

RAPPORT DE MISSION/ MISSION REPORT

Dr Jean-Luc Angot, Directeur général adjoint chargé de l'administration, des finances et des ressources humaines

Dr Caroline Planté, Chargée de mission, Représentation régionale de l'OIE pour l'Europe, Bureau de Bruxelles

Date et lieu de la mission/Date and place of the meeting : 16 mars 2006, Bruxelles (Belgique)

Titre de la mission : Réunion du groupe de travail du Comité consultatif de la chaîne alimentaire, de la santé animale et de la santé végétale sur la stratégie en santé animale (2007-2013) organisée par la Commission européenne (DG SANCO) « Prevention is better than cure »

Objet de la mission / Aim of the meeting :

L'objet de cette réunion était d'étudier avec les *stakeholders* concernés le projet de communication de la Commission au Parlement européen et au Conseil sur « une nouvelle stratégie en santé animale pour l'UE » (2007-2013).

Résumé / Summary :

La réunion était présidée par le Dr Eric Marin (DG SANCO).

Plusieurs *stakeholders* étaient représentés : AVEC (Association of Poultry Processors and Poultry Trade in EU Countries), COPA-COGECA, EUROCOMMERCE, EUROCOOP, FESASS (Fédération Européenne pour la Santé Animale et la Sécurité Sanitaire), IFAH, UECBV (Union européenne du commerce du bétail et de la viande), EFPRA (Fédération européenne des transformateurs), EMRA (Fédération de détaillants et de restaurateurs), CLITRAVI (Centre de liaison pour les industries de transformation de la viande), FEFANA (Fédération des fabricants d'additifs pour l'alimentation animale), CELCAA (Comité des commerces agro-alimentaires). La FVE s'était excusée.

Deux agences européennes participaient : l'EFSA et l'EMEA, ainsi qu'un représentant du Parlement européen.

Le projet de communication (cf. ci-joint) a été passé en revue. Il a été présenté aux CVO le 13 mars 2007. Il sera soumis au début du mois de mai à l'Impact Assessment Board et fera l'objet en juin 2007 d'une consultation interservices, en vue d'être finalisé à l'automne 2007. Les réactions du Parlement et du Conseil sont attendues au début de l'année 2008.

L'OIE a rappelé l'importance de la prévention, de la surveillance sanitaire, de la qualité et des capacités et ressources des services vétérinaires (au sens de l'OIE), de l'existence du programme PVS, de la réalisation en cours d'études économiques avec la Banque Mondiale visant à démontrer que le coût de la prévention est largement inférieur à celui de la gestion d'une crise sanitaire. Le mandat de l'OIE en matière de bien-être animal a été rappelé. La référence aux normes de l'OIE a été saluée, ainsi que l'introduction de la notion de « bien public international ».

S'agissant de la possibilité pour l'UE d'adhérer à l'OIE, les règles et la position de l'OIE ont été précisées. L'OIE a demandé l'incorporation des concepts de compartimentation et de régionalisation et l'introduction d'une phase relative à la nécessaire compatibilité du système ADNS avec le système WAHIS.

La catégorisation des maladies prévue par le pilier 1 se fera à partir de la liste de l'OIE.

Comme suite à plusieurs interventions demandant de mettre en avant la vaccination et d'encourager son utilisation, l'OIE a indiqué qu'il convenait d'être prudent et de veiller à ce que la vaccination ne soit pas présentée comme une panacée, mais comme un outil complémentaire de gestion pour certaines maladies, en précisant que le recours à la vaccination dans certains cas (ex. de l'influenza aviaire) résulte de l'absence ou de l'échec de la mise en œuvre des mesures classiques de lutte, basées sur la détection précoce et la réaction rapide.

Plusieurs *stakeholders* se sont opposés à la création d'un Centre communautaire de la protection et du bien-être des animaux, l'évaluation scientifique en matière de bien-être animal étant déjà assurée par l'EFSA¹.

La FESASS a insisté sur la nécessité de ne pas limiter la notion de biosécurité à la ferme et d'introduire la notion de biosécurité collective.

Documents recueillis / Collected documentation :

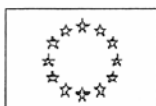
Projet de communication de la Commission au Parlement européen et au Conseil sur « une nouvelle stratégie en santé animale pour l'UE » (2007-2013).

Personnes rencontrées / Key persons met :

E. Marin , C. Billaux (DG SANCO)
B. Terrand, A. Cantaloube (FESASS)
J. Serratosa (EFSA)
R. Feller, P. Olsen (COPA-COGECA)

Diffusion : Chefs de Service et adjoints, Chargé(e)s de mission, A. Thiermann, M. Teissier, M. Zampaglione, Représentants régionaux.

¹ Cette création est toutefois déjà prévue par le Plan d'action « Bien-être animal de l'UE » de la CE.



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
HEALTH & CONSUMER PROTECTION DIRECTORATE-GENERAL

03 - Science and stakeholder relations

SANCO

09.02.2007

Brussels,
SANCO.03/RV D(2007) 30029

Subject: Draft Commission Communication on "Animal Health Strategy for the EU (2007-2013)"

Dear Sir/Madam,

The Health and Consumer Protection Directorate General (DG SANCO) would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your contribution to the evaluation on the Community Animal Health Policy. The outcome of the evaluation and the contribution of stakeholders have in many ways surpassed DG SANCO's initial expectations.


As a follow up of the evaluation process, we invite you to a Working Group of the Advisory Group on the food chain, animal health and plant health on **the Animal Health Strategy (2007-2013)** which will be held in Brussels on **Friday 16 March 2007** at the Borschette Conference Centre, Rue Froissart 36, room AB 1B, from 10H00 to 18H00.

The Working Group's objective is to discuss **the draft Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and to the Council on "a new Animal Health Strategy for the EU (2007-2013)"** and to give the opportunity to interested parties to make comments and recommendations.

Please let us know if your organisation is interested in participating in the meeting **by 20 February 2007 at the latest**. Your contact point will be Mrs Isabelle Omer (isabelle.omer@ec.europa.eu). Please note that participation is limited to one delegate per organisation, and that the Commission cannot reimburse the costs for participation in this meeting.

A letter of invitation, the detailed agenda and the draft Communication will be sent to the participants in due course.

Yours faithfully,



Robert Vanhoorde
Head of Unit

2-3-2007

DG SANCO Working Document

Draft
Communication from the Commission
to the European Parliament and the Council
on

**A new Animal Health Strategy for the European
Union
(2007-2013)**

where

“Prevention is better than cure”

Preamble

In December 2004, the Commission launched an external evaluation to thoroughly review the outcomes of EU action on animal health and the direction we may wish to take in the future. A combination of circumstances made it imperative to re-evaluate our policy:

- The main elements of the existing policy were drawn up largely when we were still a Community of twelve Member States;
- New challenges have emerged. Diseases which were unknown a decade ago have appeared -SARS is an example- while others, such as foot and mouth disease, bluetongue and avian flu, have recently presented new challenges, reminding us that they remain very serious risks;
- Trading conditions have also changed radically with the volume of trade in animal products increasing greatly, both within the EU and with third countries; and
- Science, technology and our institutional framework have evolved substantially.

An extensive consultation of stakeholders to propose actions for the future

The aim of the project has been twofold. Firstly, to assess how this complex policy structure has worked during the last 10 years. Secondly, to identify options for improving the policy framework, in the context of the Future Strategy on Animal Health for 2007-2013.

In particular, the evaluation analysed to what extent a harmonised responsibility and cost-sharing scheme could be a viable option to prevent major financial risks for Member States and the Community.

The core of the evaluation and the major focus of effort has been a substantial stakeholder consultation using a web based EU stakeholder survey (addressed to over 600 people), a survey of 34 third countries and above all an intensive interview programme at both EU level and in six Member States.

The evaluation process has been very successful. The outcome of the evaluation and the contribution of stakeholders have in many ways surpassed Commission initial expectations. This success is a real support/encouragement to the Commission commitment to “better regulate” by working collaboratively and communicating more effectively. The Commission will build on the partnership built during the evaluation process and will continue with this approach in the development of the animal health strategy.

The Commission would like to thank the evaluation team, all authorities and stakeholders who responded to our survey and those interviewed at EU, Member State, and third country level, for their contributions to this evaluation. It would also like to thank the members of the Steering Group, the various Commission services involved and the EU Delegations in third countries for their valuable assistance and support throughout this exercise.

Key messages from the Evaluation

The evaluation results were officially presented and debated with the stakeholders at the Finnish Presidency conference (7 November 2006). They can be summarised as follows:

1. *Over the period reviewed by this evaluation (1995-2004), the Community Animal Health Policy (CAHP) has been increasingly successful in terms of achieving the desired outcomes . Although policy improvements were mainly stimulated by the need to respond to major crises occurring in the Community during this period, the results have been positive. For example, there has been a considerable reduction over time in the prevalence of a significant number of animal diseases and a considerably better structured response to crises. Following the CSF, FMD and AI crises, all relevant "vertical" legislation on the control of these diseases was revised and updated, taking into account the*

lessons learnt, including those on vaccination and contingency planning. It is also an achievement that over time the Commission's role in animal health policy has come to be increasingly accepted, both within the EU and internationally.

- 2. However, to date the policy has consisted of a series of interrelated policy actions at institutional and civil society level, operating under a large umbrella of legislation through formal and informal networks, but without a defined strategy for the whole and with limited assessment of the success of actions taken. The evaluation has demonstrated the need to develop a **clear and transparent animal health strategy** accompanied by a communication strategy which improves stakeholder engagement and involvement in decision-making. In addition, future actions need to be informed by a review of the achievement of outcomes of past actions.*
- 3. Many linkages are inherent in the policy e.g. between action on animal health in third countries, at EU borders and within the EU. Better consistency between actions to improve animal health in the EU and to enhance international competitiveness could be achieved through better regulation, using simplified rules and carrying out impact assessments before introducing new legislation.*
- 4. The principle of subsidiarity was a key theme. With principles and rules laid down at EU level, but implemented by Member States, there is flexibility at MS/regional/local level to determine the best means of securing agreed outcomes. Enforcement issues were identified as critically important with a crucial role for the Commission in guaranteeing that a common approach and standards apply across the Community.*
- 5. The evaluation has highlighted the need to move towards a policy which is more focused on effective risk management and disease prevention. This can be achieved via better risk-based targeting of funding (using cost effectiveness and cost benefit analysis), statutory control measures and incentives at all levels, as well as early detection of exotic and new/emerging disease threats. This involves better prioritisation of actions relating to disease eradication and surveillance, research and development, and controls on illegal entry of potentially risk-carrying materials but also, more generally, creating a stronger culture of bio-security at all levels.*
- 6. A key component in developing a culture of bio-security would be the introduction of a harmonised framework for cost and responsibility sharing. This could be structured so as to allow implementation in line with subsidiarity at Member State and regional level. A key element of such a framework would be the introduction of a disease classification and prioritisation system. This would allow greater focus on those diseases which have high 'EU relevance' in terms of the need for coordinated action at EU level, due to their potential impact on human health and potential supra-national/supra-regional economic impact.*

A challenging EU Animal Health Strategy (2007-2013)

Based on the evaluation results and the conference debates, the Commission is pleased to present its proposal for a new EU Animal Health Strategy (2007-2013). This will allow further debate in the EU inter-institutional fora, with Council and the Parliament expected to establish their positions by the end of this year.

This strategy presents clear goals reflecting stakeholders' priorities and aiming to minimise the regulatory burden. It also ensures that our international commitments are met and coherence between the Community Animal Health Policy and other EU policies is achieved. A partnership approach built on trust, openness and a willingness to take difficult decisions will be essential for success. A high level Steering Board will be created to provide strategic guidance on priorities for action and communication.

Overall, the strategy encompasses a challenging 6 year programme of work. It contains a plan of concrete actions directed towards clear outcomes:

- **Prioritisation of EU intervention**

Decisions on responsibility for actions and the appropriate amount of resource to be committed will be based on profiling and categorisation of animal diseases, biological and chemical risks. .

- **A modern and appropriate animal health and welfare framework**

The Animal Health strategy aims to set up a single, clearer regulatory framework ensuring a firm commitment to high standards of public health, animal health and welfare. Efficient cost and responsibility sharing schemes will be developed. The Community will also strengthen its active influence on international standards and develop its export policy.

- **Better prevention, surveillance and crisis preparedness**

The animal health strategy will improve biosecurity measures at farm level, on animal movements and at borders. It will also strengthen EU animal disease surveillance and emergency preparedness.

- **Science, Innovation and Research**

It will also stimulate and coordinate innovation, science and research, hence contributing to a high level of public health and to the competitiveness of EU animal health businesses.

Each concrete action will have to be presented and developed separately following the usual decision-making procedures, which means a Commission proposal will issue accompanied by an impact assessment, after consulting stakeholders. . The timetable for delivery of all the specific actions included in this strategy will depend on the position of the Council and the Parliament, and also on our human resources capacity. There will be annual reporting on the strategy's progress.

1. Vision

Our vision is to work in partnership to increase the prevention of animal health related problems before they happen:
“Prevention is better than cure”

2. Purpose

The strategy provides direction for the development of animal health and welfare policies, based on extensive stakeholder consultation and a firm commitment to high standards of animal health and welfare. It will facilitate the establishment of priorities that are consistent with agreed strategic goals and the revision of, and agreement on, acceptable and appropriate standards.

3. Scope of the Strategy

The concept of animal health covers not only the absence of disease in animals, but also the critical relationship between the health of animals, their welfare and their ability to fulfil their expected function eg for production or recreation.

The strategy covers the health of all animals in the EU kept for food, farming, sport, companionship, entertainment and in zoos. It also covers wild animals where there is a risk of them transmitting disease to other animals or to humans. The strategy also covers the health of animals transported to, from and within the EU.

The strategy is aimed at the entire EU, including animal owners, the veterinary profession, food chain businesses, animal interest groups, researchers and teachers, governing bodies of sport and recreational organisations, educational facilities, consumers, travellers, competent authorities of Member States and the EU Institutions.

The strategy builds on the current animal health and welfare legal framework in the EU and the standards and guidelines of the World Organisation for Animal Health (Office international des Epizooties – OIE). It will be coherent with other EU policies and international commitments. It will guide the development of new policies or guidelines and will enhance existing animal health and welfare arrangements in the Community based on scientific evidence and taking into account social, economic and ethical considerations.

4. Goals

The strategy sets out some challenging aims, not just for the EU institutions and Governments, but for all citizens, to improve animal health and welfare.

The strategy's goals are:

- Goal 1: to ensure a **high level of public health and food safety** by reducing the incidence of zoonoses in humans, and biological and chemical risks;
- Goal 2: to prevent/reduce the incidence of key animal diseases, and in this way to support **farming and the rural economy**;
- Goal 3: to improve **economic growth/cohesion/competitiveness** assuring free circulation of goods and proportionate animal movements;
- Goal 4: to promote farming practices which prevent the transmission of animal diseases and comply with **animal welfare standards** whilst enabling **sustainable development**.

Performance indicators will help to measure progress towards the strategy's goals, guide policy, inform priorities, target resources and focus discussion. They will be developed in consultation with stakeholders and improved over time as better veterinary and other data becomes available. They will cover both hard indicators of animal health or disease prevalence and softer indicators tracking the confidence, expectations and perceptions of European citizens. It must be recognised that uncertainties and unforeseeable events may affect achievement of the performance indicators.

5. Action Plan

The action plan aims to explain the significant breadth of activity which is being carried out or will be carried out at EU level through legislative proposal or other mechanisms in order to deliver the different strategy goals over the next six years.

The action plan to deliver the strategic goals (section 4) will focus on four main pillars, or areas of activity:

1. Prioritisation of EU intervention,
2. The EU animal health framework,
3. Prevention, surveillance and preparedness, and
4. Science, Innovation and Research.

Two key underlying principles will apply to all the work of the Commission: partnership and communication.



Underlying principles

Partnership and Communication

Working in partnership

A partnership approach built on trust, openness and a willingness to take difficult decisions is essential for success. The strategy can only bring about real change if everyone involved in animal health works together and with all interested citizens. There are many excellent examples of partnership in action in the current Community Animal Health Policy. We must take advantage of existing collaborations, encourage new initiatives and make more use of non-legislative alternatives to regulation.'

A high level Steering Board will be created, including representatives from across the animal health and welfare sector, consumers and government officials. It will provide **strategic guidance** on the appropriate/acceptable level of animal or public health protection, and on priorities for action and communication.

A subgroup to the Advisory Group on the Food Chain and Animal and Plant Health will follow the **strategy's progress**. This working group will be consulted on all impact assessments and will advise the Commission on the best means of delivering agreed outcomes.

In collaboration with the Council, the Commission will organise a conference to present the strategy's progress (mid term review – 2010).

Communication

There is a need to **communicate clearly** to stakeholders and consumers on what the EU is doing and why. European and national entities need to cooperate to ensure a coherent message and enhance public confidence.

Communicating the strategy

There will be **annual reporting** on the strategy's progress and wider communication of policies and initiatives. Communication will take different forms depending on the message that is being delivered and the target audience. It will include participation in international or national events, developing relationships with the media, improving websites to include comprehensive relevant information for all interested parties, checklists, manuals and a forum for Questions & Answers.

Communication in case of crisis

Good communication on risk to stakeholders/consumers is also of utmost importance, as an incorrect public perception of risk may force the regulator to take unjustified or disproportionate measures in the case of a crisis.

The new Animal Health strategy must be seen as an integrated risk management strategy focusing on animal diseases, and biological and chemical risks of EU relevance.

1.1 Categorisation of animal-related threats

Profiling and categorisation of animal diseases, biological and chemical risks will provide the basis for decisions on where the responsibility for action lies.

Identified threats to animal health must be assessed to determine:

- their **relevance** to the four high level goals of the EU strategy;
- the “**acceptable level of risk**” for the Community;
- the relative **priority** for action to reduce the risk.

For serious threats to human health and the rural economy, we must strive to reduce the risk to a negligible level. But zero risk cannot be achieved. So even when dealing with high priority threats where a negligible level of risk is sought, we must analyse the cost-benefit and cost-effectiveness of possible interventions to ensure best use of limited resources, both in terms of EU funding and cost to producers. This is critical to our food supply and key to the sustainability of the environment and the rural economies of member states.

This is an important and difficult process, which has already begun at EU level. Decisions must be based on sound science, but science alone will not provide all the answers. The Commission will therefore engage representatives of all interested parties in the decision-making process to gain the widest possible agreement and shared responsibility for the judgements made and to deliver agreed objectives.

Targets will be set at community level, national level and, where appropriate, regional level. Suitable **performance indicators** will allow the assessment of progress over the next six years.

The appropriate **amount of resource** to be applied to achieve the desired level of protection, and the development of a responsibility and cost sharing scheme, will be based on the categorisation of animal diseases, biological and chemical risks.

Expected outcomes:

- **Categorisation of animal diseases, chemical and biological risks** according to level of relevance for the EU
- Agreement on the **acceptable level of risk**
- Setting of **priorities**, quantifiable **targets** and performance **indicators**
- Setting of the **amount of resources** to be committed to identified threats

Pillar 2

A modern and appropriate animal health and welfare framework

Towards a single regulatory framework, with a greater focus on incentives rather than penalties, and converging to international standards

2.1 A single and clearer regulatory framework

The EU considers “Animal Health” Services² to be a Global Public Good and their maintenance in line with international standards (in terms of legislation, structure, organisation, resources, capacities, the role of the private sector and paraprofessionals) must be considered as a minimum goal. This is a public investment priority.

Constantly evolving legislation is one of the main mechanisms for EU intervention in animal health, both in the pursuit of Community policy and to implement international obligations. Better regulation principles will be applied through a strengthened partnership and enhanced communication.

The current policy appears to be a complex series of linked and interrelated policy actions rather than a single policy framework. The Animal Health Strategy will strive for a single clear regulatory framework converging as far as possible with the OIE/Codex recommendations/standards and guidelines. This regulatory framework will include animal welfare standards³.

The European Commission is responsible for ensuring that unjustified national/regional rules do not constitute a potential obstacle to the internal market. However, the EU regulatory framework also needs to be suitably flexible to allow for judgements of equivalence, settlements of dispute and efficient responses to changing situations. Specific attention must be paid to the position of animals kept on a non-commercial basis (i.e. as a hobby) and wildlife, insofar as this impinges on central goals⁴.

Roles and responsibilities will be clearly defined. An incentive-oriented approach is needed at all levels. A revision of the current co-financing instrument is required.

More effective procedures will be used for a number of Commission Decisions. The SCFCAH will focus on Decisions in which MS and stakeholders have a key interest. Non-regulatory tools must be encouraged as far as possible.

² means the *Competent Administration*, all the *Competent Authorities*, and all persons authorised, registered or licensed by the *Animal Health statutory body* (as defined in the OIE code).

³ in compliance with the *Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on a Community Action Plan on the Protection and Welfare of Animals 2006-2010 (COM(2006)0013)*

⁴ e.g. *Natura 2000* which is established through Council Directive 92/43/EEC of May 21 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora, and Council Directive 79/409/EEC of April 2 1979 on the conservation of wild birds

Expected outcomes:

An EU Animal Health and Welfare General Law:

- **A single horizontal legal framework** will define and integrate common principles and requirements of existing legislation (Intracommunity trade, imports, animal disease control, animal nutrition and animal welfare)
- Existing legislation will be **simplified** and replaced by this new framework as appropriate, ensuring **convergence to international standards** (OIE/Codex standards) and a **firm commitment to high standards** of animal health and welfare.

2.2 Developing efficient cost and responsibility sharing schemes

Animal diseases

Existing compensation schemes are mainly focused on providing a compensation mechanism for animal owners in the event of a disease outbreak. Appropriate sharing of costs, benefits and responsibilities will contribute significantly to the key objectives of the strategy. It will contribute to preventing major financial risks for Member States and the Community by providing incentives for prevention of animal related threats. It also seeks to strengthen Community economic and social cohesion and specifically to reduce the gaps between levels of animal health in the various regions.

On the one hand, Governments have an important role to play in securing our external borders against disease incursions and leading the response to outbreaks of exotic disease. There is also an obligation on States to compensate for private property destroyed for the public good at least to the extent that the owner is not responsible for the outbreak. In this the protection of public health is a key consideration.

On the other hand, responsibility for the health of animals lies primarily with animal owners and collectively with the industry. As a result, animal owners and industry are better placed than others to deal with many of the risks of animal diseases.

There is a clear recognition that the policy needs the full participation and commitment of all parties, including the insurance sector. Ownership of risk is a key issue and new mechanisms must be introduced to involve major stakeholders in decision-making on significant policy issues, in particular for emergency measures.

A feasibility study will still be necessary to reflect on concrete proposals for the gradual development of an EU harmonised scheme.

Feed sector

In the feed sector, when large-scale incidents occur, public authorities tend to be heavily burdened with the costs of withdrawal, transport, storage and destruction of feed, food and animals, as well as the costs of analysis and other administrative outlay. Believing that feed business operators should be held financially liable and should have the means to cover the cost of remedying any damage, the Commission included provisions for financial guarantees in the proposal for a Regulation on feed hygiene⁵, which was presented on 14 April 2003. In 2007, The Commission (submitted) a report to the European Parliament and the Council setting out the possibilities for an effective system of financial guarantees for feed business operators.

⁵ Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council laying down requirements for feed hygiene. COM/2003/0180 final - COD 2003/0071.

Expected outcomes:

- Animal Diseases: development of an **harmonised EU framework for responsibility and cost-sharing**, on the basis of the following criteria:
 - Categorisation of animal diseases, biological and chemical risks according to EU relevance
 - Incentives encouraging risk-reducing behaviour from all parties involved.
 - Possibility of covering indirect losses.
 - Balancing costs (public/private funding) and responsibilities. Solidarity aspects have to be considered.
 - Prevention of distortion of competition.
 - Compatibility with EU international commitments
 - Effectiveness and flexibility of implementation at national or regional level.
 - Consultation mechanism between cost sharing partners, especially during crisis.
- Feed sector: development of a **harmonised EU framework of financial guarantees** at Community level

2.3 Community influence on international standards

The EU legislation is already largely based on OIE/Codex recommendations/standards and guidelines, respecting its commitments within the framework of the WTO Agreement on the application of sanitary and phytosanitary measures (SPS Agreement). However, there are areas where the EU could improve its convergence with these standards (e.g. disease status, imports, quality and evaluation of Veterinary Services, laboratory testing, animal nutrition, vaccination).

Where OIE/Codex have adopted standards, the EU will comply with these when applying animal health measures. However, if there is a scientific justification, the EU may introduce or maintain sanitary or phytosanitary measures which result in a higher level of sanitary or phytosanitary protection. The EU will continue to be very active in promoting its own standards in the OIE/Codex and ensure as far as possible that they are also adopted accordingly at international level. It is necessary to encourage other members of the OIE/Codex to use the international standards in the setting of their own standards.

With regard to imports, the EU should improve communication concerning its requirements vis-à-vis its trading partners. The EU should also build up its negotiating strength on matters relating to exports. The EU should endeavour to encourage other members of the OIE/Codex to improve the alignment of their legislation to international recommendations/standards and guidelines and to ensure uniform interpretation and avoid potential distortion in international competition.

Given that the Community has exclusive competence in almost all of OIE's areas of activity, it is also desirable for the Community to become a member of OIE, as it has of the Codex Alimentarius. This will help reinforce coherence between standards, guidelines and other provisions adopted by the OIE and other relevant international obligations of the European Community.

Expected outcomes:

- **Defence of EU positions** on the basis of sound scientific evidence, whenever necessary.
- **Community membership of the OIE** in order to strengthen the active role of the Community

2.4 Towards an export strategy at community level

Import conditions for food and animal products are largely harmonised. However, this is not the case for exports.

For certain third countries, common EU export requirements are specifically defined in bilateral veterinary agreements⁶. In some exceptional cases, such as Russia, the Council has given a specific authorisation to the Commission to negotiate export requirements.

The Commission has exclusive competence for negotiation of bilateral agreements with third countries in the SPS field. The Commission now needs to consider with Member States the implications for the implementation of existing and future policy on SPS negotiations with third countries in relation to exports. The aim is to ensure respect of the Treaty obligations in relation to the Common Commercial Policy and to present a unified Community approach in negotiations with third countries to maximise export potential.

Expected outcomes:

- Improved export performance through a Community rather than bilateral approach towards negotiations with third countries.
- **A strengthened EU role** in negotiating EU export conditions through the development of regional expertise.

⁶ Including Chile, Mexico, USA, Canada, New Zealand, Switzerland, and EFTA countries.

Pillar 3

Animal-related threat prevention, surveillance and crisis preparedness

Identifying problems before they take hold, and being ready to manage outbreaks and crisis

3.1 Supporting on-farm bio-security measures⁷

Successful biosecurity measures must address isolation of new animals brought to the farm, isolation of sick animals, regulation of the movement of people, animals, and equipment, and procedures for cleaning and disinfecting facilities. This responsibility lies with the animal owners.

Disease free status, bio-security measures, animal welfare measures and veterinary control will be possible means of rating holdings and supporting the development of the responsibility and cost sharing scheme.

Expected outcomes:

- **Guidelines** taking into account the level of risk associated with different types of production systems and species (e.g. intensive production, extensive production, high density area). These guidelines will be coherent with the EU animal health legal framework.
- **Provision of funding** to finance and promote on-farm bio-security measures via existing funds (e.g. Rural development fund)

3.2 Identification and Tracing

The EU traceability framework (identification systems, labelling, and TRACES, the Community TRAdE Control and Expert System) aims to improve the quality, accuracy, availability and timeliness of the provision of data on live animals, food from animal origin and feed. It allows for traceability across MS borders.

Currently, individual identification, e.g. for bovine animals, is achieved via identifiers, a paper-based system of animal passports and holding registers combined with national identification databases that are not connected between Member States. Traceability for live animal transport is achieved via a paper-based certification system in combination with TRACES.

The gradual introduction of electronic identification, foreseen for sheep and goats from 2008, raises the question of how, in the mid to long-term, the different elements of the traceability system for live animals can be combined and an EU integrated electronic system developed. Due to the cost/benefit ratio, small-scale livestock producers may be reluctant to introduce electronic identification, and an impact assessment is particularly necessary.

Increasing the accuracy and timeliness of this data should result in improved information for veterinary surveillance and better ways of dealing with disease outbreaks, while efficiency should reduce costs both for industry and government.

⁷ Biosecurity refers to those measures taken to keep diseases out of populations, herds, or groups of animals where they do not currently exist or to limit the spread of disease within the herd.

Expected outcomes:

- **TRACES** achieves its objective of becoming a **single portal for all veterinary matters**.
- **Interoperability of national identification databases**.
- **Introduction of electronic procedures** (longer term).
 - Feasibility study for the introduction of electronic identification (with particular focus on ruminants) on either a voluntary or compulsory basis.
 - Introduction of electronic certification to replace paper certification for the movement of live animals (intra-community trade and imports).
 - Creation of a wider, integrated electronic system, with a unified database encompassing all elements of the current system under certification, animal identification, and animal health and welfare status.

3.3 Better border biosecurity

The EU is the biggest food importer in the world. The Member States' responsibility in border control is to protect the community from potential animal and public health risks arising from international trade of live animals and their products. The challenge is to improve border biosecurity without severely disrupting cross-border movement of people and agricultural goods. In fact, the main safety feature of border controls on declared imports for animal health purposes is the document check, and the EU is dependent upon the accuracy and honesty of the declarations in these documents.

There has been a major growth in recent years in illegal imports which evade border controls entirely, and to combat this, veterinarians need to work more closely with customs, both at border inspection posts and at points of entry to the Community where goods or animals may enter illegally. There are fundamental questions about: the assessment of risk; trust between national governments; and what can and cannot be accomplished in border inspection facilities and other points of entry (efficiency/effectiveness).

On the other hand, it may be difficult for certain developing countries to comply with EU standards and thus engage in trade. The EU should do more to improve cooperation policy with third countries, providing them with technical assistance to help them to satisfy EU animal health requirements for imports and to fight against exotic diseases at source.

Expected outcomes:

- **Revision of the current legislation** and the development of a policy designed to deliver a better risk-based approach to border inspections and to target illegal trade. Development of EU based risk assessment to target higher risk consignments (products/countries) and assist in selection of containers to be examined physically.
- To optimise the **coordination of agencies/services regulating imports** (customs/veterinary services).
- To make **travellers** aware of restrictions and of their **responsibilities** and to ensure proportionate enforcement.
- To improve **risk management at third country level** and to provide **assistance for third countries** (via the external co-operation instruments, training, knowledge sharing and support through regional expertise).

3.4 Surveillance and crisis preparedness/management

Veterinary Surveillance

Veterinary surveillance provides early warning and prompt detection of animal-related threats, together with tracking and analysis of the way diseases occur and spread.

The information generated provides crucial scientific evidence for the EU institutions and governments to support decisions on prevention and control measures, as well as assessing the effectiveness of existing approaches. Surveillance also provides the wider public, farmers and pet owners with information which they and veterinary surgeons can use to decide how best to protect their own health and the health of their animals.

Animal keepers and veterinarians also need effective training to be able to identify the signs of disease at an early stage.

Emergency preparedness

Animal-related emergencies must be dealt with swiftly and effectively using an agreed approach. The possibility for the Commission to take fast-track decisions for emergency action is of high value in limiting and controlling animal-related threats at EU level.

In response to ethical concerns and the growing demand for improved animal welfare, the EU has already moved to a more flexible approach to vaccination, as well as improving its policy on slaughter.

Preparation, contingency planning exercises and implementation of emergency preparedness plans are the responsibility of the governments. These plans should be agreed in advance with the cost sharing scheme partners.

A key factor in being able to manage an outbreak successfully is knowing where animals and their products are, and controlling their movements.

Expected outcomes:

Surveillance:

- Improve surveillance prioritisation according to the categorisation of animal-related threats. Determine appropriate indicators and modalities for data collection.
- encourage collaborative⁸ networks of interested parties, especially through the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, the European Food Safety Authority and the European Medicines Agency, to improve data collection, risk analysis and information to the public, as well as training to allow early detection of animal health problems,
- Provide funding⁷:
 - to support epidemiosurveillance via existing funds,
 - to maintain the EU diagnostic capability (e.g. funding of laboratory networking) and,
 - to provide appropriate training (e.g. “better training for safer food” initiative).
- Improvement of the Animal Diseases Notification System (ADNS) to allow better value to be derived from surveillance activities and information to be shared widely.

⁸ Including collaboration with third countries

Emergency preparedness:

- Initiative to improve EU preparedness against major threats to animal health (e.g. Avian flu, Foot and Mouth Disease). These components may also be useful for identifying and responding to potential bioterrorism attacks:
 - Rapid response network,
 - Supporting the diffusion of expertise and tools to allow humane killing of animals in emergency situations,
 - Communication capacity during crisis,
 - Crisis management units and community veterinary emergency team,
 - Reinforcement of the necessary EU antigen/vaccine banks.

- Possibility to make use of the EU Solidarity Fund (emergency) or creation of a similar budget line.

- Define specific scientific and regulatory approaches for the authorisation of veterinary vaccines used for the prevention of animal diseases subject to Community measures.

Pillar 4

Science, Innovation, and Research

To stimulate and coordinate science, innovation and research, hence contributing to a high level of public health and to the competitiveness of EU animal health businesses

4.1 Science

The Community is committed to scientific excellence, independence, openness and transparency.

A network of **Community and National Reference Laboratories** dealing with animal diseases has been gradually set up. Scientifically sound and uniform testing is of fundamental importance for appropriate disease diagnosis and for the application of the necessary control and eradication measures. The Community Reference Laboratories activities will be evaluated in 2007 to see whether resources (human, financial, facilities...) are adequate to fulfil these duties.

The **European Food Safety Authority** and the **European Medicines Agency** also mobilise and coordinate scientific resources from throughout the EU to provide high-quality and independent scientific advice. This provides risk managers (the European Commission, the European Parliament and Member States) with a sound foundation for animal health policy.

Expected outcomes:

- To strengthen the collaboration between European agencies and national bodies.
- Based on the evaluation results, to review and where necessary extend the activities of the Community Reference Laboratories.

4.2 Innovation and Research

For the development of modern research in a global environment, it is vital to organise co-operation at different levels, co-ordinating national or European level policies, promoting networking between teams and increasing the mobility of individuals and ideas. . With decisive actions at European level in the area of animal health and welfare, the current fragmentation of Europe's efforts can be overcome.

The new 7th framework programme (2007-2013) will be an important tool in support of animal health and welfare research, alongside national efforts and other European co-operative research activities.

A series of initiatives aimed at promoting animal health and welfare research have already been launched - including the call for the creation of an ERANET⁹ on animal health, an information platform on the protection and welfare of animals and the launch of the European Technology Platform for Global Animal Health (ETPGAH) in 2004.

The industry-led Technology Platform should mobilise both public and private sectors in Europe to commit funds to carry out research through public-private partnerships. It should facilitate the development of new and effective tools (in particular vaccines and diagnostic tests) for controlling animal diseases of major importance to Europe and the rest of the world.

⁹ The objective of the ERA-NET scheme, in the context of the European Research Area (ERA), is to step up the cooperation and coordination of research activities (i.e. programmes) carried out at national or regional level in the Member States and Associated States through the networking of research.

Furthermore the Commission has proposed in its Community Action Plan on the Protection and Welfare of Animals to establish a European Centre on Animal Welfare. This would coordinate and stimulate research in order to upgrade existing standards.

Expected outcomes:

- To define a **research action** plan involving the industry and other relevant stakeholders. This plan will **prioritise** animal-related threats and will **identify** the “**gaps**” in existing control tools for surveillance, diagnosis, vaccination and treatment.
- To ensure the **appropriate level of funding** to implement the research action plan through public-private partnerships.
- To provide support for research in developing countries through **international cooperation**, especially for exotic diseases of high relevance or for neglected zoonoses which have a serious impact on those countries.
- Establishment of a **Community Reference Centre on the Protection and Welfare of Animals**.

Scope

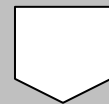
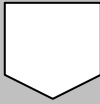
- Livestock/production animals
- Aquatic animals,
- Animals used for work, sport, recreation or display
- Companion animals
- Wildlife, and
- Animals used in research and for teaching purposes.

Elements of the existing EU legal framework

- Intra-community trade/market
- Import conditions/Border controls
- Animal disease control, eradication and monitoring
- Animal Welfare
- Animal nutrition, feed additives
- Veterinary medicinal products
- Traceability
- Research
- Scientific advice
- Training and skills
- Communication
- Financial aspects

Partnership

- Animal owners
- Animal keepers/users
- Veterinary surgeons
- Food Chain Businesses
- Consumers, travellers
- Retailers
- Animal interest groups
- Countryside interest groups
- Game keepers, hunters and landowners (wildlife)
- Governments and other Public Institutions
- EU Institutions
- International Organisations



Driving factors

Public Health Policy (incl. Food Safety)
Lisbon Agenda (Economic, growth and competitiveness)

Sustainable Development Policy

International commitments:

Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Agreement/WTO
The European consensus on development (millennium goals)

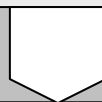
Coherence

Common Agriculture Policy
Fishery policy
Enlargement Policy
Consumer Policy
Internal Market Policy
Trade policy
Innovation and Research Policy
External Relations with third countries
External Assistance to third countries
Customs Standards
Fight against fraud

General principles

Subsidiarity/Proportionality/Accountability

Better communication - Better regulation - Simplification - Reduction of administrative burden



Goals and Action Plan