1) **Draft Guidance document on official controls, under Regulation (EC) No 882/2004 concerning microbiological sampling and testing of foodstuffs (SANCO/2952/2005 Rev. 5) (MH)**

This document was discussed at a working group meeting on 7 April 2006 during which the Member States were asked to send their comments by 25 April. A new revision was produced taking these into account. In relation to Commission Regulation (EC) No 2073/2005 on microbiological criteria for foodstuffs, its purpose is to give guidance on official sampling, requirements of official laboratories, analysis methods to be used for official samples and microbiological criteria applied to official samples. It assists competent authorities particularly in understanding Regulation (EC) No 882/2004 in relation to performing official controls in a uniform way by checking the compliance of food with microbiological requirements. The Commission representative summed up the main recommendations contained in the guidance document and took note of further comments.

It is intended to put this point on the agenda of the July SCFCAH for approval and MS to send their final comments by 1 July 2006.

2) **Presentation of database of national guidelines for feed and food (Regulation (EC) No 852/2004) (See point 2 of the SCFCAH of 17 May 2006) (PC/UW)**

Regulation (EC) No 852/2004 (Art.8) on the hygiene of foodstuffs provides for the setting up of a register of national guidelines for feed and food. An amended version of the register was presented on the basis of data and comments received from some Member States (MS). The national guidelines are listed in alphabetical order of MS and comprise the following data: title in the original language, title in English, country, language, publisher, year of edition, ISBN/ISSN code, internet link/contact, key word. Data for Croatia and Romania are also included. The Commission stressed the fact that it is the MS’s responsibility to assess national guidelines so as to ensure their quality.

3) **Avian influenza and food safety: information on a document on the measures to be taken for eggs and poultry meat in case of an avian influenza outbreak (SANCO/1153/2006 Rev. 1) (See point 5 of the SCFCAH of 2 June 2006) (TC)**

Due to the global avian influenza situation the Commission has considered it important to bring some clarity to some aspects of Community legislation as regards food safety and foodstuffs, in particular poultry meat and eggs from infected holdings. This document aims at harmonising actions taken and give guidance to competent authorities on the implementation of certain rules for the control of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) laid down at Community level. In case the presence of HPAI is confirmed, it is recommended that Member States (MS) notify any information on HPAI
risk deriving from poultry meat or eggs destined for human consumption through the Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed. Moreover, the meat of poultry slaughtered and eggs collected in a holding 5 days before the HPAI suspicion and already put on the market should be withdrawn and disposed of. Some MS expressed concerns on the 5 days delay and on the complex nature of a withdrawal measure. MS were requested to send further feedback on the document in order to present it for consensus at the July SCFCAH.

4) Information and consultation of the Committee on the request by the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) from the USA for 2006 national residue monitoring plans and 2005 results from: Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Germany, United Kingdom, Ireland, Italy, Spain and Sweden (AMBR)

The Commission took note that no Member States objected to the transmitting of national residue monitoring plans and results to the USA. However they requested more background information. In particular they questioned the fact that the plans from only some MS were requested. They would rather see such information be passed for the whole of the European Union. If needed, more details will be given at a next SCFCAH meeting.

5) Exchange of views on the following interdependent draft Commission Regulations/Decisions:

a) Draft Decision repealing certain decisions on implementation of some directives in relation to food hygiene and to the health regulations governing production and the placing on the market of certain products of animal origin intended for human consumption and the decisions laying down the special conditions of import of the fishery and live bivalve mollusc products (SANCO/226/2006 Rev. 6) (ACR)

This proposal lists in its article 2 all the Decisions and Directives which have been repealed and replaced by the implementing provisions of the hygiene package adopted at the end of 2005. Article 3 allows for a 6 months overlap to give time to operators to adapt as regards analysis and testing methods for milk and colostrums, gelatine, and import conditions for fishery products.

b) Draft Communication of the Commission relating to the maintenance of the decisions on the food hygiene rules (SANCO/685/2006 Rév. 3) (ACR)

This Communication gives a non-exhaustive list of measures which are retained, thus not repealed by the implementing measures of the hygiene package. Member States were asked to notify any measure which could have been missed out.

This proposal brings amendments to the existing hygiene Regulations as regards the single identification mark that products of animal origin should bear, exceptions to the complete skinning of carcases, the introduction of fish oil in the definition of fishery products, the inclusion of colostrum in the definition of raw milk and the associated hygiene rules, the conditions for collagen production, changes in existing fishery certificates, the introduction of new certificates, the agreed list of reference methods of analysis and testing, the traceability of pigmeat, conditions and transitional measures for import of fishery products and bivalve mollusces, …

During several working group meetings intensive discussion had taken place among other things on the issues of colostrum, tonsils or analysis and testing methods. But many Member States (MS) still expressed concerns on the inclusion of colostrum in the text for which they considered a precise and clear definition was needed. Discussion also related to the removal of tonsils which should be carried out by food business operators.

According to France, the model certificate for honey did not give any guarantee in terms of animal health. Many MS insisted on having a transitional period with an exact date for the use of the Lawrence method. The Commission could not agree on that request as it cannot give guarantees on when the Lawrence method can be declared as fully equivalent to the mouse bio assay method, which depends on the research work done by national and Community reference laboratories and the European Food Safety Authority. The legislation will be amended accordingly at the time the outcome of the research is known.

d) **Draft Commission Decision establishing the lists of third countries from which imports of bivalve mollusces, echinoderms, tunicates and marine gastropods and fishery products are permitted, the lists of establishments from which imports of fishery products are permitted and the lists of production areas from where live bivalve molluscs are permitted (SANCO/10245/2006 Rev. 4) (PC)**

Third countries and establishments can be included in the Commission lists if they can provide appropriate guarantees that the conditions applicable to live bivalve mollusces, echinoderms, tunicates and marine gastropods and fishery products are equivalent to those provided for in the relevant EC legislation.


Public health and animal health certificates having been merged, amendments to the Decisions on animal health conditions and certification requirements for molluscs and for live fish are necessary. The purpose of this proposal is to simplify the certification procedure.
All of these drafts will be revised according to some of the comments from the Member States in view of a vote at the July SCFCAH.


The call for the selection and designation of new Community reference laboratories (CRL’s) in the food and feed control area in July 2006 lead to the designation of 15 successful laboratories. Their work programmes and corresponding budgets for 2006 are to be assessed by the Commission. Community financial aid will be granted for them to carry their functions and duties as well as to organise workshops in areas falling under their responsibility. This proposal fixes the respective amounts to be granted for each CRL. The Commission asked the concerned Member States to give coordinates of a contact point for each CRL. This point will be put for vote at the 23 June SCFCAH, Toxicological safety of the food chain section.

7) **Exchange of views on a draft Commission Decision concerning a financial contribution from the Commission towards a baseline survey on the prevalence of Salmonella in slaughter pigs to be carried out in the Member States (SANCO/40162/2006 Rev. 2) (Legal basis: Council Decision 90/424/EEC) (SI/KDS) (See point 7 of the SCFCAH of 17 May 2006)**

The purpose of this proposal is to launch a baseline survey to estimate the prevalence of salmonella in slaughter pigs and to set the conditions for financial contribution from the Community. The Commission representative presented to the Member States (MS) the clarifications it intends to bring to the draft, and informed the committee of several comments from some MS. Furthermore MS have until the end of the week to apply on a voluntary basis for the additional serological analyses.

8) **Exchange of views on a draft Commission Decision concerning a financial contribution from the Commission towards a baseline survey on the prevalence of Salmonella in turkeys to be carried out in the Member States (SANCO/40161/2006) (Legal basis : Council Decision 90/424/EEC) (SI/KDS). (See point 8 of the SCFCAH of 17 May 2006)**

The Commission can consider flexibility on the deadline of 31 January 2007 for the submitting the progress report on the first 3 months of the survey; but Member will have to strictly observe the deadline of 31 October 2007 for the final report. The technical specifications to carry out the survey are described in a separate document.
9) Annual Report on the monitoring and testing of ruminants for the presence of transmissible spongiform encephalopathies (TSE) in the EU in 2005 (JOV)

The Commission presented the 2005 annual report on TSE monitoring and testing, developed on the basis of the annual reports submitted by each Member State (MS). Data received were processed in a database in order to summarize the information and to elaborate tables. Findings show among other things that the number of BSE cases and the overall prevalence in tested animals decreased by respectively 35% and 29% in 2005. These reductions and the increasing age of positive cases indicate the effect of measures taken.

MS were asked to check the Eurostat figures and to send their final comments on this Commission summary report before publication. MS were furthermore reminded to submit their request for reimbursement of the 2005 monitoring programme, if not yet done so.


This proposal defines the characteristics of composite products which pose most or only negligible animal health risk. It then determines for composite products and certain foodstuffs containing products of animal origin the conditions for exemption from veterinary checks to be carried out upon importation from third countries.

Comments from Member States are expected in good delay before submission for vote at the July Animal Health and Welfare SCFCAH.

11) Working Document setting down the list of live animals and products by Combined Nomenclature to assist selection of consignments that must be submitted to veterinary checks at a border inspection post (Legal basis: Directive 97/78/EC) (Right of scrutiny of the European Parliament) (SANCO/10631/2005 Rev. 5) (NB)

This proposal brings together live animals and products of animal origin into a single list drawn in accordance with the relevant combined Customs nomenclature. Certain plant products posing a potential animal health risk are also included. The purpose is to assist Member States in the identification and selection of consignments from third countries that must be sent to the competent veterinary authority for veterinary checks.

Comments from Member States are expected in good delay before submission for vote at the July Animal Health and Welfare SCFCAH.

11b) Exchange of views on a draft Commission Decision introducing restrictions on the intra-community trade and export of eggs from salmonella infected flocks of laying hens

The baseline survey on salmonella prevalence in laying hens carried out between October 2004 and September 2005 has shown higher prevalence than expected. The results raised concerns from Member States that no limitation in the marketing of table eggs was foreseen before 1 January 2010. The Commission considered the possibility for
earlier measures to be applied to eggs on national markets, intra-Community trade, and coming from third countries.

12) Miscellaneous

- Germany reminded the Commission of the issue of **imports of fishery products from Indonesia**, which have to be controlled for heavy metals and histamine, and in particular the control measures regarding shrimps. The Commission described the current situation: Indonesia has still not sent residue monitoring plan for 2006 or test results for aquaculture for 2005. The Food and Veterinary Office sent a letter to the Indonesian authorities asking for the information. Therefore testing at border inspection posts cannot be stopped. The German and Dutch delegates expressed the view that shrimps do not represent significant risk as concerns heavy metals because of they are short lived. Moreover certain products have been accepted for long while there have not been residue monitoring plans. Denmark and the United Kingdom wondered why Indonesia was still on the third countries list despite the fact that their residue plans are lacking. The Commission representative asked Member States to submit the data as foreseen in the Decision 2006/236/EC, which will be analysed and presented at the July SCFCAH. Discussion could then start on the way to proceed with measures. (TB)