control measures set up following the present cases. The French delegate concluded that since they depend on several climatic and ecological factors, the West Nile virus occurrence and the strength of its circulation which is related to the level of risk for animal and human
populations remain largely unpredictable. The monitoring of West Nile virus potential reservoir hosts and accidental hosts in exposed areas will be maintained in France to manage the risk.

The following item was added to the agenda:

**Bluetongue** (see also point 6)

Spain (Balearic Islands)

The Spanish delegation reported 5 outbreaks of bluetongue on the island of Menorca, the first of which was confirmed on 27/10/2003. The delegate also gave an overview of the control measures taken, which included culling.

The virus isolated is different from the vaccine strain used during the last epizooty in 2000 and therefore the possibility that virus could have remained in the islands from the 2000 epizooty is remote. The delegate also announced that Spain is preparing for vaccination.

The Commission indicated that the disease has already spread and that the effect of culling has a limited effect.

France

The French delegation reported on 3 outbreaks of bluetongue (serotype 4) in Corsica, in herds which had been vaccinated against BTV serotype 2. Moreover, there have been reports on 10 suspected outbreaks, showing clinical symptoms. Control measures have been put in place. France requested to be provided with bivalent vaccine (2, 4) for be used for vaccination in the south of Corsica. The Commission said that there was no available stock and suggested that France should order the vaccine directly to the producer.

2. **Preliminary results of the survey for avian influenza in poultry and wild birds** (DOC. SANCO/10632/2003) (A.L.)

The Commission presented the preliminary results of surveillance for avian influenza in poultry and wild birds carried out in the Member States during the period of 01/01/2003-30/09/2003. The results of this first survey and the experiences made during its implementation in the different Member States should give an impression on the distribution of H5 and H7 avian influenza subtypes in the different poultry categories. Furthermore difficulties encountered in relation to the logistics of the survey such as sampling procedures, time frame for investigations, validity of laboratory testing methods in the various poultry species should be further explored in order to establish revised Community guidelines for surveillance.

In view of the preparation of new legislation in relation to avian influenza, the Member States were submitted a discussion paper “Control strategies for avian influenza” (Doc SANCO/10612/2003-rev.2). The recent increased knowledge on LPAI suggest that there in an urgent need to review current EC legislation on AI and to include disease control measures also for LPAI caused by H5 and H7 subtypes, to protect poultry from devastating HPAI epidemics. Furthermore, there
is an urgent need to define the general future policy of the EU as regards AI, so that the Community may effectively contribute to the development of the OIE standards.

The Member States were invited to reflect and to comment on this paper in view of issuing a Community position in the OIE.

3. INFORMATION TO AND OPINION FROM THE MEMBER STATES CONCERNING THE “GLOBAL IMPLEMENTATION PLAN (GIP) FOR THE TRADE CONTROL AND EXPERT SYSTEM (TRACES)” (DOC. SANCO/10467/2003/ REV1) AND THE ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE ANIMO HOST SERVER (D.C.)

The Commission explained that during the presentation of the TRACES Global Implementation Plan (GIP) to the IDA TAC/WHAM Committee, some questions were raised that needed further clarification.

The ‘evaluation of the usage of TESTA’ should be finished after a feasibility phase. In this new version of the GIP and pre-study report, this evaluation is finalized and TESTA will be used for the system-to-system communication, in combination with web-services, depending on the MSs architecture. This means that in 2004, in preparation of the connection of TRACES with the individual MS applications, a TESTA connection will be configured for MSs that wish so.

Next to this, another evaluation-aspect related to the question whether it was foreseen to exchange EU CLASSIFIED data. This has been analysed and it has been decided that TRACES contained no EU CLASSIFIED data. For this reason, the usage of advanced security mechanisms like IDA’s solution called ‘PKICUG’ has not been considered as necessary.

Details on these subjects are described in the pre-study report and GIP that were circulated.

The document distributed reflects the comments issued by the TAC Committee at its meeting of 11 September.

The GIP was given a unanimous favourable opinion was.

4. DOCUMENTS FOR DISTRIBUTION / DOCUMENTS POUR DISTRIBUTION:


  A major highlight of the meeting was the introduction of the accession countries, their aquaculture systems and associated disease issues. Other key subjects were the current status of fish diseases in Europe (ISA, VHS, IHN and emerging or other significant diseases), scientific issues relating to the legislation and an update on selected scientific research projects. Furthermore, the CRL reported on its past activities and received suggestions for future ones from the NRLs.

The objective of the workshop was to introduce National Reference Laboratories to contingency procedures for the identification of Spring Viraemia of Carp virus, Koi Herpesvirus and Epidermal Ulcerative Syndrome via lectures delivered by experts in the respective fields and via laboratory based demonstrations of the identification procedures.

- Application from Italy for approval of the Azienda agricola Troticoltura Rio Molini with regard to VHS and IHN (SANCO/10579/2003)
- Application from Italy for approval of the Impianto ittiogenico dell'Unione della Pesca Sportiva della provincia de Sondrio with regard to VHS and IHN (SANCO/10502/2003)
- Application from Italy for approval of the Incubatio itttico provenciale di Masone with regard to VHS and IHN (SANCO/10503/2003)

The Acceding States were requested to introduce their applications for the approval of zones and fish farms.

5. DISTRIBUTION FOR INFORMATION / DISTRIBUTION POUR INFORMATION:

- Report of a mission carried out in the Slovak Republic from 8 to 12 September 2003 in order to review the follow-up action taken by the competent authorities with regard to the up-grading of certain classes of food processing establishments and associated live animal controls (follow-up to mission report DG(SANCO)/9090/2003) (DG(SANCO)/9182/2003-MR)
- Report of a mission carried out in the Hungary from 8 to 12 September 2003 in order to review the follow-up action taken by the competent authorities with regard to the up-grading of certain classes of food processing establishments and associated live animal controls (follow-up to mission report DG(SANCO)/9076/2003) (DG(SANCO)/9097/2003-MR)
- Report of a mission carried out in the Slovak Republic from 8 to 12 September 2003 in order to review the follow-up action taken by the competent authorities with regard to the up-grading of certain classes of food processing establishments and associated live animal controls (follow-up to mission report DG(SANCO)/9085/2003) (DG(SANCO)/9096/2003-MR)

6. 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.

The Commission introduced the following proposal (see also point 1)

Draft Commission Decision on protection and surveillance zones in relation to bluetongue (Dco SANCO/10575/2003-rev.5)

The Commission announced that considering the new situation as regards bluetongue, the proposal voted at the last SCFCAH had not yet been adopted. The Member States were therefore presented the current draft Decision, replacing the one mentioned above.

Considering the evolution of the bluetongue situation in Italy, Spain and France, the Member States considered a draft Decision aiming to amend the global geographic
areas where protection and surveillance zones are established. Four global restriction zones are distinguished considering the serotypes isolated: Balearic Islands and northern continental Italy (serotype 2), Sardinia and Corsica (serotypes 2 and 4), southern continental Italy (serotypes 2, 4, 9 and 16), and Greece as a whole where different serotypes have been isolated.

For Greece, it was proposed to establish a distinction between the continental part of the territory and the rest of the territory. Exemptions from the exit ban may respectively be implemented with regard to intra-Community trade, and be limited to domestic movements only.

The demarcation between protection and surveillance zones are left to be decided by the Central Authorities of the Member States concerned, based on a risk analysis approach.

The proposal also intended to lay down the conditions under which the transit of animals through the restricted zones should take place.

**Vote: unanimous vote in favour.**

7. **Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Decision approving programmes for the eradication and monitoring of certain animal diseases and of checks aimed at the prevention of zoonoses presented by the Member States for the year 2004 (Doc. SANCO/10599/2003-rev.2) (FR)**

The aim of the proposal was to approve the individual eradication and monitoring programmes for certain animal diseases and the programmes aimed at the prevention of zoonoses presented for 2004 by the Member States and the Acceding States, and fixing the level of the Community’s financial contribution.

**Vote: unanimous vote in favour.**

The Italian delegation made the following declaration:

“Italy declares that the authorities of Campania have ensured that the eradication programme for brucellosis of buffalos in the province of Caserta for 2004 will be amended as requested by the fax of the Commission services of 3 November 2003, and that written confirmation of this commitment will be sent to the Commission within 10 November 2003.”

8. **Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Decision approving the TSE eradication and monitoring programmes of Member States and certain Acceding Member States for 2004 and fixing the level of the Community's financial contribution (SANCO/4444/2003) (JOG)**

The purpose of the proposal was to approve the programmes for the monitoring for TSE and the programmes aimed at the eradication of scrapie presented for 2004 by the Member States and the Acceding States, and fixing the level of the Community’s financial contribution.

The purpose of the draft Decision presented was to approve the newly developed discriminatory test and to lay down guidelines for the use of this test to avoid unacceptable risks in relation to movements or trade of vaccinated pigs, their offspring or products.

**Vote:** unanimous vote in favour.


See also point 1.

In the light of the further spread of classical swine fever in wild boar in France (Bas-Rhin), the Member States were presented a proposal to extend the area in which measures should apply (Decision 2003/526/EC). Moreover, it was proposed to amend rules governing movements of domestic pigs for immediate slaughter from areas where classical swine fever has been detected in feral pigs to slaughterhouses located outside the areas in the same Member State. It was made clear that the domestic pig meat can be put on the market in other Member States.

**Vote:** unanimous vote in favour.

11. **Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Decision concerning protective measures with regard to imports of certain animals and their products from Albania, the Former Republic of Macedonia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in relation to bluetongue (Doc. SANCO/10604/2003) (J.F.)**

In the light of information received from Bulgarian authorities, based on the result of the surveillance programme in place, the Member States considered a draft Decision aiming to declare the Bulgarian territory as free of bluetongue, and consequently lifting the measures imposed by Decision 2001/706/EC. This means that the import of live animals and their semen, embryos and ova of species susceptible to bluetongue (sheep, goats, cattle and deer) from Bulgaria would be authorised.

**Vote:** unanimous vote in favour.

12. **Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Decision amending Decision 92/452/EEC establishing lists of embryo collection teams and embryo production teams approved in...**
THIRD COUNTRIES FOR EXPORT OF BOVINE EMBRYOS TO THE COMMUNITY AS REGARDS THE LIST FOR THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA (SANCO/10471/2003-REV.2) (H.K.)

The purpose of the proposal was to update the list of embryo collection in the USA approved for export of bovine embryos to the Community.

Vote: unanimous vote in favour.


The purpose of the proposal was to update the list of porcine semen collection centres in the USA approved for export to the Community.

Vote: unanimous vote in favour.


The purpose of the draft Decision was to define uniform criteria for the information provided by the Member States in relation to a number of animal diseases, in order to allow the Commission to assess the animal health situation properly.

Vote: unanimous vote in favour.

15. EXCHANGE OF VIEWS AND POSSIBLE OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON A DRAFT COMMISSION DECISION APPROVING PROGRAMMES FOR THE PURPOSE OF OBTAINING THE STATUS OF APPROVED ZONES AND OF APPROVED FARMS IN NON-APPROVED ZONES WITH REGARD TO VIRAL HAEMORRHAGIC SEPTICAEMIA (VHS) AND INFECTIOUS HAEMATOPOIETIC NECROSIS (IHN) IN FISH (SANCO/10606/2003-REV.1) (Y.T.)

The purpose of the draft Decision presented is threefold:

- due to an outbreak of VHS in a rainbow trout farm in Finland, the Commission proposed to amend Annex I to Decision 2003/634/EC accordingly;
- approval of the programme with a view of achieving approved status in a non-approved zone as regards a fish farm situated in the region of Piedmont and subsequent amendment of Annex II to Decision 2003/634/EC;
- subsequent to the finalisation of a number of programmes, delete the areas which have achieved approved status from Annex I to Decision 2003/634/EC

Vote: unanimous vote in favour.

In order to avoid introduction of the small hive beetle and the Tropilaelaps mite in the territory of the European Community, the Commission proposed to only authorise the import of queen bees and queen bumble bees with a small number of accompanying attendants, or small colonies of bumble bees bred under environmentally controlled conditions within recognised establishments. This authorisation to import bees would only apply to these third countries listed in Part I of the Annex to Council Decision 79/542/EEC.

Vote: 77 votes in favour, 10 abstentions.


The Member States considered a draft Decision concerning the approval of a financial contribution for publication and dissemination of the technical and scientific materials related to the OIE Conference on Animal Welfare in 2004.

Vote: unanimous vote in favour.

18. EXCHANGE OF VIEWS AND POSSIBLE OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON A DRAFT COMMISSION DECISION CONCERNING A SPECIFIC FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION BY THE COMMUNITY RELATING TO THE SURVEILLANCE PROGRAMME OF CAMPYLOBACTER IN BROILERS PRESENTED BY SWEDEN FOR THE YEAR 2004 (DOC. SANCO/4233/2003) (JCC)

The Swedish delegation presented its surveillance programme for campylobacter in broilers for 2004 (Doc. SANCO/120/2003)

The Commission subsequently submitted a proposal approving the above programme and granting a specific financial contribution for the implementation of the programme.

Vote: unanimous vote in favour.


The Commission presented a proposal granting an advance financial contribution of 50% of eligible costs incurred by Germany for compensation of the owners for their
animals and their eggs destroyed under the compulsory eradication measures related to outbreaks of avian influenza which occurred in 2003. The contribution also covers the costs of destruction of carcasses, eggs, contaminated feedingstuffs and equipment, the cleaning, disinsectization and disinfection of holdings and equipment.

The vote was postponed.

Germany raised a number of outstanding financial claims for eradication of rabies (2001), FMD (2001) and SCF (2001).


The Commission explained that the final eligible amount needed to compensate the eradication of the outbreak of avian influenza in the Netherlands in 2003 has considerably increased since the first financial contribution had been approved (Decision 2003/678/EC). The Member States were therefore presented a proposal to increase the level of the advance payment for these compensation costs.

The vote was postponed.


The Commission explained that the final eligible amount needed to compensate the eradication of the outbreak of avian influenza in Belgium in 2003 has considerably increased since the first financial contribution had been approved (Decision 2003/749/EC). The Member States were therefore presented a proposal to increase the level of the advance payment for these compensation costs.

The vote was postponed.


The scope of the draft Regulation is to amend Regulation (EC) No 1774/2002 with regard to import from third countries of certain products that may be used as feed material and pet-food, dogchew and technical products as referred to in Annex VII and VIII. The proposal introduces some technical amendments to bring these
Annexes in line with the text of the Articles, and updates the model of health certificates in Annex X and list of third countries in Annex XI.

**Vote: unanimous vote in favour.**

The representative of the Legal Service intervened to draw the attention of the Committee Members to the need to pay better attention to fundamental certification principles and in particular the need for clarity and transparency. In this respect, a practice consisting in repeating literally as an explanatory footnote the content of complex provisions drawn from existing Community law is not appropriate and should be corrected. The representative of the Legal Service expressed his intention to provide DG SANCO with a guidance note in this respect.

**23. Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Regulation repealing a number of decisions concerning the importation from third countries of animal by-products (Doc SANCO/2914/2003-rev.5) (MM)**

The Commission explained that all the Community rules on animal by-products not intended for human consumption are provided for in Regulation (EC) No 1774/2002. The Member States were therefore proposed a draft Regulation intending to repeal all the various Decisions on animal by-products not intended for human consumption which have as their legal basis 72/462/EEC and 92/118/EEC.

**Vote: unanimous vote in favour.**


The Commission explained that Directive 2002/33/EC significantly amended Directive 92/118/EEC as regards health requirements for animal by-products, in particular to reduce its scope so that it only covered animal products intended for human consumption and pathogens. The Member States were proposed a draft Regulation to further clarify the scope of Directive 92/118/EEC in this respect.

**Vote: unanimous vote in favour.**

**25. Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Regulation repealing a number of decisions concerning animal by-products (Doc. SANCO/3056/2003-rev.1) (M.M.)**

The Commission explained that all the Community rules on animal by-products not intended for human consumption are provided for in Regulation (EC) No 1774/2002. The Member States were therefore proposed a draft Regulation intending to repeal Decisions 92/562/EEC, 97/735/EC and 2001/25/EC accordingly.

**Vote: unanimous vote in favour.**

The Member States considered a draft Regulation adding China and the U.S.A. to the list of third countries to which the derogation for imports of certain animal by-products and derived products applies.

**Unanimous technical opinion in favour.**

The draft Regulation will be submitted to the WTO for comments under the SPS Veterinary agreement.

France stated that complementarities of multilateral and bilateral negotiations should be taken account of.

27. **Miscellaneous**

(1) The Commission distributed additional information on a FMD outbreak in the province of Salta, Argentina and referred to the draft Decision suspending imports from certain areas in Argentina, which had been given a favourable opinion at the SCFCAH of 08-09 October 2003. The Commission made clear that the information received needed further evaluation and clarification before measures could be lifted. The Member States agreed to this approach.

(2) France said to encounter some problems in relation to Decision 2003/483/EC on FMD, in particular regarding the use of staging points. The Commission provided clarification.

(3) Sweden reported an outbreak of Newcastle disease in a backyard flock. Paramyxovirus-1 was isolated.

(4) Norway also reported on a Newcastle disease suspicion in a small hobby flock. Laboratory investigations revealed a paramyxovirus infection. A written report was distributed.

(5) The Commission distributed all the language versions of the passport for dogs, cats and ferrets and requested the Member States to check the translation.

(6) France distributed AFSSA’s “Bulletin Epidémiologique N° 10”.

(7) The Commission circulated the following documents:

- *Proceedings – Future trends in animal agriculture – Standards for food animal production: status, well-being, and social responsibility (report of a meeting held in Washington, DC on September 18, 2002)*

- *Provisional timetable for meetings for the evaluation of Member States’ contingency plans for classical swine fever and Accession States’...*

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.

Mission reports are available on the Internet at the following address: http://europa.eu.int/comm/food/fs/inspections/vi/reports/index_en.html

Alejandro CHECCHI LANG
Director