

Summary of meeting

Disease Categorisation Expert Group on Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI)

Thursday 14th March 10:00-13:00

DG SANCO Rue Belliard 232 2-17A

Attendees:

- Chair: Maliz Pittman, European Commission
- Disease experts designated by the following Member States:
 - Belgium
 - Estonia
 - Ireland
 - Poland
 - Romania
 - Sweden
 - UK
- European Commission representatives:
 - Helen Fasham
 - Barbara Logar
 - Paco Reviriego
 - Laszlo Kuster

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 Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI). 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 HPAI

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 praise for the manual which was largely clear and useful; requests for the human health data to be completed and verified by human health experts; how to consider different HPAI strains and the potential for the disease to change.

Specific questions or issues were raised on particular fields including:

- Whether all the methods of transmission were sufficiently covered;
- How to score asymptomatic disease;
- Whether all aspects of surveillance were sufficiently covered;
- How to incorporate DIVA strategies as well as DIVA vaccines;
- How to take into account the varied effectiveness of biosecurity in different types of farms;
- The need to incorporate access to water other than drinking water;
- How to incorporate differing mortality rates in different cases or species;

- Which kind of outbreak to use as the basis for the assessment of impacts.

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.