1. **Information from Ireland on their BSE situation**

The Irish Delegation presented an update on BSE in Ireland, which showed a decrease in number of cases confirmed for 29 weeks ending 17 February 2003, a continued reduction in the prevalence of BSE test positives and a continued shift in the age profile of cases towards older age categories.

2. **Information on residues of veterinary drugs in shrimps imported from Thailand. State of procedure of the Decision voted at the 22 January 2003 SCFCAH**

The Committee voted on 22 January 2003 a proposal aimed 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.

The Commission informed the Member States that immediately after the voting, a new notification via the Rapid Alert System was received informing about the presence of nitrofurans in shrimps imported from Thailand. The procedure for formal adoption was therefore suspended until receipt from the Thai authorities of information and guarantees about the measures they had put in place to solve this positive cases. The intention of the Commission is to formally adopt the decision voted on 22 January 2003 in the very near future.

3. **Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Regulation establishing conditions for a derogation for the transport of carcasses, half-carcasses, half-carcasses 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/1249/2003)**

It was announced that, due to resolution of certain translation difficulties, Rev 5 of the Document would be discussed. During the exchanges certain delegations continued to express doubt over certain aspects of the text, the capacity of meat transport vehicles and the need for the draft. Having suggested amendments to two
points in Chapter 3 of the Annex, a tour de table revealed that a majority vote was feasible and the text was modified accordingly. An indicative vote was taken in respect of Rev. 6 and, a majority vote no longer being possible, the proposal was withdrawn.


Based on the discussion and the amendments proposed during the SCFCAH working group meeting on 06 February 2003 and further modifications following this meeting, Rev. 4 of document SANCO/3920/2002 was presented for discussion. The representative of the Commission highlighted the changes to the document comparing to the document discussed during the last SCFCAH meeting on 22-23 January 2003.

The Member States requested clarifications on point (1) of the Annex to the draft Commission Regulation proposal and in particular on Chapter A, II, point 2 on monitoring in ovine and caprine animals. The major problem of the Member states was the lack on exact data on the number of slaughtered animals over 18 months of age. The Commission made the following declarations in relation to the monitoring of ovine and caprine animals laid down in Annex III, Chapter A, section II, of Regulation (EC) No 999/2001:

“1. A Member State may test fewer animals annually than the number specified in the table in point 2, during the period from 1 April 2002 to 30 September 2003, if it can provide reliable statistics to demonstrate that it slaughtered insufficient animals to meet this number, or that the number of animals sampled is approximately equivalent to 25% of the cull ewes slaughtered during this period.

2. The provisions for monitoring in ovine and caprine animals will be reviewed before the end of 2003.”

The Member States requested clarifications on point (3) of the Annex to the draft Commission Regulation proposal and in particular:

- The wording proposed in regard the ileum i.e. “distal one meter of the small intestines including ileum” instead of “ileum”, was not agreed upon by the majority of the Member States. The ileum will be included in the SRM list for sheep and goats of all ages.

- Following an intervention of a Member States asking clarification on the sampling plan referred to in point 8 of document SANCO/3920/2002 Rev.4, the Commission explained that when assessing an alternative method samples should be taken to evaluate the alternative method. After the alternative method is validated, a sample plan should be in place in the framework of the autocontrole programme to evaluate the proper implementation of the method.
• In order to cover the possible cross-contamination of heads during transport, a modified text was proposed.

Taking into account the outcome of the discussion, the document SANCO/3920/2002 Rev.6 was presented for technical vote (SPS notification needed).

Technical Vote: 78 votes in favour, 4 votes against, 5 votes absent (qualified majority)

4a. Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Decision amending Decision 93/402/EEC as regards imports of fresh meat from Paraguay (SANCO/10107/2003)

An inspection was carried out in Paraguay between 4 and 14 February 2003. The inspection has shown that the general situation in Paraguay as regards veterinary controls on the livestock and on the meat production does not fulfil the requirements for export to the Community.

In view of the findings of the inspection, the Commission proposed to withdraw the authorisation to Paraguay to export de-boned and matured bovine fresh meat (except for those slaughtered, produced, certified and en route to the Community before 20 February 2003). These measures shall be reviewed within 12 months.

Vote: 82 votes in favour, 5 votes absent (qualified majority)

5. MISCELLANEOUS

(1) The Commission stressed to the Member States that the sharp increase of notifications through the Rapid Alert System in 2002 was due to increased controls and detection rather than a deterioration of the situation.

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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