President: Eric Poudelet for points 3, 5, 6, & 7 Patricia Brunko for points 1, 4, & 6c. Michael Scannell for points 2, & 6a. Willem Daelman for point 6b.

All MS were present

SECTION A  Information and/or discussion

1.  Reflection Paper on residues in foodstuffs of animal origin follow-up: report on expert working group discussions

In December 2003 both DG Health and Consumer Protection and DG Enterprise and Industry published a Reflection Paper on residues of pharmacologically active substances used in food producing animals. It analysed the reasons for difficulties encountered in the application of the existing legislation (chiefly Regulation 2377/90, Directives 96/23/EC and 96/22/EC). The comments received were published and summarised on the Internet in June 2004. In December 2004 a meeting with all Member States (MS) conceptual ideas for legislative amendments were presented and MS agreed to continue the discussion in six expert working groups during spring 2005 in view of the preparation of new legislation. The first sequence of working group meetings was organized: 24/02/2005 monitoring, 01/03/2005 risk evaluation, 01/03/2005 enforcement, 03/03/2005 risk management, 08/03/2005 third country evaluation, 17/03/2005 Community Reference Laboratories (CRLs) methods of analysis. Minutes of these meetings are distributed to participants and nominated contact points. Countries who have not nominated a contact point for this project can still do this under the following e-mail addresses: Ana-Maria.Blass-Rico@cec.eu.int, gudrun.gallhoff@cec.eu.int (DG Health and Consumer Protection), anne.gautrais@cec.eu.int (DG Enterprise and Industry).

2.  Russian import conditions for animals and products of animal origin (See Point 2 of the 19 October 2004, 18 January and 16 February 2005 SCFCAHs and Point 3 of the 17 December 2004 SCFCAH)

The Commission briefed MS on the most recent, more or less weekly meetings between the Commission and the Russians Authorities. A short questions and answers session followed. The MS Chief Veterinary Officers (CVOs) will be given a more comprehensive briefing at the CVOs meeting on Friday 18th March 2005.

3.  BSE/TSE in goats. Information from the Commission on the co-financing of the increased monitoring program established by Regulation (EC) 214/2005

The Commission informed delegations on the state of play of the co-financing of the increased TSE monitoring program in goats established by Regulation (EC) 214/2005. The Commission will present at the SCOFCAH meeting in April a proposal to amend the amounts allocated for the TSE monitoring and eradication programmes for 2005. The Commission confirmed the intention to finance the
tests in caprine animals up to a maximum of 30 € per test. The Commission confirmed as well the intention to introduce co-financing for the molecular discriminatory tests.

4. **Information on the transmission to the Commission of 2005 national residue monitoring plans and 2004 results in the framework of Directive 96/23/EC**

The Commission explained the background related to the developing of a database for the transmission of the national residue monitoring plans and results and informed that national residue monitoring plans for 2005 and 2004 results should be transmitted through this database.

Each Member State has been provided with a password and login to have access to the application, which address is [https://webgate.cec.eu.int/residues/SancoResidues/](https://webgate.cec.eu.int/residues/SancoResidues/)

A SANCO-residue mailbox ([SANCO-residues@cec.eu.int](mailto:SANCO-residues@cec.eu.int)) has been created to provide assistance to Member States on the use of the new application.

In accordance with Article 8 of Directive 96/23/EC, the Member States are requested to provide follow-up information on actions taken as a consequence of non-compliant results for residues. The deadline for transmitting the questionnaire is **1 June 2005**. The questionnaire shall be transmitted electronically (e-mail) using the standard format provided by the Commission.

5. **Information on investigations and subsequent actions taken by Spain following Salmonella outbreaks in the UK possibly related to the use of shell eggs**

The Spanish Delegation presented the results of their investigations to the Commission and the other MS. The UK delegation indicated its intention to forward to the Commission the results of their monitoring programme on Salmonella testing of eggs of non-UK origin. These results are expected early summer. The Commission reminded MS that there are sufficient mechanisms in the EU legislation to ensure that such food safety issues can be addressed in an evidence-based manner without undermining consumer confidence. It also confirmed that it remained ready to play its role in this framework and coordinate actions between the MS involved.

6. **Information from the Commission on the conditions for the dispatch and exchanges of half carcases of bovines cut into no more than three wholesale cuts containing vertebral column (JOV)**

The Commission clarified the conditions for the intra-community trade of half carcases of bovines cut into more than three wholesale cuts containing vertebral column. The position of the Commission is that the cuts must only be intended for wholesale, but not necessarily three parts of the same size, and in any case, the vertebral column must be removed in an authorised establishment before the product reach the retail stores.

The Commission stated that will reflect on a system of exchange of information between all Member States and the Commission in order to solve this kind of interpretation issues.
6a Information to the Member States on the follow-up to the dossiers related to the import of fishery products from Indonesia, the Philippines and Pakistan

Pakistan
Subsequent to the FVO mission in late January 2005, Pakistan decided to suspend the exports of fishery products on the grounds of sanitary deficiencies. Furthermore, Pakistan has reviewed their establishments and vessels authorised to export to the EC and proposed to modify the list as follows: Of the 22 establishments currently authorized to exports to the EC 9 were removed, and 5 have been suspended until finalising the implementation of corrective plans.

Philippines
An FVO inspection mission was carried out in October 2004 with very negative outcome. The Corrective measures notified by the Philippines authorities, revealed that the Philippines took FVO concerns into account in their action plan, especially concerning those deficiencies having a direct impact in human health such as: treatment with Carbon Monoxide which will be prohibited and the control checks for histamine and residues of prohibited medicines (Chloramphenicol and Nitrofurans). A second FVO inspection visit will be proposed once the corrective measures have been implemented to verify their effectiveness.

Indonesia – NL information on Histamine contamination
As a follow up of a previous meeting the Commission distributed the information it received from the NL delegation concerning the Histamine contamination in fishery products imported from Indonesia via the Netherlands. Several delegations commented on the number of analysis relative to the volume of imports. The Commission urged MS to remain vigilant and focused on all imports of fish given the important problems highlighted in recent FVO reports. The Commission will speak further to the NL authorities concerning the frequency of inspections of import analysis through its border inspection posts.


The Commission informed the Committee about the new initiative on training. Article 51 of Regulation (EC) 882/2004 provides the legal instrument for organising training at Community level for the staff of competent authorities of Member States involved in official controls for the verification of compliance with food and feed law, animal health and animal welfare rules, as well as plant health rules. Third countries, in particular developing countries, will be allowed to participate in Community training activities. In addition, special training and information sessions will be organised to assist those countries in better understanding import requirements.

This action is fundamental with a view to promoting a harmonised approach to the operation of Community and national control systems and to maintain a high level of consumer protection, animal health, animal welfare and plant health. This action is also important to ensure fair trade with third countries.
The Commission informed on the short term training projects, expected to be organised and implemented in 2005/2006, which will focus on HACCP audits and other relevant priorities to be discussed with the Member States. Training projects will be also organised for third countries and will focus on food standards, in particular on fruit and vegetables and fish products sectors. Assistance on the Avian Influenza situation in SE Asia is also planned.

Regarding the long term strategy on training the Commission presented some preliminary ideas without giving specific details. This strategy will be fully explained in a White Paper expected to be published by the end of 2005. The Commission invited the 14 MS who had not replied to the letter sent on 30/11/2004 requesting information on the "organisation of training at national level, resources an facilities available" to do so as quickly as possible. Once all the information is assembled the Commission will convene another meeting to inform MS on future plans.

6c. Follow-up of the contamination incident with dyes from the Sudan family

The Commission presented to the MS a state of play of the situation concerning the contamination of certain food products by Sudan dyes. Considering that palm oil and curcuma have been found contaminated by these dyes, the Commission explained the possibility of extending the measures to virgin palm oil and curcuma. This section of the Committee will be kept informed and was invited to liaise with section on Toxicological safety.

SECTION C

Draft presented for discussion - Projet présenté pour discussion - Zur Diskussion vorgestellter Entwurf


The Commission distributed and explained a non track change version of Document referenced SANCO/4198/2005 Rev 15, and added that the track change version would be forwarded to delegations by email. The text presented was the result of 4 years work and several meetings with stakeholders. The text is now ready for Interservice Consultation and will be presented for a technical vote in the SCFACH of 21/22 April. The Commission insisted that if the changes were to be made to the document, they would be have to be made public at the SCOFAH meeting of 21/22 April 2005. Should the text receive a qualified majority it will then go into SPS procedure for final vote in June/July 2005. This will allow MS 6 months adjust their practices, as the legalisation will enter into force on 01/01/2006.

Several delegations posed the question on the fate and applicability of their national criteria. The Commission confirmed that national criteria plans have to be sent to the Commission. The Commission will assess the national criteria, which are acceptable only if they have a sound scientific base.
8. Miscellaneous/Divers

(1) **Import of fish products from China**

A recent FVO inspection indicates that the current situation is acceptable, in general terms, with the exception of squid fishing boats. The Chinese authorities have decided to suspend the exports of squid in view of the important deficiencies of these boats. The Commission has requested the Chinese authorities to confirm this in writing.

(2) **Processing of Tuna**

In response to the letter sent by Spain concerning distribution to other countries of CO-treated products from the Netherlands further to the judgement of the Rechtbank in the case "Anova against NL Government", the EC confirmed that the process of "clear smoke" or "cold smoke" is not currently allowed by Community law and that the application dossier for the process was still under examination by EFSA. The EC emphasised that if MS find clear smoked tuna on their market, they may take any necessary measure. The Commission asked NL to confirm as soon as possible the status of the latest judgement, in order to allow it to examine any necessary action to be taken.

(3) **Letter from the Netherlands on the analysis of SEM in non-raw poultry meat products.**

The Commission distributed a copy of the letter submitted by the Dutch Food safety authorities informing on their intention of stop testing for SEM in non-raw poultry meat products.

Scientific studies have shown up that SEM in processed or composite foods is not an unequivocal residue marker to link with the illegal use of nitrofurazone. The Commission informed that on-going research projects are aimed at identifying another marker residue for nitrofurazone. Additionally, the issue of the occurrence and exposure to SEM and its toxicity is being evaluated by the EFSA. At the EFSA AFC Panel plenary meeting held on 22-23 February 2005 in Brussels, a first discussion on the draft opinion on SEM occurrence and formation took place. The results from the different studies have to be further evaluated and it is premature to draw any conclusion before the final opinion from the AFC panel from EFSA. The panel will meet again in April 2005.

(4) **Illegal imports of animal products to the EU from Ceuta and Melitta.**

The Commission raised their serious concerns regarding the continued absence of a substantive reply to their notes to the Spanish authorities regarding illegal imports of animal products to the EU from Ceuta and Melitta. The Commission added that this delay could not be attributed in any way to the Commission services which had made clear the legal situation in relation to such imports and the need for urgent clarification. The Spanish authorities were again asked to urgently address these concerns.
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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