

**SUMMARY RECORD
OF THE
STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE FOOD CHAIN AND ANIMAL HEALTH
HELD IN BRUSSELS ON 16 JUNE 2004
(Section Biological Safety of the Food Chain)
(Section Controls and Import Conditions)
(Section Animal Health and Welfare)**

President: Patricia Brunko for point 1, Michael Scannell for points 3, 9, 10, 11, 13 and 14, Eric Poudelet for the other points.

Mr. Bernard Van Goethem for the added point.

All the Member States were present, except Poland absent for a number of points..

1. INFORMATION ON THE RAPID ALERT SYSTEM FOR FOOD AND FEED

The Commission distributed the following documents for information:

- Food Law – basic texts
- Public information on rapid alert notifications
 - Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed – Summary information
 - RASFF Search tool quick manual
 - Annual report on the functioning of the RASFF - 2003

2. FVO INSPECTION PROGRAMME OF THE SECOND SEMESTER OF 2004

Postponed.

3. INFORMATION ON THE RESULTS OF THE FOURTH MEETING OF THE EC/CHINA JOINT TECHNICAL GROUP AND FURTHER EVOLUTION OF THE IMPORTS OF PRODUCTS OF ANIMAL ORIGIN FROM CHINA

The Commission distributed and presented the minutes of the 4th meeting of the EC/China Joint Technical Group which was held in Shanghai on 17-18 May 2004.

Two of the main issues of the meeting were

- to evaluate and discuss the action plan, development of Chinese animal origin foodstuffs safety and residue monitoring programme submitted by the Chinese side
- to further discuss the scope for lifting of the remaining restrictions on Chinese products of animal origin.

After having been briefed by the Chinese side on the evolution and strengthened food safety measures in China in the area of control of the presence of veterinary drug residues in foodstuffs of animal origin and contamination by prohibited substances, the EC side considered that China had provided the necessary clarifications of outstanding issues linked to the restrictions in place in relation to

imports of products of animal origin. In accordance with normal practice and based on a formal request from China, this would lead to a proposal to Member States to lift the current restrictions as regards the imports, except for poultry meat.

As regards poultry meat, the EC side had been briefed on the control of highly pathogenic avian influenza outbreaks in China and the situation of the EC ban on Chinese poultry meat products. The EC had declared that lifting the restrictions for poultry meat could not be accepted for the time being. It was agreed that a new inspection visit on animal and public health conditions for the production of poultry meat would be organised.

Other issues broached were

- China's active participation in the OIE
- the issue of SPS import protocols with individual Member States
- the recognition of the status of freedom of animal diseases and regionalisation of epidemics
- BSE-related restrictions for imports into China

4. INFORMATION FROM THE PORTUGUESE AUTHORITIES ON THE EVOLUTION OF BSE IN PORTUGAL

The Portuguese delegation distributed and presented a report on the evolution of BSE in Portugal updated until 31 May 2004.

The following general conclusions were drawn:

- incidence of BSE in Portugal have been systematically below 200 animals/million
- 99% of the positive animals were born before 1998 (total feed ban was stated in 1998)
- in all risk categories, a decline of the percentage of positive animals has been observed since 2001, despite the significant increase in testing levels
- last three FVO missions confirmed significant improvements in the risk management (surveillance and control measures) of BSE in Portugal
- most of the fallen stock is collected and tested: 92% of the communicated cases
- no new case of the new variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease occurred in Portugal

Portugal expressed the hope that the current restriction measures could be lifted.

5. DISTRIBUTION POUR INFORMATION / DISTRIBUTION FOR INFORMATION:

- Report of a follow-up mission to Lithuania from 8 to 12 March 2004 concerning import controls [DG(SANCO)/7016/2004 – MR]
- Report of a follow-up mission to Malta from 26 to 30 April 2004 concerning import controls [DG(SANCO)/7020/2004 – MR]

- Report of a follow-up mission to Slovenia from 26 to 30 April 2004 concerning import controls [DG(SANCO)/7241/2004 – MR]

6. EXCHANGE OF VIEWS AND POSSIBLE OPINION ON A DRAFT COMMISSION REGULATION AMENDING REGULATION (EC) NO 999/2001 AS REGARDS ERADICATION MEASURES FOR TRANSMISSIBLE SPONGIFORM ENCEPHALOPATHIES IN BOVINE, OVINE AND CAPRINE ANIMALS, THE TRADE AND IMPORTATION OF SEMEN AND EMBRYOS OF OVINE AND CAPRINE ANIMALS AND SPECIFIED RISK MATERIAL (DOCUMENT SANCO/4908/2003-REV. 5) (JM)

The Member States considered a draft Regulation amending Regulation (EC) No 999/2001.

In cattle, this Regulation will confine the eradication measures to be carried out following confirmation of a BSE case to animals of the cohort. The definition of the cohort is also clarified. A number of changes are made to the eradication measures for scrapie in sheep and goats, including the introduction of an amendment allowing lambs and kids less than two months old to be sent from infected holdings to slaughter for human consumption.

Trade and import rules for ovine and caprine semen and embryos are introduced to reduce the risk of the transfer of scrapie via these routes.

The definition of specified risk material is amended so that certain processes of bovine vertebrae are not classified as specified risk material.

Vote: 113 votes in favour; 3 votes against; 8 votes absent (qualified majority).

7. EXCHANGE OF VIEWS AND POSSIBLE OPINION ON A DRAFT COMMISSION REGULATION AMENDING ANNEX XI TO REGULATION (EC) NO 999/2001 AS REGARDS THE IMPORT OF CERVID PRODUCTS FROM CANADA AND THE UNITED STATES (DOCUMENT SANCO 3440/2003, REV. 6) (JM). (SEE POINT 5 OF THE 17 MARCH 2004 SCFCAH).

The Commission presented to the Member States a draft Regulation amending Annex XI to Regulation (EC) No 999/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards the import of cervid products from Canada and the United States of America. The regulation would aim at minimising the potential public and animal health risk posed by the importation of fresh meat, meat products and meat preparations of farmed and wild cervidae.

The Commission made clear that the objections formulated by the USA (doc. distributed) after the technical agreement given at the SCFCAH of 17 March 2004 had not been accepted by the Commission. Some internal comments had been reflected in the draft presented.

Vote: 116 votes in favour; 8 votes absent (qualified majority).

8. EXCHANGE OF VIEWS AND POSSIBLE OPINION ON A DRAFT COMMISSION REGULATION AMENDING REGULATION (EC) NO 1874/2003 APPROVING THE

NATIONAL SCRAPIE CONTROL PROGRAMMES OF CERTAIN MEMBER STATES, AND DEFINING ADDITIONAL GUARANTEES, AND GRANTING DEROGATIONS CONCERNING BREEDING PROGRAMMES FOR TSE RESISTANCE IN SHEEP PURSUANT TO DECISION 2003/100/EC. (DOCUMENT SANCO 1543/2004 REV. 1) (JM)

The Member States were presented a draft Regulation aiming to add Finland to the list in the Annex to Commission Regulation (EC) No 1874/2003 whose national scrapie control programmes are approved.

Vote: 116 votes in favour; 8 votes absent (qualified majority).

- 9. EXCHANGE OF VIEWS AND POSSIBLE OPINION ON A DRAFT COMMISSION DECISION AMENDING DECISION 97/467/EC AS REGARDS THE INCLUSION OF ONE ESTABLISHMENT IN ICELAND FOR FARMED GAME MEAT AND ONE ESTABLISHMENT IN BOTSWANA FOR RATITE MEAT IN PROVISIONAL LISTS OF THIRD COUNTRY ESTABLISHMENTS FROM WHICH MEMBER STATES AUTHORISE IMPORTS OF SUCH PRODUCTS OF ANIMAL ORIGIN (DOCUMENT SANCO/10329/2004, REV. 2) (RM)**

The purpose of the draft Decision was to add to the list of third country establishments from which member States may authorise imports of farmed game meat:

- one establishment in Iceland for reindeer meat
- one establishment in Botswana for ratite meat

Vote: unanimous vote in favour.

- 10. EXCHANGE OF VIEWS AND POSSIBLE OPINION ON A DRAFT COMMISSION DECISION APPROVING ON BEHALF OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY AMENDMENTS TO THE ANNEX V TO THE AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY AND NEW ZEALAND ON SANITARY MEASURES APPLICABLE TO TRADE IN LIVE ANIMALS AND ANIMAL PRODUCTS (DOCUMENT SANCO/10366/2003-REV.15) (WMM)**

See point 11.

- 11. EXCHANGE OF VIEWS AND POSSIBLE OPINION ON A DRAFT COMMISSION DECISION AMENDING FOR THE SECOND TIME DECISION 2003/56/EC ON HEALTH CERTIFICATES FOR THE IMPORTATION OF LIVE ANIMALS AND ANIMAL PRODUCTS FROM NEW ZEALAND (DOCUMENT SANCO/10365/2004-REV.4) (WMM)**

The proposed draft Decisions (points 10 and 11) reflect the progress made in technical working groups with New Zealand, as recommended by the Joint Management Committee on June 1-2. The minutes of this Joint Management Committee were distributed to the Member States and the work programme was briefly explained (doc. SANCO/10347/2004-rev.2). Progress will be documented via CIRCA. The two draft Decisions will be proposed for a formal opinion at the next SCFCAH meeting.

- 12. EXCHANGE OF VIEWS AND POSSIBLE OPINION ON A DRAFT COMMISSION DECISION DESIGNATING COMMUNITY REFERENCE LABORATORIES IN THE FIELD OF**

VETERINARY PUBLIC HEALTH (BIOLOGICAL RISKS), AND LAYING DOWN THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES AND TASKS, AS WELL AS CERTAIN RESPONSIBILITIES AND TASKS OF NATIONAL REFERENCE LABORATORIES IN THE MEMBER STATES (DOCUMENT SANCO/40/2004) (JCC)

Following the coming into force of Directive 2003/99/EC of the European parliament and of the Council on the monitoring of zoonoses and zoonotic agents and Regulation (EC) No 2160/2003 of the European parliament and of the Council on the control of salmonella and other specified food-borne zoonotic agents, the Member States were presented a draft Decision reappointing two Community Reference Laboratories (CRL):

- the CRL for epidemiology of zoonoses, in Germany (until end of 2004, pending taking over by EFSA), and
- the CRL for salmonella, in the Netherlands.

Subsequently the tasks and responsibilities of the corresponding National Reference Laboratories for salmonella in the Member States are also redefined.

Vote: 113 votes in favour, 3 abstentions, 8 votes absent (qualified majority).

13. EXCHANGE OF VIEWS AND POSSIBLE OPINION 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 (DOCUMENT SANCO/10348/2004) (NGB)

The purpose of this draft is to update the list of border inspection posts in the European Community in response to requests from Member States, and following inspection and recommendation by the Food and Veterinary Office (FVO) of the Commission.

The following border inspection posts were proposed to be added to the list

- in Estonia: Muuga port and Narva road
- in Malta: Marsaxxlok Freeport
- in Slovenia: Jelsane road, Brnik airport, and Dobova rail station

Vote: 116 votes in favour, 8 votes absent (qualified majority)

14. EXCHANGE OF VIEWS AND POSSIBLE OPINION ON DRAFT COMMISSION DECISION SANCO/10318/2003 LAYING DOWN HARMONISED STANDARDS FOR THE TESTING FOR CERTAIN RESIDUES IN IMPORTS FROM THIRD COUNTRIES, AND DRAFT COMMISSION DECISION SANCO/1666/2004 AMENDING DECISION 2002/657/EC IMPLEMENTING COUNCIL DIRECTIVE 96/23/EC CONCERNING THE PERFORMANCE OF ANALYTICAL METHODS AND THE INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS (NGB/GG)

Both draft Decisions were presented for discussion only.

SANCO/10318/2003 –Rev.5

The scope of the proposal is twofold:

- it lays down the reference points for action for residues of substances whose use is prohibited or not authorised in the Community when analytical tests carried out pursuant to Directive 97/78/EC on imported consignments of products of animal origin confirm the presence of such substances, and the action to be undertaken after such confirmation;
- it applies whether analytical tests are carried out routinely, under reinforced checks procedures or under a safeguard measure on consignments of products of animal origin imported from third countries.

For the purpose of control of residues of substances whose use is prohibited or not authorised in the Community, the Required Performance Limit (RPL) laid down in Annex II to Commission Decision 2002/657/EC shall be used as reference points for action. Where no Required Performance Limit (RPL) has been laid down, any detection of that substance at or above 10 µg/kg shall be considered non-compliant with Community legislation.

The draft Decision also specifies the action to be taken in case of confirmed presence of a prohibited or non-authorised substance.

SANCO/1666/2004

The Commission explained that the different interpretation of the term “minimum required performance limits (MPRL)” has the effect that one of the goals of Decision 2002/657/EC to harmonise control of substances whose use is not authorised or prohibited in the Community, has not been entirely achieved. It is therefore proposed to simplify the concept of “minimum required performance limits (MPRL)” and to replace it by “required performance limits (PRL)”.

The Member States expressed their views during a table round. The Commission noted a general welcome for the proposals. However, certain issues remain to be clarified. The Member States were invited to send their comments to the Commission in writing. The Commission indicated that it was its intention to present the draft Decisions for a formal opinion at the SCFCAH in July.

THE FOLLOWING POINT WAS ADDED FOR A FORMAL OPINION

Exchange of views and possible opinion on draft Commission Decision amending Annex I to Decision 2003/804/EC authorising certain third countries for export of live molluscs for further growth, fattening or relaying in Community waters (Doc. SANCO/10376/2004-Rev.1)

Italy explained that Decision 2003/804/EC made existing trade flows of young molluscs with the USA impossible.

The Member States therefore considered a draft Decision with the purpose to amend Annex I to the above Decision to allow import of live molluscs for further growth, fattening or relaying in community waters from Canada, New Zealand and the United States of America, subject to completion of the animal health guarantees provided for in Annex II of Decision 2003/804/EC.

Vote: 101 votes in favour, 10 votes against, 5 abstentions, 8 votes absent (qualified majority).

15. MISCELLANEOUS

- (1) The Commission provided information to the Member States on payments to be made to Denmark and Luxembourg for their 2003 TSE monitoring programmes.
- (2) Italy questioned the Commission about a working group with Eurostat set up to gather data on residue and zoonoses monitoring. The Commission provided the necessary clarifications.
- (3) Germany explained that since Decision 2000/159/EC had been revoked, there is no list of third countries authorised for imports of honey and royal jelly.
- (4) Ireland informed the Committee about problems regarding imports of blood and blood products for technical purposes from the USA.
- (5) Hungary requested to modify Article 3 of Decision 2004/280/EC by setting a new deadline for placing on the market of products referred to in that Decision.
- (6) The Belgian delegation distributed and presented a report on unauthorised animal ingredients in mechanically deboned poultry meat – baadermeat rood from Belgium (RASFF notification 2004/255). The fraudulent activities consisted in illegal production of MDM, use of raw material for MDM not fit for human consumption and fraudulent use of approval numbers. Belgium requested Germany and the Netherlands to provide the investigations of the companies in these Member States that did send raw materials to the Belgian company.
- (7) The Commission distributed the following documents:
 - Annual report on BSE
 - Activity report 2003 – Biological risks
- (8) The Commission also informed the Member States that an FVO report from a mission in Indonesia showed that strong corrective measures are needed as regards histamine residues. The Member States were requested to be vigilant at the border inspection posts.

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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