SUMMARY RECORD OF THE
STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE FOOD CHAIN AND ANIMAL HEALTH
HELD IN BRUSSELS ON 20 NOVEMBER 2006
(Section Biological Safety of the Food Chain)

Presidents: Patricia Brunko, Thomas Golden and Eric Poudélet


As laid down in Article 8 of Directive 96/23/EC, the Commission has to report to the Member States on the outcome of the checks carried out, in particular on the implementation of the national plans and the developments of the situation in the various regions of the Community.

This report summarizes the results of the national residue monitoring plans in 2005 in the Member States submitted to the SANCO residue database. This system in place since 2005 has proven to be very practical. The Commission thanked the Member States for their input. Experts from Bulgaria and Romania will be able to follow a training session in this field early in 2007.

The Commission will transmit to the European Parliament and the Council a report on the results of actions taken at regional, national or Community level, bearing in mind the report distributed in the SCFCAH on 20 November 2006, the Member States comments on it and the information included in the answers to the questionnaires on the actions taken in response to non-compliant results reported by the Member States. Once adopted, the report will be made public on the SANCO website (beginning of 2007).

1a **Information to the Member States on the proposed reimbursement towards Germany's 2001, 2002 and 2003 Rabies Eradication Programmes (AW)**

Payments in relation to Rabies Eradication Programmes in Germany have been suspended pending the results of an infringement procedure carried out by DG Markt in the framework the procurement procedures Directive. The Commission has informed Germany in March 2006 of a financial correction towards the Länder which did not comply with the Directive. Germany expressed its objections. The Commission informed Germany that it would proceed with the payments so to avoid losing the credits which expire at the end of December. Nevertheless the matter is being further examined by DG Markt and the Commission Legal Service.

2. **Follow-up of the deficiencies noted in the United Kingdom with regard to milk hygiene (TC)**

On 16 October the Commission launched an infringement proceeding against the UK. At the same time, the Commission adopted a safeguard measure against a dairy establishment in the UK. The UK provided a reply to the letter of formal notice on 23 October indicating their willingness to comply with Community legislation, and that they had issued instructions to their enforcement services and guidance to the dairy industry with
DG SANCO considered the guarantees given as satisfactory and will propose to terminate the proceeding in the next Commission meeting on infringements. In addition, the Commission indicated that a new mission of the Food and Veterinary Office will be carried out from 20 to 29 November in the milk sector in the UK to verify that the guarantees given are being applied. The Commission reiterated the need to reflect on a common strategy to efficiently limit the level of residues of antibiotics, notably through more rapid release of tests results.

3. Exchange of views of the committee on a draft Commission Decision concerning a financial contribution by the Community for the implementation of an epidemiological survey and bluetongue surveillance measures in the context of the emergency measures taken to combat this disease in Belgium, Germany, France, Luxembourg and the Netherlands in 2006 and 2007 (SANCO/10728/2006 Rev. 1) (FR)

In the context of the emergency measures taken to combat bluetongue in 2006 and 2007, Belgium, Germany, France, Luxembourg and the Netherlands are entitled to Community financial contribution amounting to 50% of the expenditure incurred. This proposal allows the first instalment to be paid, i.e. 50% of the total contribution, whereas the balance will be the subject of another decision to follow. Payments will be made on the basis of technical and financial reports to be submitted at different time limits. The vote is foreseen on the 27 November 2006 SCFCAH, Animal Health and Welfare section.

4a Exchange of views on a draft Commission Decision amending Decisions 2005/723/EC and 2005/873/EC as regards the reallocation of the Community’s financial contribution to certain Member States for their programmes for the eradication and monitoring of animal diseases and for checks aimed at the prevention of zoonoses for 2006 (SANCO/10771/2006) (FR)

On the basis of the most recent information provided by the Member States on the incurred expenditures of the concerned eradication and monitoring programmes, the Commission proposed a reallocation of the Community's financial contribution to certain Member States. Funding from programmes of Member States not using their full allocation is reallocated to those exceeding it. At the request of France the Commission updated the proposal to include funding for the French programme.

Vote: in favour by qualified majority; Malta represented by the Netherlands; the Slovak Republic & Poland were absent & not represented.


This proposal was presented at several SCFCAH meetings - Biological safety of the food chain, Genetically modified food and feed and General food law sections - as well as at
the standing committee on Plant health. It was also notified to the other sections of the SCFCAH. The Commission representative insisted on the non-binding nature of the guidelines, annexed to the Decision itself which specifies that Member States are to take them into account. Linguistic versions will be sent as soon as available to the Member States for verification before adoption procedure. The committee reached a general consensus on the proposal. Due to parliamentary scrutiny, the adoption of the Decision is foreseen in early 2007.


This proposal was discussed at the last SCFCAH meeting in October where the main concern was the date from which a restriction should apply on the marketing of table eggs from salmonella infected flocks. Currently such eggs should undergo heat treatment pasteurization from the end of 2009 on. After further discussions on advancing the date the Commission proposed the date of 1 January 2009. Most of the Member States could accept the proposed compromise though many would have preferred an earlier date.

Furthermore each Member State may decide to differentiate eggs from salmonella infected and non-infected flocks by means of a separate marking. France proposed to mark eggs at the rearing stage to avoid contamination of sound batches in packaging centres. The Commission pointed out the technical and practical difficulties of such a measure as holdings are not equipped. It will verify with DG AGRI on the possibility to mark eggs at holdings.

Restrictions apply as soon as there is suspicion of salmonella infection. They can be lifted only when confirmatory testing has been carried out and results are negative. The Commission requested Spain to report on measures taken and to send an action programme in order to resolve the high salmonella prevalence problem in the country. A technical vote is foreseen at the next SCFCAH meeting. The final vote will be taken after the SPS (sanitary and phyto-sanitary) consultation (60 days period).

6. **Discussion and exchange of view on the OIE categorisation of Member States according their BSE risk** (KVD)

The Commission informed the Member States of the status of the BSE recognition exercise according to OIE standards [Organisation Internationale des Epizooties]. An OIE official has been nominated to be in charge of BSE categorisation. The process started last week at the first working group meeting. A second working group is planned for January 2007 in order to examine further applications. The priority should be given to the major trading partners, mainly in GBR1 countries (Argentina, New Zealand, Australia…), which are not subject to TSE import requirements. As for the Member States 3 options for applications are possible:
- all Member States to send their applications individually by means of the OIE questionnaire;
- in a more coordinated approach the Commission to collect the individual applications of the Member States and to submit them to OIE;
- the Commission to send an EU combined application.
The OIE Scientific Committee of the Animal Diseases will take the final decision on the countries status. Its report will be submitted to all OIE member countries for a 60-day commenting period. If agreement is reached a resolution will be prepared for the OIE annual general session in May 2007.

The Commission clarified that the second option would not imply much delay since submission would not have to wait for the application of all the Member States but would occur in small groups of Member States. By 1 July 2007 the major trading partners should be categorised according to OIE and the Member States should be classified in the controlled risks by a Commission Regulation. Official OIE categorisation of the Member States will then follow.

7a Exchange of views of the committee on a draft Commission Decision establishing a Community Veterinary Emergency Team to assist the Commission in supporting Member States and third countries in veterinary matters relating to certain animal diseases (SANCO/10170/2006 Rev. 4) (FR)

The Commission informed the committee of its intention to establish a Community Veterinary Emergency Team, the members of which will be available through their highly experienced expertise to help the Commission in its task of assistance to the Member States in the event of outbreaks of animal diseases. In order to compensate for their on-the-spot missions an indemnity for travel and subsistence costs will be paid to the participating experts. This proposal is not subject to a vote of the committee this time and will be submitted for adoption by the Commission at a later stage.

7. Miscellaneous

In the United Kingdom atypical scrapie was detected during a routine testing in a sheep flock which was maintained for research purposes and considered as TSE free. It was imported from New Zealand and was not allowed to be in contact with other ruminants and to be sold for commercial purposes. Animals did not show any clinical sign of scrapie and were culled in September 2006. Testing samples showed positive results. Samples were sent to Norway for independent verification of these results. The Commission will be kept informed of further findings.