

**CONCLUSIONS OF THE WORKING GROUP ON INCREASED MORTALITY IN
RAINBOW TROUT AT FARMS IN CONTINENTAL SWEDEN BRUSSELS,
05/07/2013**

1. At present there is not sufficient evidence to conclude that the parasite suspected to be the cause of the new disease first detected in farmed rainbow trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) in Sweden had been introduced from a third country or has spread from Sweden to other Member States. It is possible that the parasite has been present in Sweden for some years.
2. Experimental studies have demonstrated that the disease has an infectious aetiology. Histopathological studies indicate that the agent is a protozoan parasite, possibly a sarcocystidae.
3. The parasite has been identified in rainbow trout on two farms and with a high probability also as a subclinical infection in a farm and in wild adult brown trout (*Salmo trutta*) downstream of the first infected farm. The exact geographic distribution of the parasite in Sweden is not known but it could be widespread. The route(s) of spread within Sweden are not known for certain but movement of live fish is likely to be important.
4. There is no evidence that all infected populations are seriously affected by the disease. Except in one case, no serious effects can be observed in fish farms in which the presence of the parasite has been confirmed or which had received fish from farms where later the parasite was detected. Pronounced clinical signs in conjunction with a treatment-resistant increased mortality were only observed in young triploid rainbow trout at one farm (first case). Clinical symptoms and mortality appear to be modulated by husbandry systems and hygiene conditions.
5. Member States which have received fish from Sweden during the past two years are invited to check the records of recipient fish farms for any indication of increased mortality or clinical signs in fish recently consigned to those premises.
6. In the absence of data a full risk assessment is not possible at this stage. However, following discussions among Swedish experts, based on knowledge on other *Sarcocystis spp.*, a preliminary evaluation concluded that no significant public health risk is likely. Existing general advice to consumers on fish preparation and consumption (cooking and/or freezing) was considered adequate to protect public health. Sweden will also, in short, inform the Member States on this issue at the forthcoming SCOFCAH 10 July 2013.
7. Since no significant health risk has been identified, the disease is not yet well described (the aetiology is not established with certainty) and its epidemiology not fully understood, and in the absence of validated test methods for the detection of the

infection in fish, it is considered premature to contemplate movement restrictions for clinically healthy fish.

8. The EU-Reference Laboratory for fish diseases should collaborate closely with the National Reference Laboratory in Sweden and with other interested Member States to produce additional information on the suspected pathogen and the epidemiology of the disease and for the development of readily available, practical and robust diagnostic tools to detect the pathogen or to measure the in-vivo response of the host to it.
9. Member States are invited to cooperate with Sweden, advice in assistance in characterising the disease and developing diagnostic methods.