



**EUROPEAN COMMISSION**  
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL for HEALTH and FOOD SAFETY

**Directorate Food chain: stakeholder and international relations**  
**Unit D4 Food safety programme, emergency funding**

**SANTE/ 10519/2016**

**REPORT ON THE**  
**MEETING OF THE TASK FORCE FOR MONITORING ANIMAL**  
**DISEASE ERADICATION IN THE MEMBER STATES**

Brussels, 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2016

## **TASK FORCE FOR MONITORING ANIMAL DISEASE ERADICATION**

Annual meeting of the Plenary Task Force

3<sup>rd</sup> March 2016- 10:00 H – 17:00 H

### **Participants:**

Representatives from Member States: AT, BE, BG, CZ, DE, EE, ES, FR, FI, HR, HU, IE, IT, LT, LV, NL, PL, RO, SE, SI, SK, UK.

### **Private Experts:**

Dr. Jedrt Wernig Maurer (Rabies sub-group)

Dr. Fabrizio De Massis, (chair of the bovine and sheep and goats Brucellosis sub-group);

### **European Commission (DG SANTE)**

#### **Unit D4:**

Christophe Bertrand (CB) - Chair  
Valentina Piazza (VP)  
Christian Boesinger - Froidevaux (CBF)  
Pedro Rosado Martín (PRM)  
Nicolas Krieger (NK)  
Rozalina Manova (RM)  
Tommaso Cirasa (TC)  
Sylvie Gervis (SG)  
Noelia Garzón Serrano (NGS)  
Chiara Pinna (CP)  
Katarzyna Urbanczyk (KU)  
Bernardo Catanese (BC)  
Oliver Loran (OL)

#### **Unit F2:**

Francisco Javier Perez Perez (FPP)

#### **Unit A3:**

Didier Delacourt (DD)

**Agenda:** see Annex

## **1. INTRODUCTION, opening by Christophe BERTRAND, Head of Unit D4 “food safety programme, emergency funding” in DG DSANTE**

The chair CB welcomed the representatives of the Member States, the private experts, and the colleagues from Units D4, F2 and A3. He reminded the participants about the objectives and importance of this annual meeting, which are amongst others:

-to give an overview of the activities implemented in previous years in the field of co-funded programmes,

-to exchange with Member States information regarding their needs and possible evolutions related to the veterinary programmes and activities of the Task Force subgroups,

-to help Member States in their objectives to survey and eradicate animal diseases.

The agenda was adopted (see detailed agenda-Annex 1).

## **2. ACTIVITIES OF THE TASK FORCE (TF) SUBGROUPS**

### **2.1 Report of the TF meetings held in 2015**

- Brucellosis in Croatia (chair)
- Rabies in Hungary (Chair)

#### **A. INFORMATION ON THE MEETING OF THE "BOVINE, OVINE, and CAPRINE BRUCELLOSIS SUB-GROUP" OF THE TASK FORCE ON MONITORING ANIMAL DISEASE ERADICATION HELD IN SPLIT, CROATIA, 17-18 JUNE 2015**

Dr Fabrizio De Massis, chair of the brucellosis sub-group, presented the summary of the implementation of bovine, ovine and caprine brucellosis (BRU) eradication programmes and the conclusions and recommendations of the meeting held in Croatia in June 2015.

Main conclusions:

- The eradication programme for bovine and sheep and goat brucellosis have been well designed by the country
- The last case of brucellosis due to *B.abortus* was recorded in 1965 and in 2013 for *B. melitensis*.
- Control measures are fully in line with EU legislation
- Data provided about testing coverage were not complete, giving the impression that there is no sufficient coverage to ensure the absence of *Brucella* in the country.
- The herd/flock coverage has been low in the past years but clearly improved in 2014-2015
- Illegal movement of animals and direct contact with infected herds/flocks in common pastures crossing borders with neighbouring countries have been identified as main risk factors for the spread of *Brucella*.
- The Croatian veterinary Institute, NRL for brucellosis, and the local veterinary laboratories, are all accredited according ISO 17025. Proficiency ring trials are

organised by the NRL at national level. However, all brucellosis analytical lines are not accredited.

- Compulsory total depopulation is applied in confirmed infected herds/flocks
- The management of FPSR (False Positive Serological Reactions) is foreseen in the programme, including the use of brucellin skin test on reactors.
- Animal identification and herds/flocks registration are in line with the EU legislation.
- Biosecurity measures seem to be not sufficiently implemented.

Main recommendations:

- The very good interaction between the VFSD, the labs and the Authorized Veterinary organisations should be maintained in order to achieve rapidly the Officially Brucellosis Free and Officially *Brucella melitensis* Free status
- Testing coverage should continue to be improved to reach the objective of 100% coverage.
- The reasons for insufficient coverage should be investigated, including an intensification of veterinary inspections where necessary. Corrective actions should be implemented in the concerned areas.
- Reinforcement of movement controls and trace-back and forward of outbreaks may contribute to reducing the risk of new brucellosis outbreaks occurrences. Epidemiological investigation of suspect cases should be maintained including cross-border collaboration. These measures should be maintained even after reaching Officially free status
- It is advisable for the NRL to get accreditation on all brucellosis analytical lines, including bacteriology.
- It is recommended to continue the policy of compulsory application of total depopulation in confirmed brucellosis outbreaks
- Guidelines for the management should be produced and harmonised at national level.
- Special attention should be given to issues related to biosecurity at all levels

Generally speaking, the results of the eradication programmes for bovine, ovine and caprine brucellosis are very good and Croatia could reach the officially-free status for those diseases in the very next years.

At the end of the report, the Chair of the meeting thanked Fabrizio de Massis for his strong commitment in this subgroup, and the Croatian authorities for their results and transparency during this visit. Full report of this subgroup meeting SANTE/11645/2015 is public available [here](#).

## **B. INFORMATION ON THE MEETING OF THE “RABIES” SUB-GROUP OF THE TASK FORCE ON MONITORING ANIMAL DISEASE ERADICATION, HELD IN HUNGARY, 15-16 OCTOBER 2015**

Dr Jedrt Maurer (chair of the rabies sub-group of the Task force) presented the conclusions and recommendations after the meeting of the subgroup that took place in October 2015 in Budapest.

Conclusions

- Hungarian veterinary authorities have established solid legal framework for the control of rabies in line with international guidelines.
- Considerable efforts have been made to decrease the incidence of rabies following the reinfection in 2013. The source of reinfection in 2013 remains unclear. Emergency response of Veterinary Services was rapid and very effective. Vaccination areas have been modified several times to tackle different epidemiological situations.
- Emergency vaccine stock has been established.
- There is good collaboration between central/regional authorities, hunting societies and other stakeholders. Official supervision during planning, implementation and evaluation of ORV campaigns is well organised.
- Vaccination of dogs is compulsory in Hungary; while vaccination of cats and livestock depends on the epidemiological situation.
- No human case of rabies has been reported since 1994.
- Rabies surveillance and monitoring of ORV campaigns meet international standards.
- Rabies awareness and vigilance in the country is high thanks to effective communication and education campaigns.
- The Hungarian NRL for Rabies has established WHO/OIE recommended standard laboratory techniques for rabies surveillance and ORV monitoring. The NRL participates in annual international proficiency tests.
- Vaccine bait titration is conducted in an OMCL laboratory (OCABR procedure, quality testing during campaigns). The laboratory is accredited according to MJA by EDQM.
- Like in neighbouring countries, the golden jackal is a species of rising concern, mainly due to the increasing populations in a number of countries in the region. The role of this species in rabies epidemiology is unknown. Some of the Member States concerned would welcome the inclusion of this species among the target species of ORV monitoring eligible for Community co-financing.

## Recommendations

- Frequent exchange of information, coordination of program and appropriate communication should be intensified with the neighbouring countries, in particular with Ukraine.
- The use of the classical flight-line pattern of 500 meters as recommended in the 2015 EFSA report should be preferably used, in particularly in areas bordering endemic neighbouring countries
- Confirmation of rabies diagnosis in animals with FAT-inconclusive or -negative results, the latter in combination with human exposure, using the Rabies Tissue Culture Infection Test (RTCIT) should be established to meet international requirements. Further use of the Mouse Inoculation (MIT) and Immuno Histological Tests are strongly discouraged (latter method is also not recommended by the OIE).

At the end of the report, the Chair of the meeting thanked both Ms. Maurer for the excellent work carried out by this sub-group, and the Hungarian authorities for the successful containment of the 2013 epidemics and for the organisations of the meeting. Full report of this subgroup meeting (SANTE/10146/2016) is public available [here](#).

## [2.2 Proposal in relation to TF subgroups](#)

VP presented the proposal in relation to Task Force (TF) subgroups. The Task Force (TF) for monitoring disease eradication was established in 2000 and based on the recommendations of the “White paper on Food Safety”.

The two main objectives of the TF are:

- to advance with animal disease eradication and
- to improve the cost-benefit-ratio of animal disease eradication programmes co-financed by the EU.

The TF is made up of representatives from all MSs with an EU co-financed eradication programme, invited private experts and the Commission. A Plenary Task Force meeting is held annually in Brussels. The TF has operated through plenary meetings (chaired by the Commission-DG SANTE) and expert subgroups (co-chaired by the Commission- DG SANTE) created to deal with specific diseases.

Five different subgroups (brucellosis, bovine tuberculosis, rabies, salmonellosis and classical swine fever) have been created and meet regularly.

The objectives of these subgroups are:

- to support the Task Force and
- to support the Member States in their attempts to develop and to implement optimal disease eradication measures

There was a need for further developments and strengthen of animal disease monitoring all across the EU and in the neighbouring countries.

In particular, these two tasks:

- provision of advice to Member States with a view to the preparation of a EU co-funded programme;
- provision of advice to, and the involvement of, neighbouring third countries, for which EU financial contribution is provided

As consequence, the original mandate of the TF was extended in 2010.

Considering the epidemiological situation of African swine fever and that 7 to 8 annual African swine fever (ASF) programmes are co-funded by EU by 2015, it has been decided to create a new subgroup of the TF to deal with ASF. The technical support by experts would be very useful to revise the proper design and implementation of the control and eradication programme, also on the light of update scientific support and issue recommendations.

### **3. POINTS FOR INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION**

#### **3.1 Financial implementation of the 2014 programmes**

RM presented an overview of the financial results of 2014 veterinary programmes. The concept of the financial cycle was clarified tracing the initial programme allocation (commitment), the mid-year programme re-allocation (modification of the commitment) and the final payment. The concept was further illustrated through showing a "best-case scenario" and pointing out two real cases of a good example and a bad example of a financial cycle. It was emphasized that a smooth financial cycle is crucial for optimization of budget management. The financial cycles per disease for 2014 veterinary programmes were presented.

Key messages and conclusions:

- considerable progress done but further stress should be put on the correct estimation of the needs during the initial allocation and the re-allocation exercise,
- some diseases such as Salmonella, rabies, and tuberculosis require special attention to ensure more accurate financial planning and thus more efficient and effective use of resources,
- optimization of budget management is quite important in view of the upcoming revision of the MFF and the risk of having budget cuts.

#### **3.2 Timing for the 2016-2017 veterinary programmes**

*This presentation was skipped due to lack of time, but the PowerPoint file has been sent to all participants.*

#### **3.3 State of play of template for submission of final annual reports for 2015 programmes and for submission of 2017 programmes**

CBF presented a power point describing the main features of the new PDF document for submitting final reports and payment applications, as well as some information concerning the PDF templates for submitting the 2017 programmes.

The replies given to the main MSs' questions are as follows:

- A multiannual programme is approved on the technical point of view for the number of years covered and therefore does not need to be technically re-assessed and re-approved each year. On the other hand the financial part shall be evaluated each year. As a consequence, each year, MSs shall resubmit the PDF document, selecting the options "multiannual=YES" and "funding request for an already approved multiannual programme". Only the financial tables shall appear, be filled in and submitted.
- The interest of an approved multiannual programme is that it is only assessed and approved at the beginning of the period covered. The MSs having such programmes can be confident on the stability of their programmes during the period.
- The use of unit costs simplified considerably the financial part of the EU co-financed programmes. They will still be used for the 2017 programmes without modifications.

However from 2018 programmes on, it is likely that unit costs will still be used but with modifications.

- Reallocation is a process which takes place on the basis of the intermediate reports the MSs shall submit by 31 August of the implementing year. From 2015 programmes on, through the use of Grant Decisions, an automatic re-allocation principle applies under specific circumstances (see Art. 3.4 of the Grant decisions): for a MS, within the same total allocation, there can be a re-allocation between different programmes up to 20% of the total allocation.
- The period of availability of the PDFs documents to be submitted online is the same as it was when the documents were sent by email.

### **3.4 Update guidelines for the Union co-funded veterinary programmes for the years 2017 (WD SANCO/10181/2014 Rev 6 Guidelines for the Union co-funded programmes of eradication, control and surveillance of animal diseases and zoonoses for the years 2015-2017 – update for 2017)**

NK presented these technical guidelines which aim to provide the Member States with updated technical information in order to prepare the submission of the eradication, control and surveillance programmes (veterinary programmes) to be implemented in 2017.

This document SANCO/10181/2014 Rev 6 is an update of the previous version (published on SANTE web site) concerning the targets in relation to the expected results of the veterinary programmes for the year 2017. Priorities have been kept identical. The targets for 2017 have been revised, based on the results of the 3 last years (2012-2013-2014).

The Commission services replied to several questions or requests for clarification from the Member States as regards eligible measures, unit costs, wording of some measures and link with the financial guidelines discussed the day before in the PAFF. The Chair confirmed that the consistency of the wording will be ensured between these two documents.

Delegations were requested to send any comment or question to the Commission services by 11 March 2016.

### **3.5 Main outcome of technical audits carried out by DG SANTE (Directorate F), in relation to the implementation of EU co-funded veterinary programmes in the last 3 years and planning of the 2016 activities**

FPP (Unit F2) presented the main outcomes of the audits carried out by the FVO from 2013 to 2015 in the field of the eradication programmes, and has reviewed the key points for an effective implementation of these programmes. Following points can amongst others been highlighted:

-for all diseases, the key constraints are amongst others the organisation and resources of the veterinary services, the organisation of the animal production sectors and wildlife, the engagement of stakeholders



-for bovine tuberculosis (TB), the key points are the quality of the tuberculin testing, the use of gamma interferon tests, the management of animal movements and of infected herds, the biosecurity rules, the dynamic of TB in wildlife, and the engagement of stakeholders

-for brucellosis, the key points are the quality of the holding registration and movement controls, especially when transhumance and common grazing areas, the testing regimes and movement restrictions, the epidemiological enquiries and the correct application of the vaccination programme

-for rabies, the key points are the difficulties with procurement of the vaccine, the controls of baits distribution, the monitoring of vaccine and population immunity, the quality of diagnostic, and the effectiveness of the passive surveillance.

-for African swine fever (ASF), the key points are awareness of stakeholders (farmers, backyard holdings, and hunters), the surveillance in domestic pigs and wild boars, the movement control, disposal of carcasses and prohibition of swill feeding, the hunting practices, and the trade ban of products of animal origin

-some mentions were also made related to salmonellosis, TSEs, classical swine fever, aquaculture diseases and avian influenza.

### **3.6 Main outcome of financial audits carried out by DG SANTE (Directorate A), in relation to the implementation of EU co-funded veterinary programmes in the last 3 years (A3)**

DD (Unit A3) presented the main outcome of the financial audits carried out by DG SANTE in the field of eradication programmes.

The main errors concerned the cost of tests, the number of eligible tests, the payment delays, the cost of material, and the value of compensation of the animals.

Spain asked clarification about Page 14 in regards of eligible costs for sampling?

Spain asked if an animal is sampled twice can it be submitted for financing twice?

Germany asked why compensation is not the same for culling/slaughter under Bovine Tuberculosis and Bovine Brucellosis?

-as regards the cost of tests, errors concerned the VAT, ineligible staff, ineligible consumables, and time needed for the tests

-as regards the number of tests, errors concerned ineligible tests (such as pre-movement tests or trade tests), the pooling of samples, and wrong database for reporting the tests (sampling database for instance)

-as regards the payment delays, errors concerned the confusion between the date of payment and the order of payment.

-as regards the cost of material, the main problems were related to call for tenders

-as regards compensation of animals, errors concerned the salvage value not deducted or not linked with the market value

On all these topics, the Guidelines for Member States for EU funding of veterinary programmes currently under finalisation should bring all information needed to the Member States to check the eligibility of the expenses claimed for EU co-financing.

### **3.7 Special report of the European Court of Auditors on "eradication, control and monitoring programmes to contain animal diseases": expected conclusions, recommendations and proposal on Commission follow up"**

CBF presented a PowerPoint on the outcome of the audit of the European court of auditors on veterinary programmes which took place mainly in 2015. Based on the expected conclusions and recommendations of the report (publication expected in April), some actions in order to address them were presented. Proposals from the MSs were requested.

### **3.8 State of play of funding activities in relation to Rabies and ASF programmes implemented in EU and co-operation with Third Countries**

PRM presented the objectives for rabies programmes (eradication from the EU in wildlife for 2020) and for ASF (containment in already infected areas and start funding control activities in non-EU countries when financially and technically possible).

As regards rabies, the evolution of the disease has been favourable (from 1 602 cases in 2009 to 125 in 2 010). Measures in MSs and in non-EU countries already funded were described. The main difference compared to 2015 programmes was the increased EU support for sampling and delivering of fox, jackals and raccoon dogs as a tool to enhance surveillance and monitoring. It was highlighted that programmes in non-EU countries should comply with the same requirements as the MS's programmes.

As regards ASF, measures already funded in MSs were described. The main differences compared to 2015 programmes were the funding of the selective hunting of female wild boar (started in the last quarter of 2015) and the collection of dead wild boar. Concerning control activities to be funded in non EU countries, a control programme received from Ukraine is under assessment and informal contacts are on-going with Moldova.

As next steps, the following points were highlighted:

- for rabies

- decrease vaccination areas in MSs
- increase buffer zones in non-EU countries and improve quality controls

-for ASF

- assess results of new measures
- finalize preventive-control measures in bordering areas

### **3.9 Possible perspective for funding 2018-2020 veterinary programmes**

VP presented this point, which was welcomed by the Member States. A short summary of the outcome of the last 7 years EU co-funded programmes from technical and financial point of view was given. The main achievements were highlighted, such as: BSE, Rabies, salmonellosis. Based on the favourable epidemiological situation, on the budget available for the incoming years (cuts are expected following the mid-term revision of the MFF 2014-

2020), it was explained that it is necessary to prioritise the EU intervention. Proposals have been made focusing on the need to improve the prevention, surveillance, preparedness and to continue to control certain diseases (salmonellosis) and eradicate diseases such as: brucellosis and tuberculosis. As consequence, EU funding should be distributed by taking into account the above. Some proposals and possibilities were mentioned, such as the increase of EU co-financing to combat ASF, to eradicate Rabies by 2020 and gradual reduction of the financial contribution from EU for the BSE control/eradication programme (very favourable situation), for tuberculosis eradication programmes (only in few MSs the disease is still present).

MSs have been requested to send their suggestions by end of March.

A dedicated working group will be organised by D4 (in co-operation with Directorate F and G) by end of May 2016, to discuss with MSs possible future funding of veterinary programmes for 2018-2020.

**Annex:** Agenda of the meeting

## ANNEX

### TASK FORCE FOR MONITORING ANIMAL DISEASE ERADICATION

#### Annual meeting of the Plenary Task Force on monitoring animal disease eradication programmes

Albert Borschette Conference Center

3<sup>rd</sup> March 2016, from 10:00 to 17:00

#### AGENDA

1. **Introduction, opening by Christophe Bertrand: Head of Unit D4/DG SANTE**
2. **Task Force (TF) subgroups.**
  - 2.1 Report of the TF meetings held in 2015:
    - Brucellosis in Croatia (**Chair**)
    - Rabies in Hungary (**Chair**)
  - 2.2 Proposal in relation to TF subgroups (**VP**)
3. **Points for information and discussion.**
  - 3.1 Financial implementation of the 2014 programmes (**RM**)
  - 3.2 Timing for the 2016-2017 veterinary programmes. (**VP**)
  - 3.3 State of play of template for submission of final annual reports for 2015 programmes and for submission of 2017 programmes **CBF**
  - 3.4 Update guidelines for the Union co-funded veterinary programmes for the years 2017 (**NK**).
  - 3.5 Main outcome of technical audits carried out by DG SANTE (Directorate F), in relation to the implementation of EU co-funded veterinary programmes in the last 3 years and planning of the 2016 activities (**F2**)
  - 3.6 Main outcome of financial audits carried out by DG SANTE (Directorate A), in relation to the implementation of EU co-funded veterinary programmes in the last 3 year. (**A3**)
  - 3.7 Special report of the European Court of Auditors on "eradication, control and monitoring programmes to contain animal diseases": expected conclusions, recommendations and proposal on Commission follow up " (**CBF**)
  - 3.8 State of play of funding activities in relation to Rabies and ASF programmes implemented in EU and co-operation with Third Countries (**PRM**)
  - 3.9 Possible perspective for funding 2018-2020 veterinary programmes (**VP**)