SUMMARY RECORD OF THE
STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE FOOD CHAIN AND ANIMAL HEALTH
HELD IN BRUSSELS ON 24 MARCH 2006
(Section Biological Safety of the Food Chain)

President: Eric Poudelet

All the Member States were present.

1. Clarification on the transition period for rapid tests approved under Commission Regulation (EC) No 253/2006 amending Regulation (EC) No 999/2001 as regards rapid tests. Information will also be given on the full approved use of the Idexx BSE-Scrapie Antigen test kit (KVD)

The Commission gave clarification on the validity of rapid TSE post mortem tests for ovine and caprine animals which had been approved under Regulation (EC) No 999/2001. These will benefit from a transitional period of 9 months as from the date of entry into force of the new Regulation (EC) No 253/2006, during which they can be commercialised for the EU monitoring programme. Furthermore Member States were given more information on the use of the Idexx Herdchek BSE-Scrapie Antigen test kit for bovines and small ruminants.

2. Presentation from Cyprus on the situation regarding TSE in small ruminants

The Cypriot Chief Veterinary Officer, Dr. Neophytou, gave a presentation on the evolution of TSE in small ruminants in Cyprus. Since the first outbreak in sheep in 1985, records of every infected flock are kept. In 1987 the Scrapie Control Scheme was established and in 1991 a computerised database was created to also record every confiscated animal, clinical symptoms, and as from 2004 all performed tests on each sample. In 1998 a breeding programme for the genetic control of scrapie started with a breed survey. The Agricultural Research Institute Nucleus unit for the Chios breed was created in 1999. Some information was also given on a TSE case with unusual profile. In 2005 the Commission agreed to the co-financing of a biannual survey on TSEs resistant genotypes in goats (See point 15 of 20-21 December 2005 SCFCAH). An intermediary report must be submitted in September 2006 in order to use the results of the 1st year’s investigation through collaboration with other European research institutes.

In the framework of the implementing measures of the new hygiene regulations, new certificates were adopted which contain the description of the goods part and the certification part. The first part is based on information provided by the TRACES system. Further to comments received from industry, importers and exporting countries on difficulties to fill in that first part, the Commission is in the process of amending these certificates. This issue was discussed in a working group meeting on 6 March 2006.


Under the provisions of Regulation (EC) No 999/2001 Sweden benefits from derogations in respect to the monitoring of transmissible spongiform encephalopathies (TSE) in bovine, ovine and caprine animals, and to measures of removal of vertebral column from bovine animals. Sweden is therefore allowed to examine only a random sample of healthy slaughtered bovine animals; as for the 2nd derogation, Sweden has never used it. As a first case of BSE was confirmed in Sweden on 3 March 2006, such derogations can no longer be granted to Sweden and amendments to the regulation should be made to repeal them.

The Norwegian delegate distributed a speaking note stressing the fact that Norway should continue to benefit from the current derogation to test 10 000 healthy bovine animals at slaughter as long as the geographical BSE risk remains unchanged.

Vote: unanimously in favour, Malta absent and represented by Hungary.


Further the unusual TSE cases in 2 sheep from France and in one sheep from Cyprus, monitoring of TSE in sheep should be increased in order to assess the likely prevalence of BSE in sheep and to improve Community monitoring and eradication programmes. The Commission reiterated its request to the Member States (MS) to verify the Eurostat data on the number of adult sheep slaughtered in one year in each MS. The MS commented on the proposed sample size to detect BSE prevalence and on the co-financing by the European Commission.

On 3 June 2004 the European Food Safety Authority has issued an opinion recommending a targeted surveillance in European cervids to detect a presence of Chronic Wasting Disease ([http://www.efsa.eu.int/science/biohaz/biohaz_opinions/501_it.html](http://www.efsa.eu.int/science/biohaz/biohaz_opinions/501_it.html)). In line with the opinion of the EFSA, Member States should carry out a survey starting autumn 2006 and finishing at the end of the 2007 hunting season. The survey will be forwarded by Member States to the Commission for statistical analysis.

7. Miscellaneous

**Guidelines on the development of Community guides to good practice, in accordance with Article 9 of Regulation (EC) No 852/2004 on the hygiene of foodstuffs (PC) (See point 3 of the 24 January 2006 SCFCAH)**

The Commission distributed the latest version of the guidelines, updated on basis of comments from the Member States and to be posted on DG SANCO website. Guides to good practice are not legally binding and aim at supporting the effective application of the new EC hygiene regulations. Therefore the EU food business sectors are encouraged to develop such guides. The MS were asked to send their comments on the guidelines by e-mail within 2 weeks.