SHORT REPORT
OF THE
STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE FOOD CHAIN AND ANIMAL HEALTH
HELD IN BRUSSELS ON 22-23 JANUARY 2003
(Section Biological Safety of the Food Chain)
(Section Controls and Import Conditions)

President: Mr. Eric Poudelet for points 1, 2, 8 & 9; Mrs. Patricia Brünko for points 3, 4 & 5; Mr. Michael Scannell for points 6, 7 & 10.
All the Member States were present.

1. INFORMATION OF THE UNITED KINGDOM ON SRM REMNANTS IN INTERVENTION BEEF

UK informed the meeting on SRM remnants found in intervention beef in 2002. The Commission reminded the Member States on the specific requirements related to intervention beef and more in particular on the absence of SRM. The Member States informed on the actions taken after receiving the information from UK.

2. INFORMATION AND EXCHANGE OF VIEW ON BSE STATUS CATEGORIZATION

A representative of the Commission introduced the agenda point. Commission services have been discussing modifications to the criteria for classifying countries with the Member States for many months. The major concern in applying the current rules i.e. the current OIE rules, is the absence of a clear link between the outcome of the risk assessment (i.e. GBR level) and the final BSE status category, in particular for GBR I and II countries. Following the request of the Member States to follow as closely as possible the OIE International Animal Health Code, modifications in relation to classification criteria were proposed to the OIE. It now looks unlikely that these modifications will be accepted by OIE in their entirety.

An explanatory note, attached to this minute, defining the different options with the pros and cons of each option was forwarded to the Member States and used as supporting document for the exchange of view. The Member States were requested to inform during the meeting, which option they preferred. The two options are the following:

Option 1 - Modification of criteria category 1, 2 and 3

Continue to try to persuade OIE to follow our proposal to extend SRM rules to category 2 countries, prior to making such a change in the Annex to the Regulation (GBR I countries would be classified in category 1, and GBR II countries in category 2);

Option 2 - Modification of criteria category 3
To modify the criteria of category 3 countries (GBR I countries would be classified in category 1 or 2, and GBR II countries in category 3).

Linking specific risk management measures to the different categories, both options will result in a BSE status, which is linked to the initial risk of the country with risk management measures related to the risk. The main difference of both options is that the modification to the current criteria in case of option 1 can be done through Comitology, where option 2 requires a co-decision procedure. Furthermore, option 1 will be more different from the current O.I.E. international Animal Health Code in comparison with option 2 where a modification of category 3 would be needed.

**The main conclusion of the discussion is summarised as follows:**

- Most Member States expressed the wish to start with the categorisation as soon as possible;
- Since the amendments according option 1 will require less time for adoption and subsequently categorisation, half of the Member States preferred this option.
- Although the other MSs also want to progress in this file, the main objection is the fact that option 1 would be different from the O.I.E. international Animal Health Code. For this reason, option 2 is the preferred option for these MSs. One MS proposed to use option 2 without amending the Articles. The Commission pointed out that this would result in a legal inconsistency between the Annex and the Articles.
- One MS preferred a third option, which should be a completely new risk-based categorization system. Details were not discussed.

The Commission concluded that regardless of which option is chosen, an extension of the transitional measures will be required, as insufficient time remains to carry out all the steps required for the categorisation of countries before 30 June 2003 i.e. end of the transitional period according to Regulation (EC) No. 999/2001. This should be done through the co-decision procedure.

Since the amendments of different Articles are required in option 2, an extension until July 2005 for the end of the transitional measures will be needed.

In case of option 1, we would need to propose postponing the end of transitional measures until the same date i.e. which will allow a consideration of our proposals at two general sessions of OIE (May 2003 –2004) although it is very unlikely that OIE will ever agree on a major change to the current criteria.

3. **INFORMATION ON A COMMUNITY DATABASE ALLOWING FOR THE HARMONISATION OF THE YEARLY PRESENTATION OF THE RESULTS OF THE RESIDUES SURVEILLANCE PLANS BY THE MEMBER STATES**

Following discussions in the Working Group of national experts on residue monitoring, the Commission services have developed a database for reporting residue monitoring plans and results, in order to facilitate the use of the data collected by the Member States and to compile the consolidated annual report. The
draft database had already been sent to the experts for comments. The progress of work was presented to the committee. The Member States welcomed this initiative from the Commission.

4. **INFORMATION ON THE USE OF ANTIBIOTICS IN THE APICULTURE OF THIRD COUNTRIES AUTHORISED TO EXPORT TOWARDS THE EUROPEAN UNION**

The Commission has carried out a survey on the monitoring of residues in honey by third countries. Indeed, the EU depends on imports for almost 60% of the honey consumed in Europe. Due to the specificity of this production, it is difficult to obtain from third countries all the information concerning their legislative framework for monitoring residues in honey.

The survey shows that certain antibacterial substances (tetracyclines, streptomycine, sulfonamids) are largely used in honey production. In the EU, such substances are not authorised for use in beekeeping, therefore EU beekeepers cannot have access to these substances although the same substances could be legally used in third countries. A working document was distributed during the meeting.

Member States welcomed the survey carried out by the Commission under Directive 96/23/EC.

5. **DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ENDORSEMENT OF THE HARMONISED APPROACH ON BOLDENONE RESULTING FROM THE EXPERTS MEETING OF 13 DECEMBER 2002**

It was agreed that, in the light of new developments submitted by the CRL and new elements arising from Italy, all the data available in the Member States should be sent to the Commission for a further in-depth discussion. Conditions in which these data were obtained (controls, feed, GLP status) must be described. A new expert meeting will be organised as soon as possible. The Member States, which would like to be represented, should send the name of their representative before 28 January 2003 to the Commission.

The reference document for further discussion remains the proposal drafted on 13 December 2002.


On 17 December 2002, the Commission adopted Decision 2002/994/EC concerning certain protective measures with regard to the products of animal origin imported from China, stating that fishery products obtained by other means than aquaculture should be authorised.

It was however stressed that, for eels and shrimps, the distinction between aquaculture and wild catches is not possible for the time being, except for catches of
shrimps made in the Atlantic Ocean. Those products therefore remained prohibited, except for the later category of crustacean.

Moreover, considering that salmons of the specie Salmo salar are not raised in China, the Commission further proposed to authorise the import into the Community without testing of fillets of such salmons.

**Vote: unanimous vote in favour**

**7. Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Decision amending Decision 2002/251/EC concerning certain protective measures with regard to poultrymeat and certain fishery and aquaculture products intended for human consumption and imported from Thailand (SANCO/10697/2002)**

Decision 2002/251/EC provides that it will be reviewed on the basis of the guarantees provided by the competent authorities of Thailand and on the basis of the results of the tests carried out by Member States. The Thai authorities have provided the appropriate guarantees and, in particular, they have guaranteed that all the consignments certified by the competent authority since 21 September 2002 are submitted to a systematic pre-shipment check, in order to control the presence of nitrofurans and their metabolites. They have also guaranteed that only the consignments which are free of such substances are authorised for export to the Community. The results of the checks carried out by Member States in shrimps imported from Thailand have been favourable. However the checks carried out in poultry shows that it is necessary to continue the systematic checks of these products until the results show that the pre-shipment checks carried out in Thailand are effective.

The present proposal aims at revoking the systematic checks imposed on all the consignments of shrimps certified by the Thai authorities after 21 September 2002, as having been submitted to a systematic pre-shipment check to control the presence of nitrofurans and their metabolites.

**Vote: 67 votes in favour, 10 votes against, 10 abstentions (qualified majority)**


The document SANCO/3920/2002 was first presented to the SCFCAH meeting on 16 December 2002. During the SCFCAH BSE working group meeting on 9 January 2003, amendments were proposed. During this meeting, the document SANCO/3920/2002 – rev.1, which took into account the observations made during the working group meeting, was discussed.

In relation to Annex III, one MS requested that monitoring in infected flocks be done on a statistically significant sample rather than the whole flock. The Commission agreed to reflect on the matter.
In relation to Annex XI, clarifications were requested regarding the sample size and the required method to detect contamination of head meat with central nervous system tissue, as well as on the derogation foreseen in point 9 of the proposal.

Since the proposal will amend the current SRM list, the amended version will be put for discussion and possible technical vote during the SCFCAH meeting on 18-20 February 2003. After the 60 days for comments according the SPS agreement, the proposal will be formally adopted in April 2003.

9. EXCHANGE OF VIEWS ON A DRAFT COMMISSION REGULATION ESTABLISHING CONDITIONS FOR A DEROGATION FOR THE TRANSPORT OF CARCASES, HALF-CARCASES, HALF-CARCASES CUT INTO NO MORE THAN THREE WHOLESALE CUTS AND QUARTERS OF FRESH MEAT, PURSUANT TO CHAPTER XV, POINT 69, SECOND PARAGRAPH, OF ANNEX I TO DIRECTIVE 64/433/EEC (SANCO/1249/2002)

A brief historical overview was given. This traced the development of the present draft document from its origin, based on a Danish request and the opinion of the Scientific Committee of March 1999, its consideration by the Committee in June 2002, and a revision following a working party meeting on 05.11.2002. The main modifications made following the meeting in November were explained. During the discussion, it became clear that Member States wished to avoid meat with a temperature greater than +7°C arriving at cutting plants and to have further clarification in relation to responsibilities for making and storing temperature records. Concern was expressed by a small number of delegates that transport vehicles might not have adequate equipment, that the proposal might, if adopted, result in all meat being transported at too high temperatures and, in one case, that the draft was too prescriptive. It was agreed that the text would be modified and re-discussed at the meeting of 20 February 2003.


The Commission presented to the Committee a demand from Morocco to authorise the import of canned Acanthocardia Tuberculatum on the basis of Commission Decision 96/77/EC. In order to evaluate this demand the Committee agreed to ask Spain and Morocco to provide analytical data, in particular those concerning the levels of PSP before and after treatment.

11. MISCELLANEOUS

(1) At the request of Italy, the Commission explained the state of play with regard to the development of a sampling strategy for the control of nitrofurans in products of animal origin at the Border Inspection Posts. Following receipt of the contribution from twelve Member States, the Commission services are preparing a draft for discussion at an experts working group.
(2) The Commission explained that the RASFF working group of contact points would discuss this issue in a future meeting.

(3) The Committee was informed about the activities of the Commission services since the wreckage of the Prestige and asked its members to ensure liaison with the different sections and their experts in the contaminants working group. The next meeting of the contaminants working group will be held on 3-4 February, at which experts have already been asked to bring information on actions taken following oils spills in general.


(6) The Commission announced that the Working Group on the Rapid Alert System will discuss the confidentiality of some of the information sent thought the Rapid Alert System at its next meeting.

(7) The Commission announced that the Working Group on Contaminants will discuss contamination from the Prestige oil spill at its next meeting.

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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