SHORT REPORT
OF THE
STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE FOOD CHAIN AND ANIMAL HEALTH
(Section Biological Safety of the Food Chain)
(Section Controls and import conditions)
HELD IN BRUSSELS ON 07 MAY 2002

President: Mr. Eric Poudelet for points 1, 2 and 15, Mr. Jens Nymand Christensen for points 5, 6, 7 and 10, Mrs. Patricia Brünko for points 8 and 18
All the Member States were present.

1. INFORMATION FROM THE COMMISSION CONCERNING THE CATEGORISATION FROM COUNTRIES BASED ON THE BSE STATUS (KVD)

The Commission gave an update on the BSE classification of countries. The representative referred to a working group held on 06 May 2002. He highlighted the major topics of a draft proposal on the subject intended to be tabled at a later stage. As agreed during this working group meeting, a letter including the Community comments on the classification criteria will be prepared for discussion at the CVO meeting of 16.05.2002 in view of amending the International Animal health Code in 2003.

2. INFORMATION TO THE MEMBER STATES ON THE ELIGIBLE COSTS FOR THE 2001 BSE PROGRAMME (LVDB)

The Commission indicated that, to date, it had received claims for the 2001 BSE programme from 6 Member States. The representative explained the scope of Decision 2000/773/EC, pointing out that the costs for test kits and reagents are eligible for reimbursement.

The Commission also reminded the Member States that applications for monitoring programmes for BSE and scrapie have to be introduced before 15.05.2002.

3. AT THE REQUEST OF BELGIUM, INFORMATION ON A COMPLAINT OF THE BELGIAN FISHERMEN AGAINST THE BELGIAN MONITORING PROGRAM FOR MARINE BIOTOXINS ON WILD PECTINIDAE AND THE ABSENCE OF CONTROL IN THE MEMBER STATES (PC)

The point was withdrawn from the agenda.

4. AT THE REQUEST OF BELGIUM, INFORMATION ON THE APPLICATION OF THE EUROPEAN IDENTIFICATION MARK ON FISHERY PRODUCTS ORIGINATING FROM THIRD COUNTRIES (PC)

The point was withdrawn from the agenda.
5. **INFORMATION ON THE STATE OF PLAY OF THE SUSPENSION OF IMPORTS OF PRODUCTS OF ANIMAL ORIGIN FROM CHINA (CL)**

The Commission provided information on the evolution of the issue mentioned above, in particular:

(1) the outcome of the joint meeting EC/China held on 25.03.2002. During that meeting, it was made clear that China had to improve application of EU health standards as regards products they want to export;

(2) clarification on certain aspects of the scope of Decision 2002/69/EC (product coverage: gelatine, honey,…));

(3) destruction of consignments tested positive for chloramphenicol.

From the discussion that followed, it became clear that harmonisation of the threshold value was necessary.

The Commission also indicated that the results of the Member States’ residue enquiries confirm the result of reports, namely that China is confronted with consumption of illegal medicines. Therefore, China should modify its production conditions.

The Commission also requested the Member States to provide answers to the following questions:

(1) How many consignments from China are in possession of Member States?

(2) Status of consignments prior to 15 March, not yet been tested?

(3) State of play as regards destruction of consignments tested positive?


The Commission provided the above information.

7. **INFORMATION - DISCUSSIONS WITH THE US ON DECONTAMINATION OF POULTRY MEAT (PVG)**

The Commission provided the above information.

8. **INFORMATION ON A MEETING OF MS LABORATORY EXPERTS ON NITROFURANS ANALYSIS HELD IN BRUSSELS ON 11 APRIL 2002 (ABR)**

The Commission distributed and presented a report on a meeting of laboratory experts on nitrofurans analysis. The objectives of this meeting were:
• overview of the analytical methods available in the Member States for nitrofurans detection
• evaluate the Member States’ needs to improve their methods
• disseminate information between Member States to support them to develop the methods.

A follow-up workshop is scheduled for July 2002.

9. INFORMATION ON FALSIFICATION OF HEALTH CERTIFICATES FROM CERTAIN THIRD COUNTRIES (NGB)

Postponed.


Following the detection of chloramphenicol in certain aquaculture and fishery products imported from China, and shortcomings identified during a Commission inspection visit to China, imports of products of animal origin from China were suspended in March this year.

In the light of information provided by the Chinese authorities, and the favourable results of the tests carried out on certain crustaceans caught in the Atlantic Ocean, on fish filets of certain fish species, and on gelatine, the Commission proposed to allow imports of these products from China to resume subject to monitoring and testing to ensure their safety. Since chloramphenicol was detected in fish fillets, 20% of consignments of whole fish, gutted and de-headed fish and fish fillets of the species Alaska pollack, cod and redfish, would, for a transitional period until 30 September, be subject to testing at EU border inspection posts. The presence of chloramphenicol had also been detected in sausage casings imported from China, imports of this product would therefore be subject to the same monitoring and 20% testing. Restrictions remain in place in relation to a range of other products, notably poultry meat, rabbit meat, honey and certain fishery products.

Vote: 79 votes in favour, 8 votes against.

The Spanish delegation made the following declaration:

"La delegación española votó en contra porque no está conforme con la redacción del primer guión del Anexo I. Tal y como se ha aprobado el texto, existen dudas razonables sobre si los productos de la pesca manipulados y descargados directamente en un puerto de la Comunidad estarían incluidos en este primer guión y, por lo tanto, se podrían introducir en el territorio de la U.E. sin someterlos a..."
análisis de sustancias antimicrobianas. O si, por el contrario, el primer guión sólo englobaría a los productos no manipulados descargados directamente en un puerto comunitario".

Translation of the above declaration:

"Spanish authorities fully support the Commission proposal to lift the suspension of imports of certain products of animal origin, under the guarantees provided by Chinese authorities. However, Spain cannot accept the proposed wording of the proposal because it may mislead the scope of the Decision and may lead to implementation problems. Therefore, on despite of the Spanish support for a lift of suspension, this delegation voted against the proposal because formal reasons."

11. EXCHANGE OF VIEWS AND POSSIBLE OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON A DRAFT COMMISSION DECISION LAYING DOWN SPECIAL CONDITIONS GOVERNING IMPORTS OF FISHERY PRODUCTS ORIGINATING IN BULGARIA (Doc SANCO/10066/2002) (CL)

Postponed.


Postponed.


Postponed.


Postponed.

The Commission explained that it had, on 8 June 2001, adopted Decision 2001/471/EC. This Decision introduced requirements for the own checks to be carried out by operators of meat businesses in the European Union: the application of the principles of the Hazard Analysis of Critical Control Point system (HACCP) and the carrying out of microbiological checks. The public health requirements for the production and placing on the market of fresh meat and poultry meat, applicable to operators in the European Union, should equally apply to imports from third countries. The draft Decision presented tries to achieve this, as from 8 June 2003.

*Vote: unanimous vote in favour.*


Postponed.


Postponed.


The purpose of the draft Decision was to grant financial aid to the Community Reference Laboratories on residues to assist them in carrying out the functions and duties laid down in Council Directive 96/23/EC. The amounts proposed cover the period from 1 July 2002 to 31 December 2002.

*Vote: unanimous vote in favour.*
19. **Exchange of views on a draft Commission Decision amending Decision 2001/881/EC as regards the list of border inspection posts agreed for veterinary checks on animals and animal products from third countries (Doc SANCO/10053/2002) (NGB)**

Postponed.

20. **Miscellaneous**

(1) The Dutch delegation mentioned problems encountered with export of certain processed animal protein (MBM) for incineration and requested clarification as regards the export procedure. The Commission provided the requested clarification.

(2) The Netherlands also requested clarification as regards extra certification required by France for meat-and-bone meal for use in petfood. The Commission confirmed that the scientific opinion on the subject was not yet available and that therefore specific certification was not required.

(3) Germany questioned the Commission about its views concerning measures as regards nitrofuran residues in poultry meat from Brazil. The Commission has written the Brazilian authorities to identify the source of contamination and inform on the measures taken.

(4) In respect of Decision 2002/270/EC, Italy wanted to know the place where the blue band has to be applied. The Commission said that it had to be applied on all parts of meat which contain a piece of vertebral column.

(5) Italy also wanted to know whether natural rennet was subject to veterinary checks.

(6) France said that the way in which third countries are informed about RAS notifications might lead to problems in these countries. The Commission informed the Member States that a correction had been sent.

(7) France wanted to be informed about the results of BSE missions carried out by the FVO in candidate countries. The Commission replied that this information would be provided.

(8) The Commission also added to points:

   a) The detection of spinal cord remains in carcasses dispatched from other Member States to the Netherlands. The Commission emphasised that great attention has to be paid in slaughterhouses and by veterinary inspectors.
b) The intended unilateral measure, in France, to reduce the age to 6 months for removal of the spinal cord in sheep (instead of 12 months). At the request of the Commission, the Member States expressed their opinions. France took note of the Member States’ views. It appeared that the 14 Member States were opposed to the French position. The Commission intended to ask France to reconsider and postpone or cancel the measure.

(9) The Commission also informed the delegations about a Canadian request to obtain the residue plans of Member States. There were no objections from the Member 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

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