



Organisation
Mondiale
de la Santé
Animale

World
Organisation
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Health

Organización
Mundial
de Sanidad
Animal

22nd Conference of the
OIE Regional Commission for Europe
Lyon (France), 25-29 September 2006

FINAL REPORT

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List of Abbreviations

BMVEL	Federal Ministry of Consumer Protection, Food and Agriculture
BSE	Bovine spongiform encephalopathy
CAC	Codex Alimentarius Commission
CEFAS	Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science
CVO	Chief Veterinary Officer
DEFRA	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
EC	European Commission
EFAHSS	European Federation for Animal Health and Sanitary Security
EIA	Equine infection anaemia
ENSV	Ecole nationale des Services veterinaries
EU	European Union
EUFMD	European Commission for the Control of Foot and Mouth Disease
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FMD	Foot and mouth disease
FVE	Federation of Veterinarians of Europe
GBR	Geographical BSE Risk
GF-TADs	Global Framework for the Control of Transboundary Animal Diseases
GLEWS	Global Early Warning System
GREP	Global Rinderpest Eradication Programme
HPAI	Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza
IEF	International Equestrian Federation
IICA	Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture
IMF	International Monetary Fund
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OIE	World Organisation for Animal Health
PACE	Pan African Programme for the Control of Epizootics
PVS	Performance, Vision and Strategy
RVF	Rift Valley fever
SANCO	Health and consumer protection Directorate
SPS	Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures of the WTO
STDF	Standards and Trade Development Facility
TADs	Transboundary Animal Diseases
TAIEX	Technical Assistance and Information Exchange Instrument
WHO	World Health Organization
WTO	World Trade Organization
WAHID	World Animal Health Information Database
WAHIS	World Animal Health Information System
WUP	World Union of Professions

Introduction

1. At the invitation of the Government of France, the 22nd Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe was held in Lyon from 25 to 29 September 2006.
2. A total of 138 participants, comprising OIE Delegates and/or nominees of 45 Member Countries and 2 Observer Countries and senior officers from 12 regional and international organisations attended the conference (Appendix I). In addition, representatives of the private sector and private veterinary organisations from the host country were present. Dr Barry O'Neil, President of the OIE International Committee, Dr Bernard Vallat, OIE Director General, Prof. Nikola Belev, President of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe and OIE Regional Representative for Eastern Europe, Dr Dewan Sibartie, Head of the OIE Regional Activities Department and Dr Antonio Petrini, Deputy Head of the OIE Animal Health Information Department also participated in the Conference. The speakers of Technical Items I and II, namely, Dr Gaetana Ferri, Director General of Animal Health, Department of Veterinary Public Health, Food and Food Security, Ministry of Health in Rome, Italy, and Dr Debby Reynolds, Chief Veterinary Officer and Director General for Animal Health and Welfare, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) in London, and Delegate of the United Kingdom to the OIE, honoured the Conference by their presence.

Tuesday 26 September 2006

Opening Ceremony

3. On behalf of the Organising Committee of the Conference in Lyon, Prof. Jean-François Chary, General Inspector of Agriculture, welcomed the participants to the 22nd Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe.
4. Prof. Chary traced the history of the first veterinary school in the world, which was created in Lyon in 1761, by Claude Bourgelat and for which King Louis XV gave the necessary funds. This was followed by the creation of a second veterinary school in 1766 in Château d'Alfort near Paris and thereafter in many other countries of the world. Lyon is thus the cradle of the large veterinary family.
5. Prof. Nikola Belev, President of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe and OIE Regional Representative for Eastern Europe, expressed his pleasure at welcoming the participants at the 22nd Regional Conference in Lyon. He extended his thanks, on behalf of the OIE Regional Commission, to the Government of France, and to the officers in the Directorate General for Food of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, as well as to the French National School for Veterinary Services in Lyon (ENSV), who have organised the meeting. He expressed his appreciation of the warm welcome received in Lyon.
6. Prof. Belev also spoke on the commitment of Member Countries in the implementation of the OIE Regional Programme for Europe (2005-2008) and the Fourth OIE Strategic Plan mentioning in particular the various seminars supported by EC-DG SANCO and TAIEX on the dialogue between Member Countries of the EU and other Member Countries of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe. He added that the Regional Programme places strong emphasis on specialised training for young veterinarians.
7. Prof. Belev also commented on the improved capabilities of National Veterinary Services in Europe to cope with important animal diseases, particularly highly pathogenic avian influenza. He advised that another important activity of the Regional Commission is to improve communication with the mass media to ensure that information relating to animal diseases reflect the real situation.
8. Dr Véronique Bellemain, Director of the French National School of Veterinary Services (ENSV), briefly outlined the activities of the ENSV, which is situated in Lyon since 1994. It serves to train veterinary graduates from veterinary schools for a period of two years to become official veterinarians in the French administration. Dr Bellemain then described the international activities of the ENSV and their development since the nomination of the ENSV in 2004 as the OIE Collaborating Centre for the Training of Official Veterinarians. In this context, the ENSV has, for example, prepared a 'toolbox' for the training of new OIE Delegates. It also organises the training of auditors for the evaluation of National Veterinary Services through the PVS (Performance, Vision and Strategy) tool and participates in OIE/EU and WTO/OIE seminars.

Partnerships exist with similar objectives in Argentina, the USA and Italy. Finally, Dr Bellemain informed participants that a new building is being planned for the Collaborating Centre

9. Dr Jean-Louis Touraine, Vice-President of Greater Lyon, welcomed participants to Lyon, a city with a rich cultural history of 2000 years, which is part of the UNESCO world heritage list, and which is also known for its culinary traditions. He commented that Lyon was honoured to host the conference, thus having the opportunity to welcome experts in animal health world-wide, who will discuss important topics for veterinary public health, such as avian influenza and bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE). He recalled that Lyon excels in the fields of biotechnology, diagnosis and vaccines, particularly through Lyon Biopole and the future project Bioparc Lyon. Dr Touraine ended by wishing participants a fruitful conference and a pleasant stay in Lyon.
10. Dr Monique Eloit, Delegate of France to the OIE and Deputy Director General of Food of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, expressed her pleasure at seeing so many countries present at the conference. She recalled the delicate task of the OIE to define the sanitary standards for trade in animals and animal products and noted the active participation of Europe in the development of these standards, urging National Veterinary Services world-wide to apply these standards.
11. Dr Eloit recalled the recommendation of the conference in Avila in September 2004 on emergency preparedness and disease simulation plans, which are a reality today. She also referred to one of the priorities of the Fourth OIE Strategic Plan adopted in 2005, namely, strengthening of the activities of the Regional Commissions, expressing her conviction of obtaining this goal.
12. Finally, Dr Eloit expressed her special gratitude to the Mayor of Lyon and the urban community of Lyon, the General Council of the Rhône as well as the Regional Council of Rhône-Alpes, who largely facilitated the material organisation of the conference. She also extended her warm appreciation to the Veterinary School of Lyon, the National School of Veterinary Services and the organising committee, who made every effort to make the conference a success.
13. Dr Barry O'Neil, President of the OIE International Committee, welcomed Delegates and participants to Lyon and thanked the French government and the National School of Veterinary Services for organising and hosting the 22nd Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe.
14. Dr O'Neil recalled how Europe has historically been a world leader for Veterinary Services and animal health development and went on to challenge the Region to continue to take a leadership role in the current challenges of supporting developing countries, following OIE standards for trade including early reporting of changed disease situations and working to address the agriculture and animal production challenges that are occurring due to climate change.
15. Ms Eliane Giraud, Vice-President of the Rhône-Alpes Region in which the city of Lyon is located, warmly welcomed participants to this region, which is known for its traditions and innovations that go hand in hand. She remarked that the Rhône-Alpes Region has had its share of recent upheavals, such as the outbreaks of HPAI with disastrous economic losses, as well as the climatic changes resulting in the major drought of three years' ago and changes in mountain grazing lands with its repercussions on the quality of the fodder and animal production. Ms Giraud hoped that the deliberations of the conference would be of value to the Region and the entire world. She expressed her appreciation of the contribution of the veterinary profession in the field of human health.
16. Dr Bernard Vallat, Director General of the OIE, expressed his gratitude to the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries, and the French Government for hosting the conference and welcomed all the participants on behalf of the OIE and recalled the historical significance of the city of Lyon in the evolution of veterinary science in the world, the first veterinary school of the world having seen the day in that city in 1761. He pointed out that the extraordinary participation at this conference bore testimony to the importance of the activities of the Regional Commission and at the same time expresses the willingness of countries of the region to collaborate more closely in the prevention and control of animal diseases including zoonoses.
17. Dr Vallat also thanked Dr Monique Eloit, Prof. François Chary and Dr Véronique Bellemain for the organisation of this conference.

18. Dr Vallat described the global and regional role of the OIE in the control of important animal diseases and zoonoses particularly avian influenza. He stated that although some diseases such as BSE are on the decline in Europe, other diseases such as bluetongue are re emerging in the continent and Veterinary Services need to remain on the alert to harmonise and coordinate measures for early detection of and rapid response to animal diseases.
19. Dr Vallat underlined the importance of the international meeting on avian and human influenza which was held in Beijing in January 2006 and the commitment of the international donor community to strengthen Veterinary Services which are on the front line in the combat against animal diseases including zoonoses. He mentioned the regional conference on highly pathogenic avian influenza organised at the OIE Headquarters by the Regional Commission for Europe which brought together the Veterinary services of Europe and surrounding countries to discuss the harmonisation of measures involved in the prevention and control of the disease.
20. Dr Vallat reported on the recent results obtained from the series of national seminars held in different Member Countries of the region on the dialogue between EU member states and other Member Countries of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe. He thanked the EC-DG SANCO and TAIEX, Russia, Georgia and other countries hosting OIE seminars for their support in the organisation of those seminars.
21. Finally, Dr Vallat urged Member Countries to apply under the auspices of the OIE wherever relevant, the Performance, Vision and Strategy (PVS) tool for the evaluation of Veterinary Services to identify gaps and weaknesses, which can subsequently be addressed through national resources and/or international assistance.
22. On behalf of the Government and the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries of France, Mr Dominique Bussereau, Dr Jean Marc Bournigal, Director General of the Food Directorate of the French Ministry of Agriculture of France welcomed the participants.
23. He recalled that the city of Lyon, in addition to being the birth place of the first veterinary school of the world, hosts several other important veterinary institutions, such as the National School for Official Veterinary Services, which is an OIE Collaborating Centre, the National Reference Laboratory for Research on Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies and important vaccine and drug manufacturing companies.
24. Dr Bournigal commended the role of the OIE in the international control of animal diseases and zoonoses. He mentioned that despite the diversity in climate and animal husbandry systems in Europe, global risks of disease spread remain the same and added that it would be a mistake for European countries to continue thinking that they are going to remain historically free from certain diseases, as diseases such as bluetongue and West Nile fever are already there and striking in places where they are least expected.
25. Commenting on the role of various stakeholders in the epidemiological surveillance of animal diseases, Dr Bournigal indicated that the already existing synergy between the main actors involved, namely, the State Veterinary Service, private veterinarians, diagnostic laboratories and breeders in France has proved its worth and wished that this type of collaboration continue.
26. In conclusion, Dr Bournigal wished much success to the participants and declared the 22nd Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe officially open.
27. The texts of the above speeches were made available to all the participants.

Election of the Conference Committee

28. The Conference Committee was elected as follows:

Chairperson: Dr Monique Eloit (France)
Vice-Chairperson: Dr Euvgueny A. Nepoklonov (Russia)
Rapporteur General: Dr Preben Willeberg (Denmark)

Adoption of the Provisional Agenda and Timetable

29. The Provisional Agenda and Timetable were adopted. (Appendix II and III)

Designation of Session Chairpersons and Rapporteurs

30. Session Chairpersons and Rapporteurs were designated for the technical items as follows:

Item I:	Dr Kazimieras Lukauskas (Lithuania), Chairman Dr Dietrich Rassow (Germany), Rapporteur
Item II:	Dr Patrick Rogan (Ireland), Chairman Dr Ago Pärtel (Estonia), Rapporteur
Animal health situation:	Dr Dejan Krnjaic (Serbia and Montenegro), Chairman Dr Levan Ramishvili (Georgia), Rapporteur

Animal health situation in Europe in the first half of 2006

31. The Session Chairman, Dr Dejan Krnjaic, invited Dr Antonio Petrini, Deputy Head of the OIE Animal Health Information Department, to present the animal health situation of Member Countries in the region in the first half of 2006.

Animal health situation in Europe

32. This report is based on information extracted from national reports provided by OIE Member Countries (MC) Europe for the Regional Conference. It has been supplemented, whenever felt necessary, by relevant information from immediate notification and follow up reports of events happening in some countries up to August 2006, information on bovine spongiform encephalopathy previously provided to the OIE and from the World Animal Health publication in 2004 for livestock population.

Domestic livestock population in Europe:

Country	Cattle	Sheep & Goats	Swine	Equines	Poultry
ALBANIA	655 000	2 701 000	147 000	149 000	6 432 000
ANDORRA	1 397	3 032	74	864	4 510
ARMENIA	592 067	591 566	137 508	12 262	4 862 000
AUTRIA	2 008 413	380 828	3 169 541	100 000	15 000 000
AZERBAIJAN (*)	1 934 422	7 280 146	20 448	68 798	17 500 000
BELARUS	3 980 100	120 700	3 545 000	167 600	28 476 100
BELGIUM (*)	2 738 648	176 128	6 355 333	31 945	36 506 390
BOSNIAAND-HERZÉGOVINE (*)	528 502	780 249	415 655	16 466	1 538 865
BULGARIA	543 312	2 852 940	1 024 355	205 472	17 155 637
CROATIA (*)	398 037	954 217	1 726 895	14 968	50 770 000
CYPRUS	61 432	690 756	672 657	3 800	16 771 700
CZECH. REPUBLIC	1 373 645	162 814	2 840 375	22 883	25 736 003
DENMARK (*)	1 732 657	231 110	12 868 394	39 209	29 812 776
ESTONIA	256 185	49 702	135 967	4 070	2 497 512
FINLAND (*)	969 000	115 500	1 364 200	60 200	10 997 000
FORMER YUG.. REP. OF MACEDONIA (*)	204 775	976 513	48 002	251 391	2 500 000
FRANCE (*)	19 200 000	10 165 000	15 046 000	458 000	281 244 000
GÉORGIA	1 260 200	900 000	500 000	60 000	1 100 000
GERMANY (*)	13 031 300	2 713 500	26 334 800	524 800	109 793 500

Country	Cattle	Sheep & Goats	Swine	Equines	Poultry
GREECE (*)	708 098	12 883 474	2 096 754	53 556	121 946 800
HUNGARY (*)	723 000	1 471 000	4 059 000	67 000	41 693 000
ICELAND (*)	69 000	460 370	3 800	73 000	220 000
IRELAND (*)	6 966 800	6 856 500	1 645 500	76 200	12 737 800
ISRAEL	330 000	580 000	180 000	30 000	45 000 000
ITALY (*)	5 187 098	8 581 587	...	...	...
KAZAKHSTAN (*)	5 180 900	13 282 100	1 341 300	1 110 100	25 480 500
KIRGHIZISTAN (*)	...	...	...	...	...
LATVIA (*)	376 547	50 199	340 296	14 500	3 576 000
LITHUANIA (*)	982 470	41 385	1 057 400	63 600	8 066 700
LUXEMBOUR	182 017	11 408	84 547	5 831	95 279
MALTA (*)	20 000	15 000	53 300	2 136	6 000 000
MOLDAVIA (*)	341 547	1 168 139	434 450	74 250	12 268 927
NETHERLANDS	3 798 804	1 654 755	11 311 558	133 321	92 914 176
NORWAY (*)	936 600	2 483 700	800 400	28 400	12 365 000
POLAND	6 333 955	272 958	19 513 834	312 000	113 487 800
PORTUGAL	1 080 204	2 820 080	2 812 022	170 000	24 639 500
ROMANIA	3 221 524	10 292 220	4 723 838	334 619	65 600 000
RUSSIA	...	...	...	...	...
SERBIA AND MONTENEGRO (*)	1 115 603	1 695 000	3 564 000	35 000	17 170 000
SLOVAKIA (*)	540 146	371 437	1 149 282	12 100	23 869 772
SLOVENIA (*)	451 136	142 295	533 998	16 879	3 268 044
SPAIN	5 700 651	25 505 240	24 894 956	505 000	167 993 311
SWEDEN (*)	1 657 000	456 000	1 891 000	271 000	12 400 000
SWITZERLAND	1 556 231	565 854	1 602 133	78 517	8 216 251
TADJIKISTAN (*)	...	...	...	...	...
TURKEY (*)	9 315 000	28 305 000	5 500	602 000	300 000 000
TURKMENISTAN (*)	2 014 200	15 165 300	30 800	29 000	13 984 600
UKRAINE	7 370 500	2 057 900	7 342 700	554 800	156 046 500
UZBEKISTAN (*)	6 232 600	10 710 900	83 800	150 900	18 726 900
		>	>		>
TOTAL	>123 860 723	179 704 158	143 015 906	>6 994 437	2 164 220 353

(*) Data extracted from former annual questionnaire for 2004

The above table gives an overview on the livestock population in Europe.

33. Europe has faced two important epizootics in 2006, namely highly pathogenic avian influenza caused by the H5N1 strain and more recently bluetongue.

Highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI)

34. During 2006, the following countries have reported outbreaks of HPAI subtype H5N1 in poultry: Albania, Azerbaijan, Denmark, France, Germany, Hungary, Israel, Romania, Russia, Serbia and Montenegro, Sweden, Turkey and Ukraine.
35. During the same period, the following countries have reported outbreaks of HPAI subtype H5N1 in wild birds only: Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Georgia, Greece, Kazakhstan, Italy, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland and United Kingdom.
36. The countries having declared the end of the epizootic in poultry as at August 2006 are the following: Azerbaijan, Denmark, France, Germany, Israel, Sweden and Turkey.

37. In March 2006, **Albania** notified two outbreaks of HPAI subtype H5N1 in poultry in the villages of Çuke and Aliko (Sarande county), and in Peze-Helmes village (Ndroq county).
38. The first occurrence of avian influenza in wildlife in **Austria** was detected on 14 February 2006 and the infection was reported on 26 April 2006. Between February and April, 125 wild birds were tested positive. There has been no infection of poultry or other captive birds.
39. On 29 January 2006, **Azerbaijan** declared HPAI H5N1 infection in various migratory birds in a coastal area in the vicinity of Baku. On 22 February 2006, outbreaks of HPAI were found in backyard poultry in the districts of Khyzy, Biljasuvar and Agdam.
40. In **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, two swans were found positive for HPAI subtype H5N1 in February 2006 in Plivsko lake in Srednjobosanski canton.
41. In **Bulgaria**, HPAI subtype H5N1 was confirmed in 4 wild swans found in the administrative districts of Vidin, Dobrich, Varna and Burgas during the months of February and March 2006.
42. During 2006, **Croatia** notified the presence of HPAI virus subtype H5N1 in wild birds found in the counties of Osijecko-Baranjska, Splitsko-Dalmatinska, Osijecko-Baranjska and City of Zagreb.
43. Positive cases of highly pathogenic HPAI subtype H5N1 were found in the territory of the **Czech Republic** during the first half of 2006. All cases concerned mute swans (*Cygnus olor*). A total of 14 cases were found (13 in the South Bohemian Region and 1 in the South Moravian Region).
44. The first occurrence of HPAI subtype H5N1 in **Denmark** was detected on 14 March 2006 in a common buzzard found at Svinø in the southern part of Sjælland. On 16 March 2006, it was confirmed that the highly pathogenic avian influenza virus in the common buzzard was subtype H5N1. During the months of March (35), April (7) and May (2), highly pathogenic avian influenza (subtype H5N1) was detected in 44 wild birds from various locations in Denmark. The affected species were mainly tufted ducks (26), but swans (7) and birds of prey (8) were also infected. The first outbreak of HPAI subtype H5N1 in poultry in Denmark was confirmed on 18 May 2006. The outbreak occurred in a backyard poultry holding in Funen Country.
45. On 13 February 2006, **France** notified the occurrence of HPAI in seven wild ducks found dead in Joyeux, Ain Department. Other wild birds were found affected by H5N1 in the same Department during the months of February, March and April.
46. On 25 February 2006, the French veterinary authorities notified an outbreak of HPAI subtype H5N1 in a turkey farm in the municipality of Versailleux, in the Ain Department.
47. On 23 February 2006, **Georgia** reported the detection of HPAI subtype H5N1 in 10 wild swans found in a small lake located near the village of Adlia in the district of Khelvachauri, in the Autonomous Republic of Adjara.
48. On 08 February 2006, **Germany** reported HPAI subtype H5N1 in four swans (three *Cygnus olor* and one *Cygnus cygnus*) found dead in Wiek, in the northern part of the island of Rügen, in the Baltic Sea. On the same day a northern goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*) was found dead in Dranske, also in the northern part of the island of Rügen.
49. During the months of February, March, April and May, other wild birds were found infected by HPAI in the lands of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, Bavaria, Brandenburg, Baden Württemberg, Schleswig-Holstein, Berlin and Lower Saxony. On 04 April 2006, the presence of avian influenza was officially recorded in a farm of turkeys located in Mutzschen village, Sachsen land. On 3 August 2006, a case of HPAI was detected in a swan in a zoo in Dresden.

50. In January 2006, **Greece** notified the presence of a wild swan found positive for HPAI subtype H5N1 in Central Macedonia. Other infected wild birds were found in Eastern Macedonia and Thrace. Since 04 March 2006, when the last case of avian influenza was reported (Alykes Epanomis in Thessaloniki Prefecture), there has been no further suspected or confirmed cases in Greece.
51. In February 2006, **Hungary** reported the presence of 7 mute swans (*Cygnus olor*) positive for HPAI subtype H5N1, in the locality of Bács-Kiskun. In June 2006, the disease was detected in 7 poultry farms.
52. On 10 March 2006, **Kazakhstan** reported the presence of HPAI subtype H5N1 in 3 wild swans kept in Mangghystau region.
53. The first confirmation of HPAI subtype H5N1 in **Israel** was on 16 March 2006. A total of 1,120,000 poultry in 53 commercial farms were destroyed in 15 localities.
54. In February 2006, a total of 19 positive wild birds were found in 15 outbreaks of HPAI subtype H5N1 in **Italy** in the following regions: Calabria (2 swans); Puglia (6 swans); Sicily (8 swans, 1 buzzard, 1 purple swamp hen) and Umbria (1 mallard).
55. Between March to May 2006, **Poland** notified the presence of HPAI subtype H5N1 in wild birds, in the departments of Torunski, Swinoujscie, Gorzowski, Bydgoski, Grudziadz and Sieradzki.
56. In **Romania**, the first outbreak of HPAI subtype H5N1 was reported on 7 October 2005 at Ceamurlia-de-Jos in Tulcea county. Between 07 October 2005 and 24 April 2006, 53 outbreaks were confirmed in 52 localities in 9 counties in the Danube Delta and Black Sea areas: Tulcea, Braila, Buzau, Calarasi, Constanta, Dambovita, Dolj, Ialomita and Ilfov counties. The disease re-occurred in May 2006 in Brasov and spread in the districts of Bacau, Buzau, Covasna, Neamt, Sibiu, Sibiu, Valcea, Vrancea, Alba, Arges, Bucuresti, Gorj, Ilfov, Mures, Prahova, Iasi
57. In mid January, on the Black Sea coast, in Krasnodarsk, **Russia**, 32 wild birds (swans, ducks and crows) were found positive for HPAI. In 2006, in Siberian Federal District, HPAI subtype H5N1 was reported in private backyards in Altaj, Tomsk, Omsk and Novosibirsk regions. In Tuva Republic, wild birds were found dead due to HPAI.
58. In February and March 2006, in **Serbia and Montenegro**, 11 mute swans (*Cygnus olor*) were positive for H5N1 in the municipalities of Sombor and Bajina Basta. The presence of HPAI subtype H5N1 was also confirmed in a rooster in a village located in Bajina Basta.
59. On 17 February 2006, **Slovakia** declared the presence of HPAI subtype H5N1 in a smew (*Mergus albellus*) found in Bratislava and a peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*) in Dunajská Streda.
60. On 11 February 2006, HPAI subtype H5N1 was detected in **Slovenia** for the first time in a mute swan (*Cygnus olor*). The swan was detected on the Drava River bank at Maribor (north-eastern Slovenia). In the following weeks, a total of 47 AI-positive birds were detected along the Drava River, ranging from Maribor to Ptuj, including 44 mute swans (*Cygnus olor*), 1 grey heron (*Ardea cinerea*), 1 mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*), and 1 northern pintail (*Anas acuta*). The most recent positive mute swan was detected by the end of March 2006.
61. On 30 June 2006, a great crested grebe (*Podiceps cristatus*) died in Salburúa wetlands, Álava province, **Spain**. A declaration to that effect was made to the OIE on 07 July 2006.
62. On 24 February 2006, **Sweden** reported HPAI subtype H5N1 in 2 tufted ducks found dead in Kalmar county. Other wild birds were found positive in Blekinge, Södermanland, Gotland, Kalmar, Skåne and Stockholm counties. In February 2006, the virus was detected in farmed mallards in Gässhult village, in Kalmar County.

63. On 26 February 2006, in Geneva, **Switzerland**, a goosander (*Mergus merganser*) was found positive for HPAI subtype H5N1. Other wild birds were found positive during the month of March in the cantons of Thurgau, Zurich and Schaffhausen.
64. During the first half of 2006, **Turkey** notified outbreaks of HPAI subtype H5N1 in poultry in the following districts: Adana, Adiyaman, Agri, Aksaray, Ankara, Aydin, Batman, Bitlis, Bursa, Diyarbakir, Erzincan, Erzurum, Eskisehir, Gaziantep, Gumushane, Igdir, Istanbul, Izmir, Karabuk, Karaman, Kars, Kayseri, Kirsehir, Kocaeli, Konya, Malatya, Manisa, Mardin, Mugla, Mus, Ordu, Rize, S.Urfa, Samsun, Siirt, Sinop, Sirnak, Sivas, Tekirdag, Tokat, Trabzon, Tunceli, Van, Yozgat. The last confirmed case of HPAI was reported on 31 March 2006.
65. HPAI subtype H5N1 was reported in **Ukraine** in poultry and in wild birds in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, and in the Odessa, Kherson and Sum regions.
66. In March 2006, the **United Kingdom** identified the presence of HPAI subtype H5N1 in a wild whooper swan found dead at Cellardyke slipway in Scotland. Since then, no new case of HPAI subtype H5N1 has been reported in wildlife in the United Kingdom.

Bluetongue (BT)

67. The global BT virus distribution is currently between latitudes of approximately 50°N and 34°S, but is known to be expanding in the northern hemisphere. Belgium, the Netherlands, France and Germany reported outbreaks in August 2006. Some outbreaks reported in the Netherlands were located as high as 50°55'21" North, which constitutes a change in the epidemiology of the disease as bluetongue has never been reported at such northern latitude. It is also noted that while the disease is generally known to cause unapparent infection in cattle, clinical signs have in fact been observed in those cattle.
68. On 18 August 2006, **Belgium** notified to the OIE the presence on its territory of 11 farms (bovine and ovine) located in Liege and Limburg, serologically positive for Bluetongue.
69. On 21 August 2006, **Germany** declared, 11 farms in North Rhine-Westphalia affected by BT.
70. On 17 August 2006, **the Netherlands** declared the first outbreak of BT, which was detected in a sheep farm located in Kerkrade, Limburg province.
71. On 31 August 2006, **France** informed the OIE that one outbreak of bluetongue occurred in Brognon, Ardennes in a herd of dairy cows.
72. During the first half of 2006, there was no outbreak of bluetongue in Spain.

Foot and mouth disease (FMD)

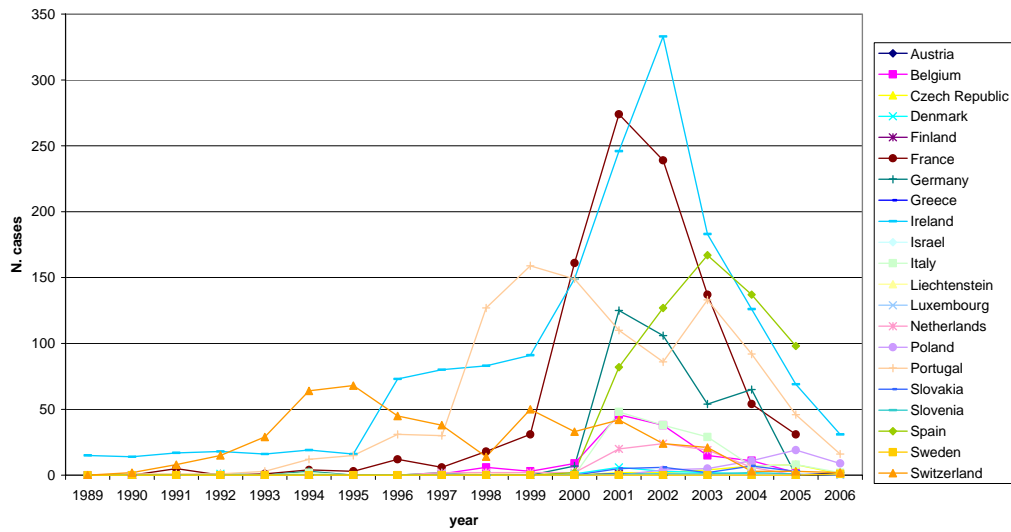
73. FMD is absent from the OIE Member Countries that are members of the European Union. These countries are recognised free from the disease without vaccination.
74. The disease is endemic or occurs sporadically in some other European countries.
75. **Georgia** is planning to vaccinate its cattle and small ruminant populations against FMD. A buffer zone has already been established in the border area of the country, where cattle are vaccinated using trivalent (O, A, Asia1) vaccine. In the other regions, bivalent (O, A) vaccines are used.
76. In **Kyrgyzstan**, during the first seven months of 2006, 1,643,500 vaccinations against FMD were performed, covering 1,408,000 heads of cattle and 235,000 heads of sheep.
77. In January 2006, an outbreak of FMD due to virus serotype Asia1 was reported in **Russia**, in a village in Kalgansky, Chitinskaya region.

78. On 07 February 2006, **Turkey** reported the reoccurrence of FMD in Thrace region. The outbreak, which was caused by virus serotype A, occurred in the province of Kirklareli. Further outbreaks were subsequently reported in the provinces of Kirklareli, Tekirdag and Edirne. These were the first outbreaks of FMD in Thrace region since the occurrence of the FMD outbreak due to virus serotype O in June 2001. FMD is endemic in the Anatolia region of Turkey.

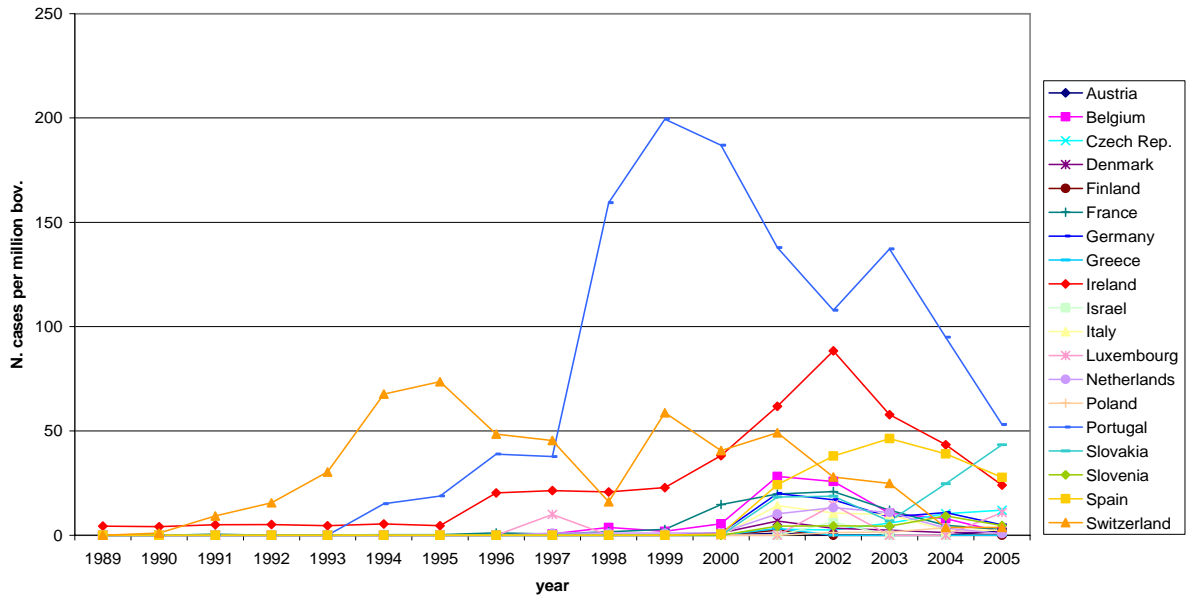
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE)

79. The general trend in the occurrence of BSE in Western Europe is on the decrease as shown in graphs 1 and 2 and the information provided below.
80. **Austria** notified in the first half of 2006 two indigenous cases of BSE.
81. **Belgium** declared one case of BSE during the first semester of 2006.
82. **Poland** declared nine cases of BSE during the first semester of 2006.
83. **Germany** declared nine cases of BSE during the first semester of 2006.
84. **Switzerland** tested in the first half of 2006, 27,000 cattle, only 2 cases were found positive.
85. On 08 March 2006, **Sweden** notified its first case of BSE in Västmanland County in one crossbred beef cow born in 1994.
86. A total of 88,619 samples were examined during the first half of 2006 in **Czech Republic**. One sample was positive.
87. In 2006 and up to 09 July 2006, only 3 cases of BSE were identified in **France**, reflecting a significant decrease in the incidence compared to previous years (31 cases in 2005 and 54 in 2004).
88. In **Ireland**, between 01 January and 30 June 2006, 27 cases of BSE were reported and 3,544 animals were destroyed.
89. During the first half of 2006, 2 cases of BSE were confirmed in the **Netherlands**, one in Oude Ijsselstreek, in February, and one in Dinkelland, in March.
90. During the first semester of 2006, 302,317 animals were tested in **Spain** and 41 cases were detected. 98 cases were reported in 2005.
91. The BSE situation described above shows that the surveillance, control programmes and other measures applied in accordance with legislation are producing tangible results.

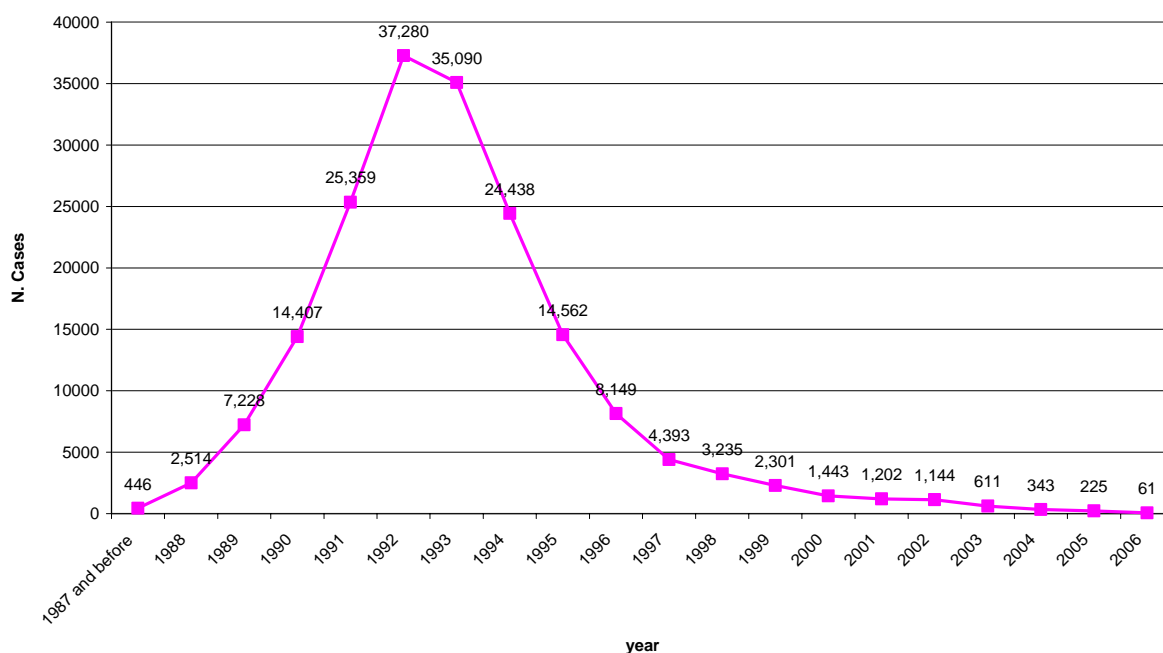
Graph 1: number of reported cases of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) in farmed cattle in Europe (excluding the United Kingdom) (updated 28.08.2006)



Graph 2: number of indigenous cases per million bovines aged over 24 months of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) in OIE Member Countries that have reported cases, excluding the United Kingdom



Number of cases of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) reported in the United Kingdom



Bovine tuberculosis

92. Tuberculosis is still of major concern in many European countries, particularly in the Eastern part. Although regarded as an important zoonotic disease, only few countries provided information on the disease or the results of their control programme.
93. **Germany** considers itself as free from bovine, caprine and ovine tuberculosis under the terms of the European Commission legislation (There were three outbreaks in cattle).
94. In **Albania**, tuberculosis is more concentrated in the central and northern part of the country (11 outbreaks) with a low prevalence (0.19%). The strategy of control is surveillance and elimination of positive animals.
95. In the first half of 2006, bovine tuberculosis was reported in one farm in Berezovsky district, Brest region in **Belarus**. Measures were taken to eradicate the outbreak.
96. Between 01 January and 30 June 2006, 10,786 cases of bovine tuberculosis were reported in **Ireland**.
97. In the first semester of 2006, 106,487 herds were tested in **Spain** (72.46% of the total herds), involving the collection of samples for analysis from 3,272,858 animals. Results gave a herd prevalence of 0.31%.
98. At present, the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and 14 regions (oblasts) of **Ukraine** are considered to be free from tuberculosis. These regions are: Volyn, Donetsk, Zhitomir, Zakarpat, Ivano-Frankov, Kirovograd, Lvov, Nikolaev, Odessa, Rovnen, Ternopol, Khar'kov, Khmel'nits and Chernovits.

Bovine brucellosis

99. In **Armenia** during the period under review, 265,225 head of cattle, 98,993 head of sheep and goats, and 14,082 head of pigs were tested serologically for brucellosis. A total of 582 cattle and 386 head of sheep and goats tested positive.
100. In **Cyprus**, 4 out of the 330 herds were found infected with brucellosis, with 114 cattle found to be positive.

101. In **Georgia**, six cases of brucellosis in cattle were detected during the first six months of 2006. One outbreak was detected in Dusheti district. Blood examination from 500,000 cows will be carried out throughout **Georgia**.
102. In **Ireland**, between 01 January and 30 June 2006, 95 samples were found positive on laboratory testing but only one herd was positive for brucellosis.
103. During 2006, in **Kyrgyzstan**, 7 affected areas have been identified and 739,000 serum samples tested, of which 5,665 cattle, sheep and goats tested positive for brucellosis.

Ovine and caprine brucellosis (Brucellosis due to Brucella melitensis)

104. Brucellosis of small ruminants is an important zoonosis in many European Countries where small ruminants' production systems are important.
105. In **Albania**, the disease is mainly present in the southern part of the country where the highest prevalence of infection is registered (10%). In the first half of 2006, 506,940 head were tested and 5,411 positive cases were identified and slaughtered. 336,943 female lambs were vaccinated.
106. **Germany** considers itself as free from bovine, caprine and ovine brucellosis under the terms of the European Commission legislation (there was one case of *Brucella melitensis* in a goat).
107. In **Cyprus**, 269 sheep and goats belonging to 16 flocks reacted positively to brucellosis.
108. In the first semester of 2006, in **Spain**, 115,244 flocks were tested (79.14% of the total flocks), which involved collecting samples for analysis from 2,737,411 animals. A prevalence of 0.15% was found.

Contingency plans and simulation exercises for animal diseases:

109. As expected, many countries in Europe have recently developed, tested, implemented or simulated contingency plans for avian influenza.
110. **Andorra** implemented contingency plans for avian influenza and transmissible spongiform encephalopathies (TSEs).
111. **Albania** is developing a contingency plan for classical swine fever.
112. **Germany** implemented contingency plans for African swine fever, BSE, classical swine fever, contagious bovine pleuropneumonia, foot and mouth disease, highly pathogenic avian influenza, Newcastle disease, and swine vesicular disease. A simulation exercise on avian influenza was performed by the Friedrich-Loeffler-Institute, Federal Research Institute for Animal Health.
113. **Austria** implemented contingency plans for African horse sickness, BSE, avian influenza, Newcastle disease, classical swine fever, FMD, swine vesicular disease, rinderpest, peste des petits ruminants, infectious salmon anaemia and viral haemorrhagic septicaemia. During 2006 a contingency plan for bluetongue was published.
114. **Belarus** developed contingency plans for avian influenza and Newcastle disease.
115. **Bulgaria** developed contingency plans for FMD, TSEs, bluetongue, classical swine fever, Newcastle disease and avian influenza.

116. **Cyprus** has conducted contingency plans for the control of FMD, classical swine fever, Newcastle disease, avian influenza, BSE, scrapie and bluetongue.
117. **Czech Republic** has contingency plans for the following diseases: FMD, classical swine fever, avian influenza and Newcastle disease.
118. **Denmark** has elaborated contingency plans for the following diseases: avian influenza, Newcastle disease, BSE, scrapie and classical swine fever.
119. **Estonia** has contingency plans for bluetongue, African horse sickness, avian influenza, Newcastle disease, sheep and goat pox, lumpy skin disease, African swine fever, classical swine fever, FMD, swine vesicular disease, rinderpest, peste des petits ruminants, vesicular stomatitis and TSEs. Estonia ran on 16-17 February 2006, a simulation exercise on the introduction of avian influenza.
120. Contingency preparedness for avian influenza was implemented in **Finland**. A simulation exercise for avian influenza was carried out in March in order to test information exchange and cooperation between officials.
121. The contingency plan for avian influenza and Newcastle disease has been reissued and circulated to District Veterinary Offices in **Ireland**. A foot and mouth disease contingency plan and a classical swine fever contingency plan are currently posted on the Department of Agriculture and Food (DAF) Web site. The contingency plan for African horse sickness is in preparation.
122. In **Iceland**, contingency plans exist for major exotic diseases, but recently most of the work has been aimed at the plans for HPAI. There is a very good Nordic cooperation for the development and operation of Contingency plans for HPAI and foot and mouth disease.
123. A simulation exercise on avian influenza was conducted in **Italy** from 18 to 21 July 2006.
124. The Government of **Kyrgyzstan** approved the order “on measures for the protection of the territory of the Republic of Kyrgyzstan from the introduction of the agent of highly pathogenic avian influenza”.
125. In **Lithuania**, contingency plans for FMD, avian influenza, classical fever and swine vesicular disease have been revised and updated.
126. **Luxemburg** prepared contingency plans for the following diseases: FMD, swine vesicular disease, bluetongue, African horse sickness, African swine fever, classical swine fever, avian influenza, Newcastle disease and BSE.
127. The following contingency plans are in place in **The Netherlands**: BSE, avian influenza, brucellosis, classical swine fever, FMD, Newcastle disease, scrapie, swine vesicular disease, tuberculosis, infectious salmon anaemia virus, infectious haematopoietic necrosis and viral haemorrhagic septicaemia.
128. **Poland** prepared contingency plans for the following diseases: FMD, Newcastle disease, HPAI, classical swine fever, African swine fever, BSE, swine vesicular disease, Infectious haematopoietic necrosis, viral haemorrhagic septicaemia and infectious salmon anaemia. In April and June 2006, simulation exercises were conducted on HPAI and classical swine fever respectively.
129. **Portugal** implemented contingency plans for: classical swine fever, African swine fever, FMD, HPAI and Newcastle disease.
130. During the first half of 2006, **Romania** elaborated contingency plans for the following diseases: classical swine fever, rabies, HPAI and Newcastle disease.
131. Contingency plans in **Slovenia** are developed for the following diseases: FMD, classical swine fever, avian influenza and Newcastle disease. From 27 to 29 June 2006, a simulation exercise on FMD took place in Slovenia.

132. During the first half of 2006, **Spain** updated its contingency plans for FMD, swine vesicular disease, classical swine fever and African swine fever.
133. **Switzerland** has contingency plans for African horse sickness, avian influenza, classical swine fever, FMD and Newcastle disease.
134. **Turkey** has contingency plans for avian influenza, peste des petits ruminants (PPR) and FMD.
135. The contingency plan for avian influenza was implemented in **Ukraine**.

Discussions

136. Dr Bernard Vallat, OIE Director General, reminded participants that the information presented by Dr Petrini was based on information on diseases as provided by Delegates on the questionnaire (designed for this conference) that was circulated to Member Countries. This information was, however, supplemented by relevant up to date information on the recent occurrence of important animal diseases. The additional information can be consulted on the OIE Web site. He requested Delegates who notice any discrepancies concerning their respective countries to send the necessary amendments to Dr Petrini. He thanked all the countries that responded to the questionnaire.
137. The Delegate of **The Netherlands** remarked that his country is free from tuberculosis (TB) and brucellosis. The Delegate of **Sweden** confirmed that his country is officially free from TB and the Delegate of **Iceland** pointed out that Iceland has been free from TB since a long time and that brucellosis is not present in small ruminants. Responding to these Delegates, Dr Vallat insisted that it is the responsibility of the Delegate to inform the OIE if his country is free from a specific disease in the course of semestrial reporting to the OIE. He explained that once a disease outbreak is recorded at the OIE, the country is considered infected until it establishes its free status. In addition, Member Countries should formally notify the OIE through semestrial reports of the absence of all OIE listed diseases on their territory.
138. The Delegate of **Denmark** indicated that he appreciated the report based on the animal health situation in individual countries on important diseases, especially on HPAI and the possible spread of the causative agent by wild birds in the European regions. He proposed that an organisation or a specific scientific Group be asked to analyse the available information to be able to establish the trend of the disease and predict future risk of spread. He pointed out that such a body exists for human diseases in Europe (ECDC) and wished that a similar mechanism be set up for animal diseases. Dr Vallat replied that the OIE is the right institution for that type of activity and explained that the OIE has a network of Collaborating Centres and Reference Laboratories that can assist in that field. This activity could, however, be reinforced especially in collaboration with sister organisations, such as the FAO and the EU. A representative of the FAO Delegation remarked that the FAO had already set up a working Group to analyse epidemiological information regarding avian influenza.
139. The Delegate of **Russia** supported the stand of Dr Vallat in that the OIE should be the central coordinating institution for animal diseases with the support of regional centres. He explained the importance of timely and accurate reporting of animal diseases in order to help compile valid information and predict disease trends.
140. The Delegate of **Israel** also expressed the need to have a central repository of animal disease information and insisted that Member Countries should not hide any important information. He suggested that countries which do not report diseases, be sanctioned. Dr Vallat reported on the OIE disease tracking system, which allows the OIE to query the Delegate of a country about press and other non official reports regarding disease occurrences in his country. He however conceded that a lot still remains to be done in a few countries in the field of transparent disease reporting. He added that the regional steering committee of the FAO/OIE GF-TADs mechanism, which also comprises the EC and elected members of the Regional Commission Bureau, is responsible for ensuring that duplication of activities is avoided and synergies concerning sanitary policies conducted by different international organisations in Europe improved.

141. Dr Vallat announced that the OIE will propose for all Regional Conferences to discontinue the animal health questionnaire and to lay more emphasis on the epidemiological analysis of the sanitary information including disease intelligence and updating of *Code* chapters with the support of Collaborating Centres specialised in that field, if necessary.
142. Dr Barry O'Neil, President of the OIE International Committee, announced that at its last meeting held a few days back, the OIE Administrative Commission suggested to the OIE Director General to review the presentation of the animal health situation during General Session in May to indicate clearly disease trends and future predictions. A new presentation format may be used next May during the General Session.
143. The Session Chairman thanked Dr Petrini for his very comprehensive presentation.

EU legislation framework on bluetongue surveillance and control

144. Mr Howard Batho, Directorate General for Health and Consumer Protection, European Commission, gave a short overview of the EU legislation framework on bluetongue surveillance and control as laid down in Council Directive 2000/75/EC and in Commission Decision 2005/393/EC. The similarities with the OIE *Code* chapter were highlighted. An overview with maps of the current bluetongue (type 8) situation was presented. Some data concerning the epidemiology and entomology of the disease were highlighted including information on the temporal disposition of outbreaks (peak around 24 August 2006), cattle herds most affected (64%), few clinical cases and very few cases occurred above 500 metres (average of 240 metres) and vector activity with transmission of disease further north than expected. It is hoped that the disease will disappear after the winter, but this is not certain. Therefore, the Commission is organising two groups with one (with the help of EFSA) focusing on epidemiology, the other focusing on surveillance. In addition, more countries should increase their awareness and surveillance for the possibility of an introduction of bluetongue into their territory.

Discussions

145. Dr Barry O'Neil enquired as to the possible source of introduction of bluetongue virus into Europe. Mr Batho replied that one can only speculate about the possible sources, such as importation of animals, but the exact source still remains to be determined.

Update on developments in aquatic animal health activities of the OIE

146. Prof. Barry Hill, Vice-President of the Aquatic Animal Health Standards Commission and Director of the Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Sciences (CEFAS) and OIE Collaborating Centre for aquatic animal diseases, Weymouth, United Kingdom, gave an update on aquaculture developments worldwide, particularly in Europe, and on further development of the OIE *Aquatic Animal Health Code (Aquatic Code)* and the *Manual of Diagnostic Tests for Aquatic Animals (Aquatic Manual)* to help reduce the risks of international spread of major diseases.
147. Prof. Hill stated that the importance of aquatic animal health continues to increase, not least because of the steady expansion of aquaculture production (mainly the farming of fish, molluscs and crustacean species) throughout the world. However, diseases continue to impact heavily on aquaculture production, and international trade in aquaculture animals is still causing spread of major infectious diseases of aquatic animals. He recalled that a detailed presentation of global aquaculture production and examples of diseases spread through international trade was given at the 21st Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe, Avila, Spain, in September 2004.

148. Prof. Hill pointed out that the new edition of the *Aquatic Code* (OIE 2006) and of the *Aquatic Manual* (OIE 2006) incorporate several important modifications agreed during the 74th General Session in May 2006, including amendments to the listed diseases. He stressed that Member Countries be aware of these changes and fulfil their obligations on reporting aquatic animal diseases to the OIE. Work has commenced in new areas such as aquatic animal welfare for which a draft set of principles for the welfare of aquatic animals has been prepared and circulated for Member Countries' comments. Also, an assessment is being carried out to decide whether amphibian diseases should be included in the *Aquatic Code* and *Manual*.
149. Prof. Hill spoke on the continued efforts of the OIE to encourage enhanced involvement of veterinary authorities in aquatic animal health and to improve cooperation between veterinary and other authorities with competence for aquatic animal health. In this regard, an OIE Global Conference on Aquatic Animal Health 'Defining Roles and Responsibilities' will be held in Bergen, Norway, in October 2006 to provide an opportunity to assist the OIE and its Member Countries in exchanging the latest information on developing a science-based approach to the management of aquatic animal health and welfare. This will assist in the evaluation and improvement of the current standards and guidelines for better control of infectious aquatic animal diseases and countries' capabilities to prepare for, and respond to, aquatic animal disease emergencies, as well as better defining roles and responsibilities.

Discussions

150. Dr Vallat expressed his support to all the proposals of Prof. Hill. He agreed with Prof. Hill's suggestion to Delegates who have not yet nominated focal points acting under their authority to report aquatic animal diseases to the OIE and to follow up OIE activities on aquatic animal diseases, to do so as soon as possible. He stressed that although the focal point may come from a different ministry, he/she still has to be nominated by the OIE Delegate in order to increase the role played by Veterinary Services in this field. Dr Vallat also encouraged Delegates to participate actively in the forthcoming OIE conference on aquatic animal diseases to be held in Norway in October 2006. He announced that the Conference on OIE Reference Laboratories and Collaborating Centres to be held in Florianopolis, Brazil, in December 2006 to which all OIE Reference Laboratories and Collaborating Centres have been invited, will be sponsored by the Government of Brazil. Costs of travel for experts of Reference Laboratories and Collaborating Centres will be taken on charge.
151. The Session Chairman congratulated the speaker for his excellent presentation and urged Delegates to ensure that Veterinary Services be actively involved in aquatic animal diseases.

ITEM I

Epidemiological surveillance and on-farm inspections: rural veterinary network, public-private sector relations, training of farmers and veterinarians

152. The Session Chairman, Dr Kazimieras Lukauskas, briefly introduced the speaker for this Technical Item, Dr Gaetana Ferri, Director General of Animal Health, Department of Veterinary Public Health, Food and Food Security of the Italian Ministry of Health.
153. Dr Ferri referred to the definition of 'surveillance' in the *Terrestrial Animal Health Code* and pointed out that an effective surveillance system should provide information for planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of health intervention programmes. This is necessary to document the health status of animal populations in the context of international trade and in the import risk assessment process.
154. Dr Ferri identified the following crucial elements in a surveillance system:
- Organisation pre-requisites (e.g. compliance to the provisions of the *Terrestrial Code* on the quality and evaluation of Veterinary Services);
 - Adequate and up-to-date training of personnel (field services, central structures and laboratory personnel);
 - Good knowledge of the target populations including an identification and traceability system;
 - Reliable information on the animal health situation of the country's animal populations and of individual animals intended for trade;
 - International certification that can be trusted;

- Formal quality assurance systems;
- Scientifically valid and fully documented methods for the analysis of data generated by the surveillance system;
- Review of procedures aimed at the continuous improvement of the overall system.

155. Dr Ferri concluded on the results of a questionnaire sent to Member Countries of the Region on surveillance systems. Of the 50 countries to which the questionnaire was sent, 30 responded. Member Countries considered a number of factors as crucial to an effective surveillance system. These include:

- factors that can facilitate the immediate disease notification, such as compensation or economical sanctions for farmers and veterinarians who do not notify diseases;
- development of the analysis of a preventive system to identify the main risk factors of each productive system and indicate the priorities for epidemiological surveillance activities;
- on-going training courses for all the components involved in the industry, including veterinarians and farmers.

Discussions

156. The Session Chairman congratulated Dr Ferri on her informative and interesting presentation. He then invited comments and questions from the participants.

157. The Delegate of Israel thanked the speaker for a comprehensive presentation, but stated that there cannot be any proper surveillance without a proper identification and traceability system. Dr Ferri agreed with this observation, pointing out that traceability provides significant information on surveillance.

158. A representative of the Belgian delegation asked what could be done to be more pro-active in the surveillance of serotype 8 of bluetongue virus in Europe. The speaker replied that only a fully transparent system of identification and traceability can help in that specific situation, which is a difficult one, as much is still unknown about the epidemiology of bluetongue in Europe. The Delegate of Belgium stated that what was more important was how to communicate the relevant data on identification and traceability to all parties concerned including importing countries. He added that he was aware of certain attempts being made in the EU, but not with much success.

159. The Delegate of Denmark congratulated the speaker for an excellent overview of animal disease surveillance. He enquired about the situation in backyard livestock owners who do not have much contact with veterinarians and who are generally less cooperative in disease reporting and surveillance. Dr Ferri replied that the situation is similar in all other countries and in Italy, farmer awareness is promoted by public announcements. She agreed that farmers should be further motivated in the field of epidemiosurveillance.

160. The Delegate of the United Kingdom congratulated the speaker for an excellent presentation and especially for her proposal to include private veterinarians in surveillance. She described that the system was already in place in the UK, but difficulties are encountered in remote rural areas, which are not well served by veterinarians. She also enquired as to who should bear the costs of surveillance. Dr Ferri agreed with those observations and pointed out that one difficulty arising out of an EU directive stipulates that private veterinarians involved in surveillance should not be related to the farmers whose farms are involved in the surveillance. She was of the opinion that public subsidies were important to ensure the presence of veterinarians in rural areas.

161. The Delegate of Sweden proposed that as an incentive, farmers be compensated for the slaughter of animals as part of disease control programmes. The reimbursement scheme should serve to promote good preventative management including biosecurity measures.

162. Dr Barry O'Neil asked whether the contribution of industry was taken into account in the questionnaire and whether Member Countries had established disease priorities for surveillance. Dr Ferri replied that while participation of industry could be envisaged, it might prove a bit risky to enlist their support unconditionally. Regarding priorities, she added that as a general rule, these were established based on the economic importance of the animal diseases.
163. Dr Vallat stressed the importance of farmer training in animal health, stating that this is already being applied in the European Union (EU), although a lot still remains to be done in other countries. He stated that financing activities related to the strengthening of Veterinary Services is crucial. He recalled the efforts made by the OIE to convince policy makers that strengthening of Veterinary Services is a Global Public Good. An efficient Veterinary Service could contribute to improved food safety and market access and thus alleviate poverty in the world. As such, it is clear that part of the financing should come from the state as accepted now by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) thanks to OIE lobbying. However, the participation of industry is also important and their funding support should be enlisted wherever possible. He strongly suggested that a global compensation scheme should be established for farmers whose animals are killed or slaughtered as part of a disease control programme. He also described the OIE multi donor world animal health and welfare trust fund. These funds will be used to assist especially developing countries to strengthen Veterinary Services to cope with disease emergencies.
164. The Delegate of Denmark enquired about the optimal use of funds involved in epidemiological surveillance. He spoke on the difficulties often encountered in convincing policy makers about the best use of funds. He mentioned the example of a country where trichinellosis has not been observed for the past 75 years and yet, individual testing of animals was still being carried out.
165. The Delegate of France remarked that while there are a lot of discussions on surveillance, little is said on systems of production, farm hygiene and the use of veterinary drugs. In France, attention is being paid to these aspects. She also reported that in France there are official links existing between public veterinarians, private veterinarians and breeder associations fully dedicated to animal health. Such networks are less common in certain remote areas and they need to be encouraged.
166. The Session Chairman concluded by thanking all the participants, and then requested a small group comprising the speaker, Dr Gaetana Ferri, as well as Dr Kazimieras Lukauskas (Lithuania), Dr Dietrich Rassow (Germany), Dr Keren Bar-Yaacov (Norway), Dr Agneta Norgren (Sweden), Prof. Vincenzo Caporale (Italy), Dr Budimir Plavsic (Serbia), and Dr Nataliya Zgonnyk (Ukraine) to draft a Recommendation on this item to be considered by the meeting.

Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE)

167. Dr Vaarten, Executive Director of the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE), addressed three main points. The first point was the functioning of veterinary networks in rural areas. According to the FVE, these networks are endangered. Increasing social and financial pressure on veterinarians working in large animal practices, combined with a sharp decrease of young veterinarians choosing large animal practice leads to a lack of sufficient numbers of veterinarians to cover all areas. Where society as a whole thinks it is important to keep farms in these areas and to avoid the outbreaks of high impact disease, measures have to be taken to support the veterinary network in rural areas.
168. Secondly, the FVE emphasises the need for good cooperation between public and private veterinarians. In a small profession such as the veterinary profession, it is crucial that veterinarians join forces and invest in the way they cooperate.
169. The third and last point addressed by the FVE, veterinary education, is extremely important for the future of the veterinary profession. The FVE is concerned about the quality of the curricula in some countries. They are out of date and do not meet the minimum requirements. Nevertheless, these schools give diplomas to new veterinarians allowing them to obtain a license to practice. This undermines the veterinary profession and the whole of the Veterinary Services.

European Federation for Animal Health and Sanitary Security (EFAHSS)

170. Mr Bernard Terrand, President of the EFAHSS, remarked that livestock farmers are the primary sentinels in their holdings and ensure the health surveillance of their animals on a daily basis. Their role is therefore vital in the prevention and management of animal health problems at the farm level. Alongside them, veterinary practitioners act as their partners with a mission that should in future be focused more on giving advice than on the curative treatment of animals. Historically, the tandem of livestock farmer – veterinarian has helped to ensure maximum animal health safety in each farm. For this reason, the European Federation for Animal Health and Sanitary Security (EFAHSS) actively supports the development of a stronger partnership between these two stakeholders.
171. Nevertheless, given the nature of the threats and the contagiousness of the diseases involved, the management of animal health risks and crises requires a collective approach. It is the role of the State Veterinary Services to make sure that this is organised and successfully carried out, in particular by encouraging livestock farmers to join together within animal health organisations. Mr Terrand said that where such organisations exist, they have proved effective in training and raising the awareness of farmers and in terms of cost sharing.
172. Mr Terrand underlined that it is this global approach, founded on strong public Veterinary Services, veterinary practitioners present and active throughout the territory and livestock owners grouped together in independent animal health organisations that ensures – and will continue to ensure – that European consumers benefit from an unprecedented level of sanitary quality.

World Union of Professions (WUP)

173. Dr Michel Baussier, Secretary General of the Veterinary Statutory Body of France, presented the report prepared by Dr Christian Rondeau, President of the World Union of Professions (WUP), who could not be present at the conference.
174. Dr Baussier stated that the WUP is a non-governmental organisation of independent professions with a membership of around ten world ‘single-profession’ unions and a score of national or regional inter-professional unions.
175. Its main objectives are as follows:
- a. To organise the liberal professions in each country by establishing for each profession a statutory body independent of any political or commercial interests.
 - b. To promote the organisation of these statutory bodies into networks.
 - c. To increase the scope for intervention by the liberal professions.
176. Within the field of animal disease control, effective surveillance is essential in order to maintain a favourable animal health situation. This requires the involvement of numerous stakeholders.
177. Dr Baussier emphasised that it is, therefore, essential for livestock producers, veterinarians and the administration in all countries to work together to design, develop and implement animal health surveillance.
178. In particular, this complementarity presupposes clarification regarding the authority in charge of the system and its objectives, making livestock producers aware of their role as the first link in the chain of epidemiological surveillance, State recognition of the role of each of the stakeholders, initial and continuous training for official veterinarians, strengthening of links between producer and the official veterinarian, networking of information on the health status of livestock populations, etc.
179. Dr Baussier concluded by stating that this is a long-term process, which can only be strengthened by the valuable sharing of experiences between North and South.

Discussions

180. The Delegate of Ireland commented that in some countries, there is an over emphasis from farmer unions on the politics of farming rather than on the health of animals. Mr Terrand agreed that this is generally the case, but pointed out that this approach is often linked with the policies of the European Union. The Delegate of France pointed out that EFAHSS has a mandate, which is more oriented towards sanitary matters than unions or politics and that it is beneficial to have farmer organisations fully dedicated to animal health.
181. The Delegate of Spain congratulated all three speakers and asked Dr Vaarten what was being concretely done to harmonise veterinary practice in Europe. Dr Vaarten replied that the President of his association is doing his utmost to harmonise the practice of veterinary surgery in Europe noting that there is now free movement of veterinarians within the European Union.
182. A representative of the Belgian delegation thanked the three speakers for their presentations and enquired about the reluctance of young veterinarians to work in rural areas and also about the relations between public and private veterinarians. Dr Vaarten replied that more than 75% of young veterinarians prefer to deal with companion animals that are found mostly in urban areas. Regarding the relationship between public and private veterinarians, he stated that they should join forces and work together rather than fight one another. Dr Baussier remarked that the fact that young professionals tend to prefer urban areas is not restricted to the veterinary profession, but is a phenomenon that is seen in most liberal professions. Dr Vallat added that the OIE is fully aware of this situation and summarised the main reasons why veterinarians prefer urban areas. These include: feminisation of the profession, more than 70% of intake in veterinary schools being women; lack of social life in rural areas and reluctance of certain banks in some countries to provide loans to veterinary students wishing to work in rural areas. He suggested that the situation may be alleviated by: recruiting more students originating from rural areas on the understanding that they are more likely to practice in those areas after graduation; providing certain additional fiscal incentives and allowing veterinarians to sell veterinary drugs for the treatment of animals falling under their responsibility, particularly if they do not receive subsidies from the Government. Dr Vallat also spoke on the role of Veterinary Statutory Bodies in regulating discipline within the profession as expressed through OIE standards on the quality of Veterinary Services.
183. A member of the Italian delegation commented on the veterinary curricula, pointing out that while much emphasis is placed on pets, little is done to encourage the teaching of subjects, such as risk analysis or epidemiological surveillance. He also queried whether the profession can still be called 'liberal'. He also wondered why Veterinary Services are not subsidised at the same level as other agricultural activities. Dr Vaarten replied that the curricula in some veterinary schools date back to several decades and suggested that Statutory Bodies be more involved in the issue. He pointed out that although the veterinary profession is regarded as liberal, it is still a regulated profession requiring a license to practice, thus requiring a good compromise between remunerations and quality of services provided. Dr Baussier also supported the idea that Statutory Bodies should have a say on veterinary curricula as stated in OIE standards.
184. Finally, the representative of EFAHSS advised that his association was at the disposal of Veterinary Services willing to help in the setting up of breeder associations as a permanent support to animal health policies.
185. The Session Chairman thanked all three speakers for their excellent and comprehensive presentations.

Fourth OIE Strategic Plan and other matters relevant for the Region

186. Dr Bernard Vallat, Director General of the OIE, gave a short overview of the Fourth OIE Strategic Plan, which covers the period 2006 to 2010.
187. The Director General stated that the Fourth Strategic Plan builds on the success of the Third Strategic Plan. He indicated that the global vision of the OIE enunciated in the Third Strategic Plan has been globally retained and added that the Fourth Strategic Plan is, in fact, an organic development of the Third Strategic Plan.

188. Dr Vallat recalled the following three strategic elements from the third Strategic Plan have been reinforced.:
a) improving the dissemination of timely and accurate information on animal diseases including zoonoses, by making the best use of modern information technologies and non official information tracking systems;
b) strengthening the role of the OIE as a reference organisation for setting science-based standards on all matters concerning animal health, animal welfare, diagnostic methods and control of diseases, animal production food safety and the facilitation of international trade of animals and animal products with minimal sanitary risks and c) the provision of scientifically-based recommendations on measures for the prevention and control of animal diseases including zoonoses, taking into account the economic, social and environmental impacts of such measures, and the provision of services for the determination of animal health status in relation to specific diseases.
189. Dr Vallat described in detail the two new strategic elements that have been added to the fourth strategic plan. The first of these is the support to capacity building for Veterinary Services. In addition to its role as a catalyst for major capacity building activities, the OIE will also provide support to Member Countries wishing to become more fully engaged in the work of the Organisation in the form of educational training materials and training programmes for official Delegates, especially those who assume office for the first time. The second new element identified in the Fourth Strategic Plan deals with strengthening of the OIE's involvement in governance related to decision-making in animal health and welfare including capacity building, applied research, communication, and the "mediation" of potential disputes.
190. With regard to institutional arrangements and funding of the Fourth Strategic Plan, Dr Vallat emphasised that the visibility of the OIE to the general public, media, decision-makers, veterinary professionals and farmers will be enhanced. The Plan had foreseen adjustments to the design and scale of assessed contributions in order to facilitate the recovery of contributions from all Members. He added that he has received a mandate from the OIE International Committee to prepare a new mechanism allowing direct funding of the activities of OIE Regional Representations through compulsory contributions of Member Countries of the OIE Regional Commissions. This new mechanism was adopted by OIE Member Countries in May 2006.

Evaluation and strengthening of Veterinary Services

191. Dr Vallat stated that since the HPAI crisis, the front line role of Veterinary Services (VS) in the prevention and control of animal diseases and zoonoses has been clearly recognised by policy makers as well as by the international donor community. To fulfil their functions efficiently, VS especially in developing and in transition countries need to be strengthened and provided with the necessary human, technical, financial and legislative means. This can be achieved if the VS are properly evaluated for compliance with OIE international standards on the quality of VS. The OIE has in this respect developed in collaboration with the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), the Performance, Vision and Strategy (PVS) tool to evaluate VS in order to identify gaps and weaknesses in VS that can subsequently be remedied through resources from national budgets or international aid.
192. Dr Vallat pointed out that two seminars have been held this year at the OIE Headquarters in collaboration with the 'Ecole Nationale des Services Vétérinaires' of Lyon to train veterinary experts in the harmonised application of the PVS tool. Over 40 experts have thus been trained and certified by the OIE to carry out evaluations of VS and these experts are also recognised by the World Bank. Dr Vallat added that many countries have already requested the OIE to evaluate their VS and several evaluations are currently being organised particularly in Asia, Africa and Eastern Europe and will be carried out within the weeks to come.

Follow-up of recommendations of OIE meetings held in Europe

193. Dr Vallat provided some details on the follow-up of the main recommendations adopted during previous OIE meetings for Europe. Regarding the recommendation pertaining to contingency planning and simulation for the control of epizootics, adopted during the 21st Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe held in

Avila, Spain, Dr Vallat indicated that many Member Countries have held simulation exercises and implemented contingencies plans for important animal diseases, particularly Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza.

194. Dr Vallat stressed that the unprecedented crisis caused by HPAI in the world including Europe prompted the OIE to convene an Emergency meeting on Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza in Europe. This Emergency meeting held at the OIE Headquarters, was attended by over 50 Member Countries and led to various recommendations that will be submitted for endorsement during the present conference. The recommendations included *Inter Alia* the application of harmonised control measures of HPAI in Europe, which are being largely followed by countries of the region.

195. In compliance with the Avila recommendation pertaining to the concept 'from the stable to the table', Dr Vallat indicated that several national seminars titled 'Dialogue and common activities between the OIE Member Countries of the European Union and OIE Member Countries of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe' have been organised with the assistance of European Commission and TAIEX (Technical Assistance and Information Exchange Instrument) to familiarise and provide guidance to non EU Member Countries of Europe with procedures related to the harmonisation of veterinary legislation and OIE standards in place in the EU. The seminars were held in Bulgaria, Rumania, Turkey, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Albania, Serbia and Montenegro, Croatia and Bosnia Herzegovina; upcoming meetings in 2006 are due to take place in Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan, and more are scheduled in 2007 in Russia, Ukraine and Belarus, in order to progressively cover all the countries of the Regional Commission that are not EU Members.

196. In September 2005, a seminar on the Quality of Veterinary Services was held in Suzdal with the active collaboration of the Russian Federation. This meeting, the first of its kind organised by the OIE in Europe, led to the drafting of a very important recommendation on the structure of the Veterinary Services to be submitted for endorsement at this Regional Conference for Europe.

197. Dr Vallat added that improvement of sanitary governance to prevent and control animal diseases and zoonoses, has become a key objective of the OIE. The implementation of new policies related to this matter will follow the recommendation voted by Member Countries of the OIE Regional Commission during the seminar hosted by Russia in Suzdal in September 2005.

198. Dr Vallat concluded on the last recommendation from the Avila conference on the 'Simplification of the BSE categorisation system and new surveillance and monitoring system for BSE adapted to the structure and dynamics of the national cattle population', indicating that the *Terrestrial Animal Health Code* has been modified in 2005 and the categorisation system for BSE reduced from 5 to 3 categories.

The European Union also decided to stop GBR (Geographical BSE Risk) classification activities and to follow decisions taken by the OIE International Committee on the BSE status of OIE Member Countries. The new surveillance appendix was adopted in 2005 and OIE experts are continuously improving the text, integrating regularly any new scientific knowledge.

Discussions

199. The Delegate of France asked whether the OIE Regional Representation for Europe caters for countries of the European Union. Dr Vallat replied that the Representation covers mainly Eastern Europe, but added that a Sub-Regional Representation will soon be open in Brussels to act as a bridge between Eastern Europe and the EU. He stressed that the Sub-Regional Representation will be under the supervision of the main Representation in Sofia and the OIE Headquarters.

200. The Delegate of Norway congratulated Dr Vallat for the actions being taken by the OIE in accordance with the various missions of the organisation. She expressed her special thanks to the OIE staff dealing with WAHIS and the training they are providing to Member Countries in the application of the new disease reporting system.
201. The Session Chairman thanked Dr Vallat for his very interesting presentation.

Wednesday 27 September 2006

ITEM II

Live animals and food smuggling: current practices and prevention and repression tools

202. The Session Chairman, Dr Patrick Rogan, briefly introduced Dr Debby Reynolds, Chief Veterinary Officer and Director General for Animal Health and Welfare, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) in the United Kingdom, to give a presentation on this topic.
203. In her presentation, Dr Reynolds remarked that illegal movements (smuggling) of live animals and their products, particularly in large volumes, may have a significant impact on animal and public health and economy. Smuggling was considered as an important issue by a majority of Member Countries of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe, and there are a variety of actions being taken to deal with it.
204. Dr Reynolds provided a broad overview of countries' perceptions of the issue, and actions they take, and outlines recommendations for consideration by the OIE Regional Commission for Europe. These recommendations highlight the need for increased co-operation between veterinary and customs services, collaboration and information sharing between member countries, technical assistance and training programmes.
205. In conclusion, Dr Reynolds stated that it was essential to recognise that the extent and development of illegal practices contributes to the uncertainty in risk for Member Countries.

Discussions

206. The Session Chairman thanked Dr Reynolds for her comprehensive presentation and opened the floor for discussion.
207. The Delegate of Israel congratulated the speaker for her excellent presentation and explained that it was difficult to check container goods in transit, as these containers are generally not opened during inspection. They can contain anything ranging from live birds to meat coming from countries where important animal diseases exist. Dr Reynolds and Mr Younger from Interpol both agreed that control of goods in transit was very difficult.
208. The Delegate of Iceland enquired about the cost effectiveness of compulsory passenger declarations as enforced in certain countries, such as Australia and New Zealand. Dr Reynolds pointed out that processing of those declarations can prove costly and causes delays to passengers especially in big airports. Dr Barry O'Neil, OIE Delegate of New Zealand, explained that his country was heavily dependent on agriculture, which contributes about 20% of the country's GDP and therefore maximal precautions need to be applied.

He however pointed out that despite all the precautions taken, about 10 to 15 tons of meat are still found each year in passenger bags. Cultural and social practices, such as the consumption of personal food and the offer of food items as gifts are often responsible for the illegal entry of goods. He conceded that passenger declarations will not on their own help solve the problem, but is an essential part of the whole control system.

209. The Delegate of Lithuania stated that people involved in the smuggling of goods are very conversant with existing laws and how to by-pass them. He also spoke about false certification, which allows illegal entry of goods. He suggested that governments invest in more sophisticated technologies such as the satellite system. Dr Reynolds agreed that new technologies should be developed. Dr Rogan, the Session Chairman, insisted on the political will, which is vital for the success of these operations.
210. A member of the French delegation attached to the 'Brigade Nationale d'Enquêtes Vétérinaires', a specialised unit to control smuggling, described the various methods utilised in smuggling including purchase of goods via the internet. She also mentioned the reasons for smuggling, which range from combating poverty to finding easy ways for enrichment. She pointed out the limitations of resources and means available to effectively combat smuggling. Dr Reynolds agreed with the observations and stated that the experience of France can be of use to other countries.
211. Mr Peter Younger from Interpol observed that information sharing among the various agencies concerned is not always effective because very often, these agencies do not communicate with each other and even if they do, it is often too late.
212. Prof. Belev also outlined the dangers related to absence of veterinary certification or to false certification and stressed the need to have effective linkages between Veterinary Services and Customs. He requested the OIE to find possible solutions by reviewing the standards relating to Veterinary Services.
213. Dr Vallat mentioned that the OIE can be of assistance in several ways. The OIE can review the standards on Veterinary Services to lead Member Countries to review their legislation to enable the Veterinary Services to have formal relations with other administrations concerned, such as Customs, Police and Judicial services, in the control of smuggling. The OIE is currently updating the models of certificates mentioned in the *Code*, as these date back several years. He suggested that new standards be developed to render certificates unalterable, as if they were bank notes, and included in the *Code*. He added that the OIE is currently working with Codex Alimentarius on the harmonisation of certificates.
214. The Delegate of France suggested that the collaboration between the various services need to be better organised. She also mentioned the situation in her country where there is a specialised unit acting under the authority of the Veterinary Services. This unit comprises veterinarians who have received additional training in law and other judicial matters. Veterinarians are also closely associated with the judicial and police services. Dr Reynolds replied that other countries can learn from the French experience. She added that in her own country, an 'illegal meat task force' has been created following the foot and mouth disease crisis. She suggested that relevant activities of such specialised units could be reported to the OIE.
215. Mr Howard Batho of the EC delegation stated that the discussions highlighted the importance of the subject. He mentioned that there is plenty of legislation in the EU to control imports and also smuggling, but much remains to be done. His colleague, Dr Neil Brooks, added that better coordination among different community and national agencies is required. He felt that more risk based intelligence is needed and advised that additional multi disciplinary teams be created. He conceded that control of transshipment is actually very difficult. He pointed out that a conference on smuggling recently held in Slovenia, was attended by many veterinarians and announced that a similar one will be organised next year.
216. The Delegate of Greece mentioned the problems encountered with the illegal trade of veterinary drugs and suggested that the OIE address the problem for the benefit of Member Countries.

Presentation on Interpol

217. Mr Peter Younger, Criminal Intelligence Officer Wildlife Crime, Public Safety and Terrorism Directorate, O.I.P.C. Interpol, said that Interpol's commitment to the fight against Environmental Crime began in 1976. Environmental Crime covers the areas of pollution, radioactive and nuclear waste together with the illegal trade in wild flora and fauna.

218. In 2006, with external funding, Interpol created the first full-time wildlife crime specialised officer position.
219. Mr Younger pointed out that Interpol's emphasis remains on the illegal trade in wild flora and fauna, and parts and derivatives, but recognises the significant risk associated with this trade from deliberate or accidental introduction of diseases and parasitic organisms.
220. He added that the wildlife crime programme is aimed at increasing awareness of crime, its methodology, trends and associated risks, and at providing support, information and intelligence to law enforcement agencies worldwide working to suppress this illegal trade.
221. In conclusion, Mr Younger indicated that Interpol's goal is to increase and support co-operation; communication, and co-ordination between member countries and a wide range of enforcement agencies.

Discussions

222. The Delegate of Israel expressed concern about the illegal trade of animal products coming from South America and Asia where FMD exists. He recalled that serotype A exists in South America, but is likely to enter the European Union if appropriate precautions are not taken.
223. A representative of the Belgian delegation spoke about the human risk associated in the prevention of smuggling activities indicating that a veterinary inspector was assassinated in 1995 by the hormones mafia. He suggested that some confidentiality be exercised when carrying out enquiries in order to avoid such a dramatic event.
224. The Session Chairman concluded the discussion by thanking the participants. He then requested that a group be formed to draft a recommendation on this technical item. Mr Howard Batho (European Commission), Dr Catherine Collinet (France), Dr Nick Coulson (United Kingdom), Dr Ago Pärtel (Estonia) and Dr Patrick Rogan (Ireland) agreed to assist the speaker, Dr Debby Reynolds, in the preparation of a recommendation.

FAO/OIE collaboration in animal disease control during the last two years, with emphasis on avian influenza

225. Dr Joseph Domenech, Chief Veterinary Officer of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) gave a presentation on FAO-OIE Collaboration in animal disease control over the last two years with emphasis on avian influenza. He pointed out that the FAO-OIE general agreement and the specific GF-TADs joint initiative were signed in May 2004. These have defined the new development of joint projects and progress based on clear synergies concerning complementary mandates and missions. An evaluation was carried out in 2005, which showed the importance of improvements in collaborative activities between the two Organisations. It has also defined areas for continuous evolution of this partnership.
226. Dr Domenech spoke on the establishment by the FAO of a new institutional context, which has provided a series of tools allowing more efficiency in responding to major international animal health crises. The establishment of the Emergency Center for the Control of Transboundary Animal Diseases (ECTAD) and of the Chief Veterinary Officer position have restored the central chain of command in better compliance with the approaches promoted by the OIE and based on a strong role of the Chief Veterinary Officers at the national levels.
227. These new organisational changes have been put in place within the last two years at the central headquarters level in Rome as well as at the regional level. ECTAD has also promoted the development of an integrated approach to diseases. Thanks to the multidisciplinary nature of its expert groups, ECTAD better addresses the issue of interactions between animal disease epidemiology and socio-economic policy, institutional and environmental contexts.

228. Speaking on the GF-TADs mechanism, Dr Domenech stated that specific tools have been established, such as the FAO-OIE Crisis Management Centre (CMC), the FAO-OIE-WHO Global Early Warning System (GLEWS) or the OIE-FAO network of Reference Laboratories and Collaborating Centres on HPAI (OFFLU).

At the regional level, a new OIE-FAO initiative was launched concluding the establishment of OIE-FAO Regional Animal Health Centres. Several of these centres will soon be officially created. In Africa, the ALive (African Livestock) initiative represents an inter-institutional platform where the OIE and FAO are imminent members.

229. Dr Domenech stated that the Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) crisis has accelerated the process of collaboration between the FAO and OIE. Joint activities were multiplied: coordination meetings, joint country missions, publication of an FAO-OIE joint Global Strategy for the Prevention and Control of HPAI, Technical and Scientific conferences and workshops, and implementation of national and regional projects.
230. Dr Domenech mentioned that other FAO-OIE collaborations are continuing, such as those on foot and mouth disease (FMD – Commission for Europe, South-East Asia FMD programme); on rinderpest eradication (partnership in the Pan African Control of Epizootics programme: PACE/ AU-IBAR; Global Rinderpest Eradication Programme [GREP]), on the Inter Institutional Portal for Biosecurity and Food Safety, (partnership FAO-OIE-IPPC-Codex Alimentarius-WHO-WTO...), on microbial drug resistance, on the prevention of food safety crisis at the farm end, on the evaluation of Veterinary Services or more recently on bluetongue.
231. In conclusion, Dr Domenech stated that FAO-OIE collaborations have progressed considerably over the last two years. The HPAI crisis has worked to strengthen this partnership very quickly and it has put International Organisations, such as the FAO and OIE and their activities under intense media and political attention. The international community applauds the collaboration between the FAO and OIE. These dynamics have to continue and new institutional arrangements are under discussion in order to ensure increased sustainability to this partnership.

Discussions

232. Dr Barry O’Neil, President of the OIE International Committee and the Administrative Commission, thanked the speaker for his comprehensive presentation and noted with satisfaction the synergy between the OIE and the FAO. He congratulated the OIE Director General for his initiatives to improve the relations between the two organisations. He stated that the OIE/FAO collaboration was discussed at length during the recent Administrative Commission meeting. He summarised the respective roles of the two organisations, indicating the leadership role of the OIE in policies dealing with animal diseases including zoonoses, the development of standards in accordance with the WTO-SPS Agreement and the application of the Performance, Vision and Strategy (PVS) tool for the evaluation of Veterinary Services, indicating that the OIE will collaborate with FAO considering its expertise as very relevant. He expressed appreciation for the role of the FAO in agricultural development and encouraged both organisations to work together in new areas using appropriate mechanisms, such as the GF-TADs Regional Steering Committee and the OIE/FAO Regional Animal Health Centres.
233. Dr Vallat provided assurances that all OIE/FAO programmes will be implemented especially in developing and in transition countries where the FAO has a strong foothold. Regarding the PVS, it is the role of the OIE to ensure the training of experts and validate their reports. He also announced that the OIE is pleased to contribute to the success of the FAO ‘Crisis Management Centre’ details of which particularly those regarding governance will soon be finalised.

Presentations by international and regional organisations

234. Dr Euvgueny Nepoklonov, Vice-Chairman of the Conference, invited presentations from international and regional organisations.

World Health Organization (WHO)

235. Dr François-Xavier Meslin, Coordinator, Department of Food Safety, Zoonoses and Foodborne Diseases (FOS) of the WHO, briefly outlined the mission of the FOS to lower the burden of disease from food and animals through the communication of sound science and the provision of effective tools to all levels of society. He stated that in both the developing and developed world, diseases linked to food production - including those caused by chemical or microbiological contamination and zoonotic agents (foodborne as well as non-foodborne) - represent an increasingly significant health problem with important social, economic and political implications. It is estimated that each year, two million people world-wide die of diarrhoeal diseases, mostly attributed to contaminated food and drinking water.
236. Dr Meslin remarked that the new WHO department promotes an integrated, cross-sectoral approach to food safety addressing all factors in the food chain from 'farm to fork' and is structured in five core group functions: Zoonotic diseases and veterinary public health; microbiological food safety; chemical food safety; foodborne disease surveillance; and food safety systems including Codex. The department functions as the hub for WHO's interaction with the FAO and OIE in relation to zoonotic diseases, including veterinary public health and food safety aspects of avian influenza.
237. To demonstrate the effective working relationship among the FAO, OIE and WHO over the past three years, Dr Meslin mentioned the development of a common system for early warning for events of common interest named GLEWS (Global Early Warning System), which builds on the added value of combining and coordinating the alert and response mechanisms of the three Organisations. The document describing GLEWS has been endorsed by the three Organisations at the occasion of their 12th Annual Coordination meeting held in Paris in February 2006. The GLEWS agreement was formally signed by the three Organisations on 18 July 2006.

Discussions

238. Dr Vallat expressed his satisfaction about the presence of sister organisations, such as the WHO, at OIE meetings, stating that the OIE endeavours to continuously improve relations with the WHO. Referring to zoonoses, Dr Vallat insisted that the OIE play a major role by controlling pathogens at their animal source. He mentioned the OIE/FAO/WHO agreement on the Global Early Warning Systems (GLEWS) that provides an excellent opportunity for the three organisations to work together to avoid duplication of disease information systems, particularly regarding non official information.

He also indicated that the OIE has been active in the field of antibiotic resistance since a long time, but deplored the attitude of certain medical experts who tend to advise that all antibiotics used in humans should not be utilised in animals. Dr Vallat pointed out that such statements are not often based on sound scientific evidence. He stated that antibiotics used for therapeutic purposes constitute an important element in the management of animal health and welfare. He also regretted that the WHO International Health Regulations were adopted without any regard for the task of Veterinary Services, despite the support of WHO colleagues in Geneva. Dr Vallat expressed the wish that the official position of the OIE be taken into consideration by the WHO in all future collaboration in the field of zoonoses.

Council of Europe

239. In his presentation on 'Animal Welfare in Europe: achievements and future prospects', Dr David G. Pritchard, Senior Veterinary Consultant - Animal Welfare, Animal Health and Welfare Directorate, United Kingdom, announced the joint CoE- EU DG SANCO- TAIEX -OIE Workshop, which will be held on 23 and 24 November 2006, in the Council of Europe's headquarters (Palais de l'Europe), Strasbourg, France. Chief Veterinary Officers and their experts on animal welfare, country delegates to the COE conventions on animal welfare and recognised observers to the COE from Non Governmental organisations will be invited. The participation of all countries of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe is envisaged and funding is available for Delegates from certain countries.

The objective of the Workshop is to examine methods of better collaboration between the organisations in drawing up welfare rules and guidelines and to examine ways of improving animal welfare standards at operational level.

Discussions

240. Dr Vallat complimented the speaker on his presentation and mentioned that the OIE and in particular, the Regional Commission for Europe, fully support the meeting to be held in Strasburg. He expressed the wish that the expenses related to the participation of some Delegates of the eastern European region be taken on charge by the organisers.
241. The Session Chairman paid tribute to the activities of the organisation and thanked the speaker for his presentation.

Fédération équestre internationale (FEI)

242. Dr Frits Sluyter, Head of the Veterinary Department of the Federation équestre internationale (FEI), made a short presentation on equine infection anaemia (EIA) outbreaks in the EU.
243. He stated that EIA was confirmed in 3 horses in Ireland on 6 June 2006 and the infection was traced back to a Veterinary Clinic where an index case was treated or in premises where the index case had resided previously. As at 20 September, 22 cases of EIA were diagnosed and affected animals either died or were euthanised. The mode of entry of the infection into Ireland is not certain, but it could have occurred following importation of plasma from Italy which reported several outbreaks of the disease earlier in the year.
244. He added that all horses in the affected premises will remain under surveillance for at least 90 days and will undergo two Coggins tests at 45-day intervals. High-risk animals will undergo 6 Coggins tests at 10-day intervals. The 90-day restriction period will recommence if any new cases are identified.
245. Dr Sluyter concluded by saying that Veterinary and Racing Authorities in EU countries have taken strict precautions to limit the spread of the disease. The United Kingdom, which received some horses from Ireland, has set up a traceability system and applied repeated Coggins tests to detect any possible infection. The FEI, which was about to organise the World Equestrian Games involving more than 800 horses in Germany, decided to insist on additional testing for horses coming from Ireland and Italy or from horses in the UK that had travelled to affected countries.

Discussions

246. A member of the German Delegation pointed out that the authorities have detected infectious anaemia in some horses in the state of Thuringia, Germany. Tracing has established a number of contacts. The Czech Republic has been informed about one contact identified on their territory. He thanked all the people having contributed to the good management of the recent World Equestrian Games in Aachen.
247. The Delegate of Ireland commended the good cooperation of the horse industry in his country.

Update on the OIE 'World Animal Health Information System' (WAHIS)

248. Dr Antonio Petrini, Deputy Head of the OIE Animal Health Information Department, presented the new World Animal Health Information System (WAHIS), which has replaced the old classification of diseases from Lists A and B to a single list of diseases chosen on the basis of criteria established in 2004. He explained that the implementation of this new system started using new standardised reporting forms in paper format. However, In April 2006, the OIE launched a new on-line notification system, using the internet providing each Delegate with a password to access the system and process information directly using the WAHIS Web application instead of using paper forms.

OIE Delegates can now access this secure Web application and process information needed to submit their immediate notifications and follow-up reports, six-monthly reports and annual reports. The use of WAHIS by Countries to notify diseases will thus help end-users have access to real-time information.

249. Dr Petrini stated that WAHIS has a Geographical Information System (GIS) and a mapping facility enabling improved capacities of epidemiological surveillance and disease control as Delegates are able to show the exact distribution of new events or diseases present in parts of the country which are especially important for international trade. WAHIS provides each Member Country with a map to obtain the geographical coordinates of an event occurring in the country when making an immediate notification or follow-up reports. The built in map of the first administrative division of each Member Country needs to be verified and rectified if necessary, by each country as it is used to display disease distribution by country and by first administrative divisions in use by Veterinary Services.
250. Dr Petrini announced that the web interface of WAHIS database, WAHID Interface will be launched in two months time and will enable end-users to obtain a wide range of information on regions or countries with mapping support.
251. Dr Petrini was happy to report that the majority of countries in Europe have already started using WAHIS. He urged Delegates to ensure that the six-monthly report and the annual report for 2005 are processed rapidly.

He also requested them to process the first six-monthly report for 2006 and to integrate the monthly notification procedure for the months of the second semester of 2006 for diseases that are present and that are notifiable within the country.

Discussions

252. The Delegate of Belgium pointed out that this new system requires additional work in order to be managed properly, often necessitating technical support from OIE. He encouraged continuation in the development of the application of this tool, which is useful for users, as it makes it easier to follow the evolution of the animal health situation. He encouraged the OIE team to pursue their efforts in that field.
253. A representative of the Danish delegation thanked the OIE and its team for this new WAHIS system. He asked when Member Countries would be able to benefit from this system in accessing the information contained in it. Dr Petrini replied that the interface Web WAHID will replace the historical handistatus base within the two forthcoming months. The two systems will co-exist for some time and then all the data will be integrated and accessible on WAHID.
254. Dr Vallat recalled the history of the OIE disease information system for the new Delegates. There existed a weekly report based on urgent information, a monthly report on the diseases of list A and an annual OIE/FAO/WHO report, which was more complete, providing information on animal populations, veterinary surgeons, laboratories, etc. The first change consisted in eliminating list A and B diseases and drawing up a single list of diseases, which came into force on 01 January 2005. The second change consisted in modernising the system by computerising the communication between Member Countries and the OIE and by creating a data base accessible on the interface Web. The weekly reports now include emerging diseases and follow-up information. The monthly reports have been replaced by semestrial reports on all listed diseases. The system of semestrial reporting is operational since July 2006. The countries without Internet access can send their reports on paper, which will be included in the data base by the OIE. Since some time, it is possible to send data on annual reports via WAHIS. Some delays have been encountered in the publication of the annual report 2005 (*World Animal Health*), but this will be published in early 2007. The 2006 annual report should be published by March/April 2007.

Plenary discussion of draft Recommendations No. 1 and No. 2

255. Draft Recommendations Nos. 1 and 2 on the two Technical Items of the Conference were presented to the participants and put forward for discussion. A few amendments were called for in both recommendations, which were presented for final adoption on Friday.

**Selection of the Technical Items
for the 23rd Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe**

256. Dr Vallat informed participants that at its recent meeting, the OIE Administrative Commission suggested that as from 2008, only one technical item warranting the distribution of a questionnaire to Member Countries will be presented during the General Session. The second technical presentation, which will be decided by the Administrative Commission, will deal with a current topic of international interest and will be presented, without a previous questionnaire, by a world renowned expert. He therefore suggested that all regional conferences adopt a similar approach. This proposal was unanimously accepted.
257. Following a lengthy discussion, the following technical item (with a questionnaire) as proposed by the Delegate of Sweden was adopted for the 23rd Conference:
- Practical application of OIE standards and guidelines on compartmentalisation.
258. The title of the second technical presentation (without a questionnaire) will be decided during the meeting of the Regional Commission at the General Session preceding the next regional conference.

**Date, venue and agenda items
for the 23rd Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe**

259. The President of the Conference asked Delegates present if any of their countries wished to host the 23rd Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe. The Delegate of Lithuania expressed the wish of his country to host the Conference in Vilnius. This proposal was unanimously accepted. The exact date of the meeting, which should be in the second half of September 2008, will be decided at the meeting of the Region during the OIE General Session in May 2007.

Thursday 28 September 2006

Professional and cultural trip

260. Participants found the visit organised for the day by the host country to be of great interest. Sincere thanks to the organisers for their kind hospitality were presented.

Friday 29 September 2006

Adoption of the draft Final Report and Recommendations

261. The Conference approved Recommendations Nos 1 and 2 and the draft Final Report with certain minor amendments (Appendices IV and V).
262. The Director General stated that the press release of the Conference made available to the participants could be used by Delegates for the media in their countries, if they so wished. It will also be placed on the OIE Web site.

Closing Ceremony

263. On behalf of the Regional Commission Bureau for Europe, the OIE Central Bureau and the Conference participants, Dr Nikola Belev, President of the Regional Commission, read the motion of thanks to the Government of the Republic of France (Appendix VI).
264. Dr Vallat reinforced the motion of thanks to insist on the very positive aspects of the Regional Conference for Europe. He thanked the organisers of the Conference particularly the government of France, Prof. Chary, Dr Bellemain, students of the ENSV, local bodies, and sponsors for the perfect organisation, warm welcome, and excellent hospitality including the professional and cultural visits, appreciated by all the participants.

He also thanked Delegates for their fruitful participation in the discussions observing that the level of participation was exceptionally high. He conveyed the appreciation of the President of the OIE international Committee on the organisation of the meeting and the high level of discussions. Finally he thanked his team for the excellent job performed before and during the conference.

265. He briefly reported on the Press Conference he had given the previous day in the presence of the media during which the discussions were very positive. (Appendix VII).
266. Dr Monique Eloit, Delegate of the host country, expressed her pleasure of her country at having hosted the Conference and expressed her appreciation to Drs Vallat, O'Neil and Belev, the Delegates and participants. She extended her special thanks to the session chairpersons and rapporteurs, as well as to the organisers who had worked hard since several months to make the conference a success. She added that the conference had served to reinforce the collaboration between the Veterinary Services of Member Countries and also as a venue to meet new and familiar faces, and to share information, knowledge and friendship.
267. The 22nd Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe was officially closed at 11 a.m.

.../Appendices

APPENDICES

- No. I List of participants
- No. II Agenda
- No. III Programme
- No. IV Recommendation No. 1
- No. V Recommendation No. 2
- No. VI Motion of thanks
- No. VII Press release

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**22nd Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe
Lyon, France, 25-29 September 2006**

AGENDA

- I. Epidemiological surveillance and on-farm inspections: rural veterinary network, public-private sector relations, training of farmers and veterinarians
- II. Live animals and food smuggling: current practices and prevention and repression tools
- III. Animal health situation of Member Countries during the first semester of 2006
- IV. Updated information on aquatic animal health activities by the OIE
- V. Implementation of the recommendation of the meeting on highly pathogenic avian influenza in Europe held at the OIE Headquarters on 27 and 28 February 2006
- VI. Activities of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe
- VII. Presentations by international and regional organisations
- VIII. Other matters:
 - Selection of the Technical Items for the 23rd Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe
 - Date, venue and agenda for the 23rd Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe
 - Miscellaneous

**22nd Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe
Lyon, France, 25-29 September 2006**

Timetable

Monday 25 September 2006

- 02.00 pm Registration and distribution of documents
- 07.30 pm Welcome reception hosted by the Mayor of Lyon at the City Hall

Tuesday 26 September 2006

- 08.00 am Registration and distribution of documents (contd)
- 08.45 am Opening ceremony
- 10.00 am Break
- 10.30 am -Election of the Conference Committee (Chairperson, Vice-Chairpersons and Rapporteur General)
- Adoption of the Agenda and Timetable
- Election of Session Chairpersons and Rapporteurs for Technical Items and Animal Health Situation
- 11.00 am - **Animal health situation of Member Countries during the first semester of 2006 (Dr Antonio Petrini)**
- Update on developments in aquatic animal health (Dr Barry Hill)
- 01.00 pm Lunch
- 02.30 pm **Technical Item I**
- Epidemiological surveillance and on-farm inspections: rural veterinary network, public-private sector relations, training of farmers and veterinarians (Dr Gaetana Ferri)**
- 04.00 pm Break
- 04.30 pm Presentation by the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE) (Dr Jan Vaarten)
- 04.45 pm Presentation by the European Federation for Animal Health and Sanitary Security (EFAHSS) (Mr Bernard Terrand)
- 05.00 pm Presentation by the World Union of Professions (WUP) (Dr Michel Baussier on behalf of Dr Christian Rondeau)
- 05.15 pm -Fourth OIE Strategic Plan and other matters relevant for the Region (Dr Bernard Vallat)
- Evaluation and strengthening of Veterinary Services (Dr Bernard Vallat)
- Follow-up of recommendations of OIE meetings held in Europe (Dr Bernard Vallat)
- 06.15 pm Preparation of Recommendation No. 1 by designated small group

08.00 pm Reception hosted by the OIE

Wednesday 27 September 2006

09.00 am **Technical Item II**

Live animals and food smuggling: current practices and prevention and repression tools (Dr Debby Reynolds)

10.30 am Presentation by Interpol (Mr Peter Younger)

10.45 am Break

11.15 am FAO/OIE collaboration in animal disease control during the last two years, with emphasis on avian influenza (Dr Joseph Domenech)

11.30 am Presentations by international and regional organisations

12.30 pm -Lunch

- Preparation of Recommendation No. 2 by designated small group

02.00 pm An update on the OIE 'World Animal Health Information System' (WAHIS) (Dr Antonio Petrini)

03.00 pm Plenary discussion of draft Recommendations No. 1 and No. 2

04.00 pm - Selection of the Technical Items for the 23rd Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe

- Date, venue and agenda items for the 23rd Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe

06.00 pm Press conference

08.00 pm Reception hosted by the French Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries

Thursday 28 September 2006

Professional and guided tourist visit

Friday 29 September 2006

09.00 am Adoption of the Final Report and Recommendations

10.30 am Break

11.00 am Closing ceremony

**22nd Conference
of the
OIE Regional Commission for Europe
Lyon (France), 25 – 29 September 2006**

Recommendation No. 1

Epidemiological surveillance and on-farm inspections: rural veterinary network, public-private sector relations, training of farmers and veterinarians

CONSIDERING THAT

Epidemiological surveillance systems are essential for the good governance of animal health, zoonoses and food safety control programmes,

Private sector veterinarians and farmers are the most likely persons to early detect the presence of diseases in livestock and epidemiological surveillance is strongly dependent upon their contribution,

Compensation to livestock owners for direct losses incurred for the presence of animal diseases together with sanctions for violations is crucial,

General principles of epidemiological surveillance as well as those relating to specific animal diseases, such as bovine spongiform encephalopathy, foot and mouth disease, bluetongue and avian influenza, are described in the various appendices contained in the *Terrestrial Animal Health Code* (the *Terrestrial Code*),

The Chapters in the *Terrestrial Code* relating to the quality of Veterinary Services spell out the importance of early detection of and rapid response to animal diseases including zoonoses, which are linked to the efficiency of the Veterinary Administration,

The ability of collecting data at field level with all the appropriate information based on animal identification and traceability, is essential to assure the effectiveness of epidemiological surveillance systems,

The efficiency and efficacy of an epidemiological surveillance system depends on the level of knowledge of all the participants,

A public-private partnership requires a good co-operation between private and public sectors, Bluetongue virus can be given as an example of an emerging disease that appears to be currently spreading in the European region. The implementation of a surveillance system to monitor its spread and the efficacy of control measures appear necessary to facilitate trade,

THE OIE REGIONAL COMMISSION FOR EUROPE
RECOMMENDS THAT

1. Veterinary Services of Member countries organise and manage countrywide epidemiological surveillance networks at national levels in a way that will allow the collection, collation and analyses of data generated at all possible levels taking into consideration the livestock sector including backyard flocks and wildlife.
2. The analysis of epidemiological data be performed by specifically trained personnel. Specialised national centres or units should be organised to function as focal and reference points to assure coherence of the network. The OIE collaborating centres and reference laboratories should take a leading role in ensuring

training and expertise to Member Countries to achieve this objective.

3. Veterinary Services implement epidemiological surveillance systems assuring early detection of, and rapid response to animal diseases including zoonoses. This system should be led by an efficient Central Veterinary Administration, involving networks of veterinary practitioners in all rural and urban areas as well as livestock owners. This is to be set up in compliance with OIE international standards on disease surveillance and quality of Veterinary Services.
4. Training and refresher courses or continuing education be organised and made available to all stakeholders involved in the surveillance system.
5. Adequate compensation be provided for livestock owners for the slaughter and destruction of animals carried out as part of disease control programmes. The compensation schemes should promote good preventative management practices including high biosecurity standards.
6. Appropriate measures be adopted on the obligations for veterinarians and livestock owners to report and notify suspicion of disease, including sanctions to be applied in case of non compliance.
7. The OIE promote the creation of surveillance networks for relevant diseases, for example bluetongue, based on its OIE Reference Laboratories, Collaborating Centres and existing networks. If necessary, the network should involve other neighbouring regions.

(Adopted by the OIE Regional Commission for Europe on 29 September 2006)

**22nd Conference
of the
OIE Regional Commission for Europe
Lyon (France), 25 – 29 September 2006**

Recommendation No. 2

**Live animals and food smuggling: current practices and
prevention and repression tools**

CONSIDERING THAT

The illegal introduction (smuggling) of live animals is an on-going threat to animal health and international trade in all countries,

Smuggling of animal products and veterinary biologicals is an on-going threat to animal health, public health and consumer confidence in all countries,

Smuggling is considered to be an important issue by Member Countries of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe,

Member Countries in the region with limited resources and funds consider that they would benefit from assistance from other countries, particularly in training, meetings and improved information flow,

Practical experiences from some Member Countries suggest that partnership between Veterinary Services and Customs Services in planning and application of risk management measures on the basis of risk assessment has been the key step in improving the use of limited enforcement resources,

All countries in the region consider that the OIE could contribute to deal with the issue of smuggling, including of companion animals, at the regional and international level,

THE OIE REGIONAL COMMISSION FOR EUROPE RECOMMENDS THAT

1. Member Countries be encouraged to ensure political commitment and an effective legal base and co-ordination of activities among various government departments, other relevant agencies, industry, transport companies, private practitioners and potential 'end-users' to effectively deal with the issue of smuggling.
2. The OIE contribute at a regional level through encouraging increased communication, co-operation and sharing of intelligence through an arrangement between Member Countries. Details of such a mechanism could be further examined by pilot studies and possibly by the establishment of an OIE Ad hoc Group.
3. The OIE and Member Countries contribute at the international level to deal with the issue of smuggling by ensuring: intergovernmental collaboration, information campaigns, training, setting international standards and by producing an evaluation of economic incentives.
4. A review of the Chapter of the OIE *Terrestrial Code* relating to the Evaluation of Veterinary Services, in particular to bring out the link between Veterinary Services, Customs Services and Police Services be carried out. Updating of the OIE certificate models, using both new obligations on the security of supporting documentation, and on electronic communication between the competent authorities of importing and exporting countries should be envisaged. The possibility of a central data base should be investigated.

5. The OIE examine whether the existing OIE notification systems could be modified to include notifications on intercepted and rejected large consignments by Member Countries.
6. The OIE examine to what extent the existing international organisations (e.g. IATA or similar organisations) that deal with transport companies on a global level should be involved in the process

(Adopted by the OIE Regional Commission for Europe on 29 September 2006)

MOTION OF THANKS

The OIE Regional Commission for Europe, the Director General of the OIE, members of delegations, observers and representatives of countries and international organisations, wish to express their gratitude to the Government of France, the Host Country of the 22nd Conference of the OIE Regional Commission, for the excellent welcome accorded to the participants and for all facilities made available to them during their stay in Lyon from 25 to 29 September 2006.

**22nd Conference
of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe
Lyon (France), 25 - 29 September 2006**

PRESS RELEASE
27 September 2006

The 22nd Conference of the Regional Commission for Europe of the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) was held in Lyon (France) from 25 to 29 September 2006 and was kindly hosted by the Government of the Republic of France.

The Conference was chaired by Dr Monique Eloit, the OIE Delegate for France and Dr Nikola Belev, President of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe and OIE Regional Representative for Eastern Europe. The representative of the Minister of Agriculture of France, Mr Jean-Marc Bournigal, the President of the OIE International Committee, Dr Barry O'Neil, the Director General of the OIE, Dr Bernard Vallat, Delegates of OIE Member Countries, representatives of international and regional organisations and observers attended the Conference.

The Conference was held in the city of Lyon, which is the birthplace of the first veterinary school of the world and which also hosts the OIE Collaborating Centre for the Training of Official Veterinarians (ENSV).

In his speech, Mr Jean-Marc Bournigal, Director General, Food Directorate, France, representing the Minister of Agriculture of France, commended the role of the OIE in the international control of animal diseases and zoonoses. He mentioned that despite the diversity in climate and animal husbandry systems within Europe, global risks of disease spread remain the same. He stated that *“it would be a mistake for European countries to continue to think that they are going to remain historically free from certain diseases.”*

Two technical items were discussed during the Conference:

- **the illegal smuggling of animals and animal products;**
- **the role of veterinarians and livestock owners in the early detection of and rapid response to animal diseases.**

These two items are of particular significance considering the current international scene dominated by the occurrence of avian influenza in the world and of other emerging and re-emerging animal diseases such as bluetongue in Europe.

Participants recalled the role played by legal and illegal trade in poultry and poultry products for human consumption in the spread of H5N1 virus and emphasised the need for countries to strengthen their Veterinary Services and reinforce veterinary controls at borders. Recommendations were adopted during the conference, one dealing specifically with the illegal smuggling of animals and animal products. The role played by the OIE at global level in the control of avian influenza was highly appreciated, particularly its capacity to go beyond the specific veterinary framework to encompass public health and other social and environmental issues.

The recent outbreaks of bluetongue in The Netherlands, Belgium, France and Germany - the most northern latitude where the disease has ever been diagnosed – has again stressed the importance of having effective national surveillance systems to be able to detect early and respond rapidly to an unexpected disease event.

Recalling the significant potential impact of emerging and re-emerging diseases on public health and rural and national economies, Dr Vallat remarked: *“Veterinary Services are now recognised as a global public good. They provide the first line of defence against animal diseases including those transmissible to humans. Strengthening of Veterinary Services using the Performance, Vision and Strategy (PVS) tool must, therefore, be considered a priority for public investments worldwide”.*

The OIE Regional Commission expressed its appreciation and gratitude to the support provided by the OIE to Member Countries of the Region and strongly supported the actions being undertaken by the OIE to promote the control of animal diseases and zoonoses world-wide and in the region.

All recommendations adopted by the conference will be submitted for consideration and adoption during the next OIE General Assembly, in May 2007.

The World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), created in 1924 under its initial name "Office International des Epizooties", is one of the oldest international organisations and, with its 167 Member Countries, is one of the most representative intergovernmental organisations.

Present on all five continents through its Regional Representations, its 180 Reference Laboratories and Collaborating Centres, the OIE oversees animal health and surveillance in the world and plays a key role in scientific research and the dissemination of veterinary information.

The close relationship between animal health and animal welfare has prompted the OIE to play a key role as the leading international organisation for animal welfare and elaborates specific recommendations and guidelines on relevant subjects.

Operating at the interface between animal and human health, the OIE works in close collaboration with other agencies supporting and financing the fight against animal diseases and helps its Member Countries to prevent, control and eradicate those diseases.

In its capacity as the international reference organisation for animal diseases, including zoonoses, the OIE also elaborates sanitary standards that safeguard the world trade in animals and animal products within the framework of the WTO SPS Agreement.