1. Information on the progress made in the preparation of a draft Commission Regulation on microbiological criteria for foodstuffs (PM)

The Commission is currently in the process of revising the microbiological criteria for foodstuffs laid down in the Community legislation. This review is being carried out within the framework of the general recast of Community food hygiene legislation. The regulation laying down the revised criteria will be based on the proposed Regulation on the hygiene of foodstuffs and the intention is that it would be adopted soon after the adoption of the new hygiene legislation. In addition to the Regulation, laying down the criteria, the Commission intends to adopt a Communication, which will describe the Community strategy on the setting and application of the criteria in more details.

The main principles of the strategy on setting the criteria are as follows: The criteria to be laid down in Community legislation are to be relevant for consumer health protection and their application should be practicable. The criteria will be developed on the basis of scientific advice. The food business operators should use the criteria in the context of their HACCP-based procedures, especially in the validation and verification of these procedures. Flexibility will be provided as regards the use of alternative sampling and testing methods and sampling frequencies. The Regulation will cover all foodstuffs and the whole food chain in as similar way to the new food hygiene legislation. Some new criteria will be proposed and the existing ones revisited.

2. Information to the Member States on the proposed reimbursements for the 2002 TSE Monitoring Programme (AW)

The Commission distributed to the Member States proposed payments for the 2002 TSE Monitoring Programme.
3. **Situation of the nitrofuranes contamination in Belgium (egg powders) and results of the controls performed by the other Member States in this sector (SC)**

The Commission stressed the fact that the Member States have to focus their analyses on egg powder. In addition, the Commission encouraged the Member States to send the results of their controls as soon as possible and in any event well in time before the next meeting, in order to have a complete overview of the situation.

The Belgian delegation presented an update of the situation with regard to the discovery of nitrofuran residues in egg products and distributed a progress report.

The firm involved has started again its production. All the batches of egg products are tested for nitrofurans and only released in case of favourable results.

4. **Food & Veterinary Office - Programme of Inspections 2003 (July to December) (AKL)**

The Commission presented an update to the FVO inspection plan for 2003 and presented to the Member States a detailed inspection programme for July to December 2003. In carrying its inspection plan for 2003, the FVO will give particular emphasis to inspections in applicant countries.

There is always a degree of uncertainty attached to any FVO inspection plan. By necessity, it must remain flexible to enable it to respond to emergencies and unforeseen circumstances. As in previous years, adjustments to the plan will be required as the year progresses. Inspections in response to emergencies can only be made by cancelling or postponing planned missions.

5. **Final report of a mission carried out in Argentina from 18 to 29 November 2002 in order to evaluate the controls in place over foot-and-mouth disease and to assess public health controls over the production of fresh meat (DG(SANCO)/8715/2002) (FDD)**

This mission was carried out in November 2002 with reference number DG(SANCO)/8715/2002. The report is published on the European Commission’s EUROPA web-site at the following address:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/food/fs/inspections/vi/reports/argentina/index_en.html

The goal of the mission was explained and main conclusions and recommendations were presented.

In response to our conclusions related to approval procedures of establishments, the competent authorities of Argentina suspended for one establishment certification with immediate effect. For two others, certification was suspended based on our recommendations.
The Argentinean authorities have sent an action plan in order to address the recommendations. Although the Argentinean authorities have made a significant effort to respond to the mission report for number of issues insufficient action has been undertaken or further information is needed.

Beside these three establishments, two more establishments have been de-listed based on the results of a recent mission carried out by OLAF (February 2003). The Argentinean authorities have proposed 16 other establishments for de-listing. The procedure of de-listing has started after having informed the Argentinean authorities and follow up of outstanding issues is in the process.

6. Information on the part of the Portuguese authorities on the contamination of certain rearings of poultry by nitrofuranes

The Portuguese delegation presented an update of the situation with regard to the discovery of nitrofuran residues in poultry and distributed a progress report. They indicated that they have now identified two distinct routes of contamination.

1. Regarding bulk furaltadone found in turkey farms, this substance originated from China and arrived in Portugal through Germany. However, the authorities did not yet know the precise details pertaining to the supply chain. The drug was seized and destroyed and the owners are being prosecuted.

2. The majority of positive results in poultry meat were due to contaminated feedingstuffs. The raw materials (mainly fish meal/additives used in premix/Soya bean) used to produce these feedingstuffs originated from third countries. They were contaminated by metabolites of nitrofurans

The Portuguese delegation stated that all results have been systematically negative results since April 2003. Nevertheless, a surveillance system is still in place and will remain until the official authorities are content that the situation is completely satisfactory.

The Commission asked Portugal to provide all the relevant data regarding analyses and origin of all products suspected to be at the origin of the problem.

7. Information on the part of the German Authorities on a suspected case of scrapie in an ARR/ARR sheep

On 04 April 2003, the German Federal Research Centre for Virus Diseases of Animals (FRCVDA) informed the German Federal Ministry for Consumer Protection, Nutrition and Agriculture about a possible case of scrapie in a sheep carrying homozygously the ARR allele of ovine prion protein (PrP).

This suspicion arose when historical scrapie cases were genotyped retrospectively. Although in this case the generally defined diagnostic criteria for scrapie are fulfilled, the discovery and firm confirmation of a field inspection in this genotype should require and equivocal demonstration of scrapie by detection of the corresponding infectivity. For this purpose, a range of conventional and transgenic
mice were inoculated at the FRCVDA. First results from these bioassays will be available in 2004.

8. Information on the part of the Swedish authorities on the salmonella contamination in meat preparations. Background, presentation of and conclusions from a project

Human salmonella is considered a serious disease in Sweden, due to a wide range of acute and chronic symptoms, the potential for spread and the economic burden of the disease. Annually, between 3000-5000 salmonella cases are reported in Sweden. The number of unrecorded cases has not been calculated. A vast majority of notified cases are persons contracting the infection abroad on vacation. Only approximately 10-15% of cases are considered to have been contracted in Sweden. Sources of infection may be reptiles kept as pets and domestically produced food items as well as imported food, secondary spread from a person infected abroad, etc. Predominant serotypes are Enteridis and Typhimurium.

The incidence of domestically contracted human salmonellosis is very low in Sweden compared to most other countries and is usually less than 10/100000 inhabitants. This is considered to be an effect of the long-standing Swedish salmonella control programme.

Nevertheless, the introduction of contaminated products into the Nordic countries could jeopardise the exhaustive efforts made at all levels in these countries in order to minimise the prevalence of salmonella in animals and food for human consumption, as well as the overall aim of the additional guarantees issued for salmonella, which is to protect public health.

9. Distribution for information / Distribution pour information:

- Report of a mission carried out in Hungary from 7 to 11 April 2003 in order to review the plan submitted by the Hungarian Authorities for the upgrading of poultry meat, fish and egg products establishments (DG(SANCO)/9116/2003)

- Report of a mission carried out in the Czech Republic from 7 to 11 April 2003 in order to review the plan submitted by the Czech Authorities for the upgrading of fishery products, egg products and poultry meat establishments (DG(SANCO)/9074/2003)

10. Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Regulation on the procedure applied by the European Food Safety Authority to requests for scientific opinions referred to it (Document SANCO/2465/2003) (JV) (see point 17 of the 20-21 May 2003 SCFCAH)

procedures in matters of food safety, foresees that the implementation modalities of this article, concerning the procedure applied by the Authorities to requests for scientific opinions referred to it, are set by the Commission following the consultation of the Authority.

The modalities set by the Commission for the application of Article 29 were presented for an opinion of the Committee by the new Unit of the Commission’s Health and Consumer Protection Directorate General (SANCO D.5), responsible for the Commission’s relations with EFSA.

**Vote: Unanimous vote in favour**

11. Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Decision imposing special conditions on the import of Brazil nuts in shell originating in or consigned from Brazil (Document SANCO/0038/2003) (FV)

The Commission presented to the Member States a draft Decision imposing special conditions on the imports of Brazil nuts in shell originating in or consigned from Brazil.

**Vote: Unanimous vote in favour**


The Commission presented to the Member States a draft Regulation on transmissible spongiform encephalopathies and animal feeding for a final review by the Member States. The later expressed their overall satisfaction with the draft while outlining some possible implementation problems. The Commission therefore postponed the proposed date of entry into force to September 2003.

**Vote: Unanimous vote in favour**

13. Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Decision approving amendments to the annexes to the Agreement between the European Community and New Zealand (Document SANCO/10247/2003, Rev. 4) (WMM) (see point 13 of the 20-21 May 2003 SCFCAH)

The Commission presented to the Member States a Draft Decision approving amendments to the annexes to the Agreement between the European Community and New Zealand.

The Commission presented to the Member States a draft Decision amending Decision 2003/56/EC on health certificates for the importation of live animals and animal products from New Zealand.

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

15. Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Decision repealing Decision 2001/705/EC concerning protective measures with regard to the fishery and aquaculture products imported from Indonesia (Document SANCO/10332/2003) (CL)

Following the detection of Chloramphenicol in shrimps imported from Indonesia, the Commission adopted Decision 2001/705/EC, providing for systematic control to detect the presence of prohibited substances in these products when arriving to the Community.

The Decision provides that it will be reviewed on the basis of the guarantees provided by the competent Indonesian authority and on the basis of the results of the test carried out by Member States. The Indonesian authorities have provided the appropriate guarantees and the results of the checks carried out in shrimps imported from this country have been favourable.

Therefore, in order to lift the systematic controls in shrimps imported from Indonesia, Decision 2001/705/EC should be repealed. This is the intention of this proposal.

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


The Commission presented to the Member States a draft Decision postponing the application of Decision 2003/43/EC as regards requirements for collagen until 30 September 2003.

Vote: Unanimous vote in favour
16a. Interim emergency measure taken by France following the finding of Sudan red 1 in hot chilli and hot chilli products. Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Decision pursuant to Article 54 of Regulation (EC) Nr 178/2002 (Document SANCO/2723/2003)

On 9 May 2003, France sent information through the rapid alert system for food and feed relating to findings of the dye Sudan 1 in imported hot chilli products. Available experimental data indicate that Sudan 1 may be a genotoxic carcinogen; therefore a tolerable daily intake may not be established. Sudan 1 may also exert sensitising effects by dermal route or inhalation. It has also been classified as a category 3 carcinogen by the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC). Therefore the findings reported by France point to an adulteration with a health risk. On 5 June 2003, in the light of the possible extent of the problem, France adopted interim protective measures and informed the Commission thereof. In accordance with Article 54 of Regulation (EC) Nr 178/2002, the Commission put the matter before the Standing Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health. The Committee expressed a favourable opinion by 82 to extend the measures taken by France to the whole Community.

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

Declaration from the Dutch Delegation:

“The Dutch Delegation abstained because there was not enough time to reflect on this Decision with the competent persons.”

17. Exchange of views on a draft Commission Decision amending Decision 2000/49/EC repealing Decision 1999/356/EC and imposing special conditions on the import of peanuts and certain products derived from peanuts originating in or consigned from Egypt (Document SANCO/0988/2002, Rev. 2) (FV)

The Commission consulted the Member States and obtained consensus on a draft Decision amending Decision 2000/49/EC repealing Decision 1999/356/EC and imposing special conditions on the import of peanuts and certain products derived from peanuts originating in or consigned from Egypt.

18. Exchange of views on a draft Commission Decision amending Decision 2002/80/EC imposing special conditions on the import of figs, hazelnuts and pistachios and certain products derived thereof originating in or consigned from Turkey (Document SANCO/0047/2003, Rev. 1) (FV)

The Commission consulted the Member States and obtained consensus on a draft Decision amending Decision 2002/80/EC imposing special conditions on the import of figs, hazelnuts and pistachios and certain products derived thereof originating in or consigned from Turkey.
19. Exchange of views on a draft Commission Decision amending Decision 2002/79/EC imposing special conditions on the import of peanuts and certain products derived from peanuts originating in or consigned from China (Document SANCO/0048/2003, Rev. 1) (FV)

The Commission consulted the Member States and obtained consensus on a draft Decision amending Decision 2002/79/EC imposing special conditions on the import of peanuts and certain products derived from peanuts originating in or consigned from China.

20. Exchange of views on a draft Commission Decision amending Decision 97/830/EC repealing Commission Decision 97/613/EC and imposing special conditions on the import of pistachios and certain products derived from pistachios in or consigned from Iran (Document SANCO/1041/2002, Rev. 2) (FV)

The Commission consulted the Member States and obtained consensus on a draft Decision amending Decision 97/830/EC repealing Commission Decision 97/613/EC and imposing special conditions on the import of pistachios and certain products derived from pistachios in or consigned from Iran.


The Point was removed from the Agenda

22. Miscellaneous – Divers

- The Finnish Authorities presented a report of the Finnish National veterinary and Food Research Institute (EELA) on the «Economic Impacts of the Finnish Salmonella Control Programme (FSCP) for broilers.

The FSCP, an example of the Comprehensive policy to manage food risks, was instigated in 1995. Responsibility for Salmonella safety is taken in all parts of the production chain, particularly at the beginning of the chain. The FSCP can be regarded as successful because the occurrence of Salmonella in animals and food has been low. The rare occurrence is also the result of actions outside the FSCP such as Salmonella control of feed and own-checking systems within the food processing industry. The FSCP covers bovine, swine and poultry meat and egg production. This project focused on the costs, benefits and cost distribution of the Salmonella control in broiler meat production
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](http://europa.eu.int/comm/food/fs/inspections/vi/reports/index_en.html)

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