Summary record of the meeting of the Scientific Committee on Animal Health and Animal Welfare held on 25 October 2000 in Brussels adopted 19 January 2001

List of Participants

MEMBERS

Dr. R. Ahl, Dr. D. Alexander, Prof. J. Badiola Diez, Prof. D. Broom, Dr. F. Garrido-Abellan (Chairman), Dr. M. Gunn, Prof. Dr. J. Hartung, Dr. P. Le Neindre, Prof. Dr. V. Moennig, Prof. G. Panina, Prof. A-L. Parodi, Prof. Dr. J. van Oirschot, Dr. E. Vanopdenbosch

COMMISSION

Dr. J. Moynagh

APOLOGIES

Prof. S. Alexandersen, Dr. R. Dantzer, Prof. P. Jensen, Dr. D. B. Morton, Prof. J. Noordhuizen, Prof. M.Verga

1. Adoption of the Agenda

The agenda was adopted as proposed.

2. Adoption of the record of the meeting of 27 June 2000

The minutes of the meeting were adopted with a few minor amendments.

3. Declarations of interest

No member reported any conflicts of interest relating to the items under discussion.

4. Report from the Subcommittee on Animal Welfare (Dr Le Neindre)

Subcommittee meeting

The subcommittee on Animal Welfare met on 26 September 2000. At this meeting progress was reviewed in the two major reports that are currently underway, the welfare of animals kept for fur production and the welfare of beef cattle. Considerable progress had been made in both reports but about three months work remained in each. Consequently it is likely that the reports would be ready in the early part of next year, which is on schedule.

For fur animals the working group have amassed considerable information on these species and the farming practices and welfare issues involved. In all, six species are being reported on.

The beef cattle report is at a similar stage. Unlike more intensive systems such as broiler production, there is a wide variation in farming methods throughout the EU depending on climate, topography and tradition. The list of welfare problems identified was circulated and discussed.

A new question concerning transport of animals was discussed. The Committee has been asked to report on animal

transport in general. In particular the following issues should be addressed: loading densities, travelling times (including an evaluation of the stress involved in unloading and reloading animals), welfare of animals on board roll-on roll-off vessels, transport of horses, methods for evaluating stress and poor welfare during transport. This will be a major report.

Risk analysis working group

The Chairman reported on the working group of the Scientific Steering Committee dealing with the harmonisation of Risk Assessment methods. A text setting out the scientific basis for assessing animal welfare was discussed with a view to its inclusion in the working document which is being prepared by the SSC group. It was noted that all disciplines had developed risk assessment methodologies which agreed on the basic principles but which were then adapted to suit the specific needs of the area.

Future work

The subcommittee also discussed its output and noted that it had the capacity to respond to additional questions, if required by the Commission. In particular, questions outside the usual areas of farm animal welfare could be usefully addressed:

- welfare of laboratory animals (use of primates in research, training of workers, reuse of animals),
- welfare of pet animals (dangerous dogs, selection of genetic defects),
- welfare of new farm animals (ostriches, ...),
- welfare of transgenic animals in laboratories and in production units.

5. Report from the Subcommittee on Animal Health (Dr. Ahl)

A meeting of the subcommittee was held on 27 September. Three items were discussed, two of which concerned reports for approval by the subcommittee and one was a progress report. The subcommittee approved both reports, concerning the inactivation of viruses in blood and concerning the use of marker vaccination against BHV1, the virus causing Infectious Bovine Rhinotracheitis. The Scientific Veterinary Committee had produced a report on this subject in 1996 but had concluded that more information was likely to become available, hence the request for this subject to be revisited.

The subcommittee also reviewed a draft report on the eradication of *Brucella melitensis*. This is a detailed comprehensive report and is the most advanced report remaining with the subcommittee. Some finalisation work is required but it should be ready for presentation to the new Committee.

Two other working groups have also been established, one dealing with the risks of recycling disease agents in fish farming via fish waste and the other with diagnostic tests for Contagious Bovine Pleuropneumonia.

6.1 Discussion and possible adoption by the Committee of a report on the use of vaccination against Bovine Herpesvirus 1. (Rapporteur Dr E. Vanopdenbosch)

This report was an update of a report adopted by the Scientific Veterinary Committee in 1996. Since then new research results had become available but several of the concerns had not yet been resolved.

As requested by the Commission, the report considered the types of marker vaccine, their efficacy and safety, the risks of latency and reactivation, the sensitivity and specificity of the accompanying diagnostic tests and the risks posed by the possibility of the existence of seronegative latent carrier animals. The report also identified areas for future research.

Following discussion and a number of amendments the report was adopted unanimously by the Committee.

6.2 Discussion and possible adoption by the Committee of a report on the inctivation of viruses in blood and blood products. (Rapporteur Prof. J. Van Oirschot)

This report reviewed the agents that can be present in blood and blood products and which could present a risk of spreading serious transmissible diseases. A particular concern arises from blood and blood products, particularly foetal calf serum, which are used in the pharmaceutical industry or as laboratory reagents. Such products are valued for their cellular growth properties, but however are destroyed treatments which would be necessary to sterilise the product.

Current EC legislative requirements, which require that product treatment methods be demonstrated to inactivate five serious viruses, do not seem to be most appropriate as only RNA viruses are included in the list.

The report recommends that inactivation methods be validated using representatives from the various virus families. Ideally, such inactivation methods should be verifiable. However further research is required to develop safe replacements for cell culture supplements which is the long term solution.

Following discussion and minor amendments, the report was adopted unanimously by the Committee.

7. Miscellaneous

As this was the final meeting of the current mandate, the Commission presented a review of the various reports that had been adopted by the committee during this mandate. In all a total of 21 reports had been adopted, many of which were large documents dealing with very complex issues. All members were to be complemented both for their generous scientific input to the Committee and also for the excellent working relationship within the Committee.

The meeting closed at 17.00h