

Summary of meeting

Disease Categorisation Expert Group on Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE)

Wednesday 24th April 2013 10:00-13:00

DG SANCO Rue Belliard 232 2-17A

Attendees:

- Chairs: Martial Plantady and Fabien Schneegans, European Commission
- Disease experts designated by the following Member States
 - Germany
 - Poland
 - Slovakia
 - Slovenia
 - Sweden
- European Commission representatives:
 - Helen Fasham
 - Barbara Logar
- Observer:
 - Expert from Norway

Apologies:

- Experts from Cyprus and Portugal

1. Introduction from the Commission

Commission representatives explained the context of disease categorisation and prioritisation within the EU Animal Health Strategy, and outlined the study that had been commissioned in conjunction with the OIE. The result of that study had been a disease categorisation and prioritisation tool which is designed to capture key information about diseases of terrestrial animals and, where possible, to quantify that information to aid in the categorisation and prioritisation process.

The Commission then gave a short guide to the tool and its structure. The aim of the meeting was to complete the tool's fields for Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE). The Commission had pre-filled many values, but the group could both challenge any of these values; and were asked to complete the values left blank.

2. Values in the tool filled in by experts with respect to BSE

The chair clarified that the exercise would consider classical BSE only, and not atypical BSE which has a different epidemiological pattern.

The group progressed through the tool from start to finish, discussing pre-filled values where at least one group member wished to open the discussion, and completing blank values. The tool was filled in as far as possible through discussion and consensus.

General points included questions on whether current control measures should be taken into account when considering the disease impact.

Specific questions or issues were raised on particular fields including:

- The need to verify the human health data with human health experts;
- Whether to complete the 'risk of introduction' worksheet;
- Whether all possible control measures were sufficiently accounted for in the tool;
- How different animals and species should be considered;

- Some clarifications needed on how to complete the fields about laboratory tests;
- Whether all transmission methods were sufficiently covered in the tool;
- The problems with the long incubation period of the disease and its effect on the data;
- How to score the impact on consumption;
- Whether certain auto-filled criteria really reflected the previous answers;
- Certain wording and explanations needed improvement in the manual.

3. Conclusions

The Commission thanked the experts for their contribution and explained that all of their work, including the tool that they had filled in and the questions and comments they had raised on the tool itself, would be used, together with the work of the seven other disease-specific expert groups, in a full assessment of the tool by the Commission.