

Summary report of the meeting of the Scientific Committee on Veterinary Measures relating to Public Health held on 11 June 1999 in Brussels (approved at the meeting on 23-24 September 1999)

List of Participants

MEMBERS

Prof. A. Osterhaus (chairperson), Prof. R. Gilbert (vice-chairperson), Dr. P. Colin, Prof. J. Fink-Gremmels, Prof. A. Johnston, Prof. A. Mantis, Prof. E. Nurmi, Prof. E. Quinto Fernandez, Dr. J. Schlundt, Dr. I. Vagsholm, Prof. P. Willeberg

APOLOGIES

Prof. V. Caporale, Prof. O. Kaaden, Prof. A. Macri, Prof. F. Van Knapen, Prof. D. Vuitton (vice-chairperson)

ABSENT

none

COMMISSION

Mr. R. Vanhoorde (DG XXIV), Mr. B. Verleysen (DG XXIV), Mrs. R. Diez (DG XXIV), Mrs. J. Morosetti (DG XXIV), Mr. J-L. Jouve (DG XXIV)

Mrs. C. Majewski (DG III)

Mr. W. Daelman (DG VI), Mr. V-M. Niemi (DG VI)

Mrs. S. Stefanidis (DG XXIV), Mrs. M. Thisse (DG XXIV)

1. Welcome, declarations of interests

The secretariat informed the Committee about the formal nomination of Dr. Colin. The Committee congratulated Dr. Colin on his nomination.

One member declared an interest with regard to point item 6 on the agenda. He explained to the Committee that he is participating, on behalf of his country, in a technical Commission working group addressing the review of the "zoonoses" Directive. The Committee decided that this did not preclude his participation in the working group but that the person in question should not act as chairperson or rapporteur.

2. Adoption of the Agenda

The agenda was adopted.

3. Adoption of the minutes of the meeting of 29 - 30 April

The minutes were adopted.

4. Discussion and possible adoption of a scientific opinion concerning the revision of ante-and post-mortem inspection procedures for an alternative inspection system for the slaughter of

pigs

The rapporteur introduced the draft report to the Committee. The Committee agreed that the aim of the exercise should be wider than the reduction of unnecessary costs in the current meat inspection system but that the opportunity should be taken to recommend a more forward looking approach which should result in a better protection against a series of food-borne zoonotic diseases. The mandate will be reworded in order to reflect the latter aspect more explicitly.

The rapporteur was asked to amend the draft report and to elaborate, with the assistance of some members of the Committee, a more detailed pro-active approach.

5. Discussion and possible adoption of a scientific opinion on the evaluation of microbiological criteria and temperatures for storage and transport of products of animal origin intended for human consumption:

- **partim microbiological criteria**

- **(partim temperatures for storage and transport - postponed)**

In presenting the draft report of the Working Group, the rapporteur referred to the current variety of microbiological criteria, to their lack of scientific backing and to their poor efficiency in guaranteeing safe food. The Committee discussed the draft report and considered the written comments of a member who was unable to attend the plenary. The Committee considered the relevance of using decision trees in the assessment of the appropriateness of microbiological criteria. Some members stressed the importance of a sound statistical backing and the need to include considerations on sampling methods and sensitivity of classical and new detection methods.

As a fundamental review based on risk assessment is a very comprehensive exercise which might take many years, the Committee agreed to make a series of science based comments for the intermediate period.

The rapporteur was invited to review the draft report in the light of the discussions in the plenary.

6. Establishment of a Working Group on the assessment of risks related to zoonotic diseases causing major concern to public health and on possibilities to decrease their incidence in humans

The secretariat presented the draft mandate and drew the attention to the restricted time period given. The Committee established a provisional working group which might be reviewed in the light of the progress of the discussion. The secretariat was asked to contact the members to explore their willingness to participate and their availability in the near future.

7. Progress report on the request for a scientific opinion concerning the prevalence and methods of control of cysticercosis

The point was postponed because of the absence of the rapporteur.

8. Progress report on the working group on listeria

The rapporteur gave a short feed-back on the second working group meeting which took place on 04 June. It is intended to have the draft report available to the Committee by its plenary session of September.

9. Information to the Committee on possible new questions to the Committee:

- **cleaning and disinfection of knives in the meat industry**
- **review of the report of the Sc. VC. on "Trichinella free areas"**
(report of 1996).

- **vibrio vulnificus and parahaemolyticus in molluscs.**

Item was postponed because of a lack of time.

10. Feedback by members of the Committee participating in the SSC working group on the harmonisation of risk assessment procedures

Item was postponed because of a lack of time.

11. Feed-back by the chairman on subjects discussed in the SSC which are of interest to the Committee

The Committee was provided with a copy of the agenda of the last meeting of the SSC.

12. Feed-back by members of the Committee having attended working group meetings of other Scientific Committees

Item was postponed because of a lack of time.

13. Miscellaneous

- The issue was raised as to whether it would be appropriate to review the system of expressing acknowledgements for the input of working group members to draft reports. After discussion it was decided to maintain the procedure which was decided at the plenary of 22.7.1998. The motivations for this decision are: the fact that the plenary can substantially amend draft reports and the possibility that external experts might not agree with the final opinion as adopted by the SCVPH and risk for pressure from interest groups, journalists etc. The secretariat will continue to express acknowledgements of their input when sending the final opinion to external experts.

The secretariat informed the Committee that in the light of the principle of transparency the composition of working groups is disclosed on demand.

- The secretariat informed the Committee about some comments from industry to the Committee's opinion concerning Public Health Aspects of the Use of Bovine Somatotrophin. After having carefully evaluated the reactions, the Committee confirmed its opinion and concluded that the aspects raised by industry were not omitted and were addressed by the Committee (cf. chapters 2.3.1., 2.3.2., 2.4., 3.2. and 3.3. of the opinion) as well as by the Scientific Committee on Animal Health and Animal Welfare (Report on Animal Welfare Aspects of the Use of Bovine Somatotrophin; chapters 5.4 and 6).

- Next meetings are scheduled for:

26 July 1999 (*cancelled !*),

~~23~~+~~24~~ September 1999,

08 November 1999,

17 December 1999.

