



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
HEALTH & CONSUMER PROTECTION DIRECTORATE-GENERAL

Directorate E – Food safety: Plant health, animal health and welfare, International questions
Unit E2 - Animal health and welfare, zootechnics

SANCO/1194/2001
KS/ks

WORKING DOCUMENT

**Summary report for the first year
(2000/2001)
of the subgroup for bovine tuberculosis of the
Task Force for monitoring disease eradication in
the Member States**

**(As created in accordance with
Action N° 29 of the White Paper on Food Safety)**

CONTENT

	Headline	Page
I.	Creation of the Task Force	3
II.	Meetings of the subgroup for bovine tuberculosis of the Task Force	5
III.	Results of the meetings	6
III.1	General remarks and overview over the disease situation	6
III.2	Aspects relating to all programmes	8
III.3	Greece	17
III.4	Ireland	10
III.5	Italy	20
III.6	Spain	28
III.7	United Kingdom	25
IV.	Subjects to be followed-up in the future	30
V.	Conclusions	30
	<u>Annex:</u> Members of the subgroup	31

I. Creation of the Task Force

I.1 Background

With the “WHITE PAPER ON FOOD SAFETY” (DOC/00/1-COM/99/719) measures are proposed aiming at a more co-ordinated and integrated approach to the organisation of food safety with a view to achieving the highest possible level of health protection. It is recognised that animal health is an important factor in food safety and it is stated that:

“Existing eradication and disease control programmes, such as those for tuberculosis and brucellosis, should be continued and where possible re-inforced; in particular, in those Member States whose status with regard to these diseases remains problematic. Particular attention should be devoted to the control of hydatidosis and *Brucella melitensis* in the Mediterranean regions.”

A number of actions are proposed to achieve this aim in the Annex of the White Paper. In the animal health sector (Action N° 29) an increase of budgetary allocation for actions provided for in Council Decision 90/424/EEC on expenditure in the veterinary field is foreseen with the objectives:

1. To enable actions necessary to improve animal disease eradication (brucellosis, tuberculosis etc.)
2. To create a task force for monitoring disease eradication in the Member States.

The task force as foreseen in the White Paper in Food Safety has been created in a meeting held on 15 March 2000 in Brussels.

I.2 Structure, mode of operation and management of the Task Force

The Task Force has been created in accordance with an action plan proposed by the Commission and agreed by all Member States (Document SANCO/738/2000 Rev.1). This action plan includes a description of the objectives, the structure, the mode of operation and the management of the Task Force.

The objectives of the Task Force are in particular

- (1) To improve animal disease eradication and
- (2) To improve the cost-benefit-ratio of animal disease eradication programmes co-financed by the Community.

The Task Force comprises of all Member States and of the Commission. Meetings are chaired by the Commission and take place in Brussels. Points on the agenda of the meetings shall be aspects relating to all or most programmes. These would be for example the standardisation of programmes and measures and the standardisation of evaluation methods such as reports or epidemiological investigations. In each meeting of the Task Force the programmes concerning one or two diseases shall be discussed in detail.

For some diseases (sheep and goat brucellosis, bovine brucellosis, bovine tuberculosis) subgroups of the Task Force have been established. 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.

Each subgroup comprises of those Member States having a programme approved for the respective disease plus two to three other Member States and the Commission. The members of the subgroups have been nominated personally. A list of the members of the bovine tuberculosis subgroup is given in Annex I.

Meetings of the subgroups are being chaired by one of the Member States and take place on the spot in Member States with approved programmes.

II. Meetings of the subgroup for bovine tuberculosis

The meetings of the subgroup for bovine tuberculosis of the Task Force took place as follows.

Date	Location	Main subject
12 April 2000	Brussels/ Belgium	Current situation of bov. tuberculosis in the MS with approved programmes Possibilities to diagnose the disease Intervals of regular testing Causes for extraordinary tests Vaccination against bov. bruc.
27/28 June 2000	Dublin and Portlaoise / Ireland	Evaluation of the programmes of the MS with special emphasis on the Portuguese programme
03 April 2001	Brussels/ Belgium	Review of the year Parameters for establishing objectives and targets and for monitoring results and progress of programmes

Due to budgetary restrictions only one meeting of the tuberculosis subgroup was possible to be held in a Member State.

As agreed with the action plan for the creation of the Task Force meetings taking place in MS with co-financed programmes concentrated on areas with particular problems. This allowed contact and discussions with local veterinarians and producers and included limited visits to relevant points of interest for the programme (farms, laboratories, local veterinary services, etc).

For each meeting a detailed report has been prepared. Copies of these reports are available in EU Directorate General Health and Consumer Protection, Unit E.2.

III. Results of the meetings

III.1 General remarks and overview over the disease situation

The agenda of the meetings included the evaluation of one or more programmes of the MS, the discussion of some general technical aspects and the discussion of financial aspects.

The evaluation was based in particular on

- The approved programmes (see the table III.1(1) below),
- Community and national legislation,
- Reports submitted by the MS in the context of the programmes,
- Reports of the Food and Veterinary Office of the Commission (FVO) and
- Information received during the meetings from the members of the subgroup.

Table III.1(2): Commission document numbers of bovine tuberculosis approved for co-financing by the Community in 2000 and in 2001

MS	2000	2001
Greece	XXVI/3295/1999	SANCO/45/2001
Ireland	XXVI/3298/1999	SANCO/48/2001
Italy	XXVI/3299/1999	SANCO/49/2001
Spain	XXVI/3296/1999	SANCO/46/2001
United Kingdom	XXVI/3305/1999	SANCO/56/2001

The presentations and discussions in the meetings focused in particular on the results of the control programme in each country. Special reference was made to problem areas, to the situation of tuberculosis in wildlife, and to measures of the programme including investigation of the origin of infection in herds, information on the diagnostic tests used, on testing protocols, etc.

The disease situation in the MS with approved programmes is given in table III.1(2) for the years 1998 and 1999.

Table III.1(2) - Prevalence of bovine tuberculosis in herds and animals during the years 1998 and 1999, in countries of the EU with approved eradication programmes

MEMBER STATE	HERDS			ANIMALS		
	% infected*		Difference	% Infected*		Difference
	1998	1999		1998	1999	
Greece**	0.50	1.13	+ 0.63	1.30	1.37	+ 0.07
Ireland	7.10			0.56	0.59	+ 0.03
Italy	0.87	0.85	- 0.02	0.27	0.20	- 0.07
Portugal	0.05	0.08	+ 0.03			
Spain	3.44	3.90	+ 0.46	0.89	0.81	- 0.08
United Kingdom	4.81					

* Calculated from investigated holdings/ animals.

** In Greece the regions (Nomos) included in the programme change from year to year. The data given in this table refer to the whole country.

NA Not available.

III.2 Aspects relating to all programmes

III.2.1 General recommendations:

In the meetings of the subgroup for bovine tuberculosis a number of conclusions and recommendations were agreed upon. They are partly general points concerning all programmes and partly relate to special diseases. The general recommendations and conclusions are in particular the following:

1. Severe interpretation of tuberculin test should apply to problem herds and to herds in risk areas. This includes classification of all inconclusive tests as positive and consequently compulsory slaughter of the animal.
2. ELISA and γ -Interferon assay were useful in certain situations as an adjunct to the tuberculin test.
3. The tuberculin skin test should remain the primary screening test, but research into other test methodologies should be encouraged.
4. In countries with a bovine tuberculosis problem annual testing should remain the norm but more frequent testing would be desirable.
5. The majority agreed that if funding was available pre-movement testing should be considered.
6. Prompt and adequate compensation payments should be made to farmers who are in compliance with Veterinary legislation.
7. Level of compensation should be linked to co-operation of the farmer.
8. EU support payments to farmers (premia) should be dependent on compliance with community legislation dealing with bovine tuberculosis.
9. Within a country each autonomous region should have its own targets set and that the delivery of the programme should be measured for each region separately.
10. When quoting status the EU status should be quoted alongside the national status to assist in understanding and comparisons between member states.
11. Without prejudice to international or Community agreements or legislation levels of Tb in wildlife and other species where they existed, were also infected with Tb and shared the environment with cattle required addressing in tandem with the bovine Tb eradication programme.
12. In Ireland and Northern Ireland consideration should be given to introducing a pre-movement test for animals over 1 year of age and in particular for breeding animals.
13. In Ireland and Northern Ireland consideration should be given to introducing a ceiling on compensation.
14. The sub-group should try to establish a questionnaire to facilitate monitoring of progress and results in such a way as to make valid comparisons between programmes.

III.3 Greece

A. Epidemiological situation

The difficulties encountered with the Greek Tb eradication programme namely relate to the difficulty of establishing the true status of cattle kept on small islands because of their isolation, access difficulties and very small numbers. Difficulties are also experienced with common grazing practices and free-range cattle where difficulties with round-up and restraint of cattle were an issue. Regions of low prevalence of disease required checking to confirm the prevalence and to establish true status. In general lack of trained staff and the employment of temporary staff was a difficulty and was a core problem for administration and laboratories. Training and Tb awareness sessions for farmers, technicians and Veterinary Surgeons are being conducting

B. Control strategy

B.1 Detection of infected herds

B.2 Clearance of infected herds

B.3 Certification and protection of herds

C. Recommendations made to the Greek programme

Consideration should be given to utilising private Veterinary Practitioners, under contract, to conduct animal tests as is used in other member states in order to overcome deficiencies in the delivery of the programme.

III.3 Ireland

A. Epidemiological situation

B. Control strategy

The disease control strategies envisaged by Ireland in order to address the problems identified in the short, medium and long term are the following. The short-term focus being to concentrate attention on the 20% of the country producing 50% of the bovine reactors, including a policy of badger population control; and in the medium term to develop an effective vaccine to prevent Tb infection in badgers. In the long term the intention is to deliver an anti-Tb vaccine to badgers and eradicate Tb in both badgers and cattle.

B.1 Detection of infected herds

B.2 Clearance of infected herds

B.3 Certification and protection of herds

C. Recommendations made to the Irish programme

The following comments and recommendations were being made by the subgroup for the Irish Eradication programme:

1. The motivation of and information transfer to staff through regular meetings, training courses, conferences and contacts is very important and should continue.
2. The development of the IFN γ assay, as an adjunct to the tuberculin test in herds with a Tb problem should continue and facilities for its use should be extended to the whole country. The Irish researchers and others involved in the development of this assay should continue their association with others in the same field worldwide.
3. Without prejudice to international or Community agreements or legislation the level of Tb infection in wildlife and in Ireland in the badger in particular would have to be addressed simultaneous with the eradication of Tb in the bovine when designing the Tb eradication programme. The group, therefore wished to encourage enhanced research into the problem of Tb in all affected species and hoped that nothing would hinder the very necessary on-going work on the development of a suitable vaccine.
4. The current 12-month movement window should be reduced by means of a compulsory pre-movement test.
5. Compensatory payments should reflect individual animal market value only with an upper limit to encourage the sense of responsibility of the farmers.

III.3 Italy

A. Epidemiological situation

The definition of various status in Italian law do not fully conform with EU law, however, official freedom is not claimed from the EU until the conditions laid down in Directive 64/432/EEC are fulfilled. The aim of the Italian programme is to increase the number of regions recognised as officially free under Italian law so that all regions except Piemonte, Latio and Campagne will be free within two years.

B. Control strategy

The basis for the eradication programme is laid down by Ministerial decree. Apart from other testing methods, in Italy also the IFN γ assay is being used, usually in parallel with the tuberculin test and particularly in Piemonte to speed up eradication on holdings. A screening programme on circa 5000 animals using the IFN γ assay is being trialled.

C. Recommendations made to the Italian programme

It was recommended that when quoting status that EU OTF status should be stated alongside the Italian Free classification. This would assist in drawing comparisons between member states and be in agreement with the Directive.

III.3 Portugal

A. Epidemiological situation

Very low levels of Tb have been reached although worry was expressed at the fact that the animal level infection rate, based on the comparative test, of 0.8 seems to have risen from 0.4 over the last 3 years. Two North-Western regions are considered problem areas.

B. Control strategy

The authorities intend to extend the use of IFN γ assay, improve slaughter-house detection and improve control measures. The new programme will also include more epidemiology. The Portuguese delegate also expressed a concern that mycobacteria other than *M. bovis* were causing problems. Of 400 factory NVL animals 37 had some mycobacterium isolated that was not *M. bovis* also 10% of lesioned animals had a non-*bovis* Mycobacterium. Work was continuing to try identify the mycobacteria involved.

C. Recommendations made to the Portuguese programme

III.3 Spain

A. Epidemiological situation

Currently 97 % of herds are free from bovine tuberculosis with the target being 99 %. Contrary to FVO reports, the Spanish delegate indicated that the different regions did operate the programme in much the same manner except that some regions were much larger than others, some have different farming systems e.g. dairying in the North and extensive grazing in the South and that some regions started a programme ahead (North) of others (South).

B. Control strategy

The aim of the Spanish bovine tuberculosis programme is to increase the number of Tb free herds, to concentrate primarily on dairy herds and to have two rounds of testing during the year for herds with a mix of cattle and goats primarily during the housing period. In cultural herds the concentration of activity will be on the breeding animals but not on the fighting bulls.

B.1 Detection of infected herds

While the intradermal tuberculin test is the routine test used that in Spain other diagnostic tests such as serological tests, histological and microbiological examinations are also used.

Holdings are classified according to disease status T1, T2 or T3. T3 holdings are officially free from tuberculosis with movement into such herds only allowed from other T3 herds with isolation and post-movement tests required. T2 holdings are carrying out routine control tests with a view to upgrading to T3. T1 holdings have an unknown clinical history and minimum tuberculin test profile. There is a co-operative network involving the various parties throughout Spain involved in Tb eradication.

B.2 Clearance of infected herds

?????

B.3 Certification and protection of herds

All positive animals are removed within 30 days of notification with compensation based on official rate scales (depending on the age of the animal primarily).

C. Recommendations or conclusions made to the Spanish programme

It was difficult to find out precisely what is happening in each autonomous region. Each region should have its own targets set and the delivery of the programme then measured for each region separately. Both short term and long term targets should be established.

III.3 United Kingdom

A. Epidemiological situation

The U.K. bovine tuberculosis programme is being approved and implemented only in Northern Ireland. Features and difficulties of the programme are very similar to those in Ireland.

B. Control strategy

The Northern Ireland and Irish workers on IFN γ assay have exchanged results in the past.

One difference with the Irish programme is that in Northern Ireland full market value is paid for animals reacting to the tuberculin test and the independent valuers value is binding on both the farmer and the Ministry. There exists therefore the possibility to 'overvalue' an animal. The new valuation scheme being discussed currently with the farmers in Ireland included a proposal that only 75 % of the market value would be paid and that a further arbitration stage is also proposed.

B.1 Detection of infected herds

B.2 Clearance of infected herds

B.3 Certification and protection of herds

C. Recommendations made to the UK programme

It was recommended that consideration should be given to introducing a pre-movement test for animals over 1 year of age and particularly breeding animals.

As for Ireland, the levels of Tb in wildlife, particularly the badger, should be addressed in tandem with the bovine Tb eradication programme.

Consideration should be given to introducing a ceiling on compensation and to re-consider the procedure of payment of the valuers valuation. It was considered that an absence of compensation ceiling was in itself a drawback to the adoption of disease prevention measures and safer practices on farm.

IV. Subjects to be followed-up in the future

- Further evaluation of the progress of bovine tuberculosis eradication in the MS.
- Establishing criteria to be used to commence a specific programme.
- Establishing measures to facilitate evaluation of progress, monitoring of setting and achieving targets and monitoring of results of a programme.
- Discussion of possibilities to further improve tests and testing procedures.
- Harmonisation of the slaughter policy following the outcome of tests performed.
- Harmonisation of epidemiological inquiries.
- Possible financial incentives and/ or punishments to farmers and to veterinarians not complying with the rules of the eradication programme.

V. Conclusions

1. The work of the subgroup on bovine tuberculosis of the Task Force for monitoring disease eradication in the Member States has in its first year commenced in a very positive and constructive way. Particularly important for this were the basic objectives of the groups:
 - Establishing a group, which would deal as well with general as with specific questions and difficulties of bovine tuberculosis eradication and the way to achieve eradication;
 - Discussion of difficulties in the programmes and in their implementation in an open way with the aim to help the Member States in finding solutions to their special problems;
 - Motivation of the people involved in the programmes, in particular the local veterinarians and the industry (farmers, transporters etc.), by having the meetings in the Member States concerned and preferably in the most difficult areas.
2. Most of the concerned Member States were grateful for the help provided and reacted by considering the recommendations made. In this context it must be pointed out that this reaction may in the short and medium term lead to an increase of infected animals and holdings mainly due to increased testing and more severe interpretation of testing results. This increase should not be interpreted as a failure of the programme.
3. In the evaluation of the situation in the Member States it became obvious that the difficulties in some programmes is often due to the lack of political support, which results in basic problems for the veterinary services.

Members of the subgroup for bovine tuberculosis

Nominated member	Substitute
Mr. J. Ferris DVRL (Chairman) Dept. of Agriculture, Food & Rural Development Central Veterinary Research Laboratory Abbotstown Castleknock, Dublin, IRL	
Mrs. M. Good SSVI Dept. of Agriculture, Food & Rural Development, Dublin, IRL	Mr. Ian O'Boyle SVI Dept. of Agriculture, Food & Rural Development, Dublin, IRL
Angelos Vacalopoulos Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Health Directorate, Athens, EL	Mrs. Helen Orfanou Microbiology Department, Athens Inst. of Infectious and Parasitic Diseases, EL
Christina de Frutos Escobar Laboratorio de sanidad y producción animal, Santa Fe, ESP	Manuel Duran Lab. de sanidad y producción animal, Santa Fe, ESP
Ludovica Pacciarini Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale della Lombardia e dell'Emilia, Brescia, IT	DR. Giorgio Zanardi Inst. Zooprofilattico Sperimentale della Lombardia e dell'Emilia, Brescia, IT
Mr O. Denny Dundonald House, Belfast, UK	Mrs Lynne Rutledge Dundonald House, Belfast, UK
Steen Giese Danish Veterinary Laboratory, Koebenhavn, DK	Peter Ahrens Danish Vet. Lab., Koebenhavn, DK
Jaana Seppänen Ntl. Veterinary and Food Research Institute (EELA), Helsinki, FIN	Vesa Mylly EELA, Helsinki, FIN
Dr. Alice Amado Laboratório Nacional de Investigação Veterinária de Lisboa, PT	Dr. António José Rosinha Direcção Geral de Veterinária Lisboa, PT
Dr. Susanna Sternberg National Veterinary Institute Division for Disease Control and Biosecurity Uppsala, SW	Dr. Goran Bolske National Veterinary Institute Division for Bacteriology Uppsala, SW
Dr. Kirsten Sander Health and Consumer Protection General Unit E.2, Europ. Commission	Dr. Alf Füssel Health and Consumer Protection Directorate- Directorate-General Unit E.2, EU

IV. Results of the meetings

In the meetings of the Task Force and its subgroups a number of conclusions and recommendations were agreed upon. They are partly general points concerning all programmes and partly relate to special diseases. The recommendations and conclusions made by the Task Force (TF) or made by the subgroups and subsequently agreed by the Task Force are in particular the following:

1. Measures to be implemented by the Member States with regard to the planning, measures to be taken and submission of the programmes
 - 1.1 Clear definition of objectives and targets for the programmes.
- Meeting TF on 15/03/2000 -
 - 1.2 Taking measures to improve the implementation of the programmes, in particular those with less satisfactory effects.
- Meeting TF on 15/03/2000 -
 - 1.3 Taking action to improve the monitoring of the efficiency of the programmes. A description of the method to monitor the approved programme(s) will be submitted by each Member State to the Commission.
- Meeting TF on 15/03/2000 -
 - 1.4 Data collection and presentation for the monitoring of programmes should be standardised in order to allow a common surveillance system. Indexes to evaluate the progress of the programmes should be defined. Evaluation and interpretation of these indexes should take into account the ecological aspects (drought period, etc.) and cyclic periods of the appearance of the disease.
- Meeting subgroup on sheep and goat brucellosis (SG Bm) on 18-19/04/2000; TF on 27/07/2000 -
 - 1.5 Submission of proposals for criteria to reduce or to stop co-financing of programmes in case of unsatisfactory progress from the Member States to the Commission.
- Meeting TF on 15/03/2000 –
 - 1.6 Submission of the programmes in accordance with the “Guide for the achievement of eradication and control programmes in the veterinary field” (Doc. VI/6431/1999 Rev.1).
- Meeting TF on 15/03/2000 -

- 1.7 Meetings of the sub-group should preferentially take place in regions with higher brucellosis incidence / prevalence in the host countries and to allow the interaction of the members with the local realities.
- Meeting subgroup bovine brucellosis (SG bB) on 17/04/2000; TF on 27/07/2000
-
2. Possible incentives or punishments, which would be valuable tools to improve the success of eradication programmes
- 2.1 Within the Member States, free and infected regions should be defined taking into account their specificities and eradication measures should be defined according to the regional disease situation. These regions should not be too small.
- Meeting SG bB on 17/04/2000; TF on 27/07/2000 –
- 2.2 Ensuring that the industry (farmer's organisations, private veterinarian etc.) is actively involved in the planning and the execution of the programme.
- Meeting TF on 15/03/2000 -
- 2.3 Active co-operation of the farmers is regarded as essential for the success of the programme and new approaches for dealing with the lack of collaboration and the compliance with veterinary rules have to be developed.
- Meeting SG Bm on 18-19/04/2000; TF on 27/07/2000 -
- 2.4 Developing and implementing extensive public relations campaigns. This should include information about impacts of the disease on animals and humans. Good and bad results of the effects of the programme should be published by region for psychological reasons.
- Meeting on 15/03/2000 -
- 2.5 Severe trade incentives in case of freedom of the holding or region and severe disadvantages in case of infected regions or infected holdings in free regions should be introduced.
- Meeting on 15/03/2000 -
- 2.6 Severe sanctions to farmers, veterinarians and other people and organisations involved should be imposed in case of non-compliance with the rules.
- Meeting on 15/03/2000 -
- 2.7 The payment of compensation for slaughtered animals should be linked to compliance with the rules: Paying more than 100 % in case of exceeding the required actions (i. g. exceptionally quick slaughter of infected animals); paying

less in cases of non-compliance. In the latter case several steps of grading could be foreseen.

- Meeting on 15/03/2000 -

- 2.8 The level of compensation should be linked to the co-operation of the farmer.
- Meeting SG Tb on 12/04/2000; TF on 29/05/2000 -
- 2.9 Prompt and adequate compensation payments should be made to farmers who are in compliance with Veterinary legislation.
- Meeting subgroup bovine tuberculosis (SG Tb) on 12/04/2000; TF on 29/05/2000 -
- 2.10 The payment of Community premia should be linked positively to farmer's collaboration or to the status of the holding.
- Meeting on 15/03/2000 -
- 2.11 EU legislation concerning support payments to farmers (premia) should be amended so that such payment would depend on compliance with Community legislation dealing with brucellosis or tuberculosis. Definitive criteria should be laid down.
- Meeting SG Tb on 12/04/2000; TF on 29/05/2000 -
- 2.12 Member States should consider to decide that occurrence of the disease in question (detection of infected animals) shall be regarded as "force majeure" so that the animal can be slaughtered immediately without negative impacts on the payment of premia to the farmer. This would be possible by using Article 11 of Commission Regulation 3887/92 ("... an epizootic affecting part or all of the farmer's livestock").
- Meeting on 15/03/2000 -
- 2.13 It should be ensured that all laboratories involved in detecting the disease are subject to regular ring-testing trials and the staff is properly trained.
- Meeting on 15/03/2000 -

3. Bovine tuberculosis

- 3.1 In countries with bovine tuberculosis problems annual testing should remain the norm but more frequent testing would be desirable.
- Meeting SG Tb on 12/04/2000; TF on 29/05/2000 -

- 3.2 If funding was available pre-movement testing should be considered in particular in problematic areas.
- Meeting SG Tb on 12/04/2000; TF on 29/05/2000 -
- 3.3 Severe interpretation of tuberculin test should apply to problem herds and to herds in risk areas. This includes classification of all inconclusive tests as positive and consequently compulsory slaughter of the animal.
- Meeting SG Tb on 12/04/2000; TF on 29/05/2000 -
- 3.4 The tuberculin skin test should remain the primary screening test, but research into other methodologies should be encouraged.
- Meeting SG Tb on 12/04/2000; TF on 29/05/2000 -
- 3.5 In bovine tuberculosis ELISA and Gamma-Interferon assay were useful in certain situations as an adjunct to the tuberculin test.
- Meeting SG Tb on 12/04/2000; TF on 29/05/2000 -

V. Measures taken

V.A Measures taken by the Member States

Many recommendations of the Task Force and of the subgroups have been taken into account for the programmes submitted for the year 2001 or have directly been incorporated in the implementation rules of the running programmes during the year 2000.

V.B Measures taken by the Commission

In accordance with the recommendations, in particular the following actions were taken:

1. Once a month in a meeting of the Standing Veterinary Committee (Animal Health) Member States were requested to provide information (in oral and in written form) on diseases co-financed by the Community.
2. Harmonised models for reports to be submitted by the Member States on their programmes to the Commission have been agreed upon (Commission Decision 2000/322/EC).
3. A ring trial involving all National Reference Laboratories (NRL) for bovine and for sheep and goat brucellosis has been carried out (technical organisation by the NRL of the UK in Weybridge, Dr. A. MacMillan).
4. A meeting of all National Reference Laboratories for bovine and for sheep and goat brucellosis took place on 13/14 December 2000.

5. Draft models for epidemiological reports for bovine and for sheep and goat brucellosis have been established (first drafting and co-ordination of the work done by the chairman of the sheep and goat brucellosis subgroup, Dr. B. Garin-Bastuji).
6. Preparations for the drafting of possible harmonised rules for compensation of farmers (drafting done by the chairman of the bovine brucellosis subgroup, Prof. F. Boinas).

VI. Conclusions

1. The work of the Task Force and in particular of its subgroups has in its first year commenced in a very positive and constructive way. Particularly important for this were the basic objectives of the groups:
 - Establishing a group, which would deal as well with general as with specific questions and difficulties of the diseases to be eradicated and the way to achieve eradication;
 - Discussion of difficulties in the programmes and in their implementation in an open way with the aim to help the Member States in finding solutions to their special problems;
 - Motivation of the people involved in the programmes, in particular the local veterinarians and the industry (farmers, transporters etc.), by having the meetings of the subgroups in the Member States concerned and preferably in the most difficult areas.
2. Most of the concerned Member States were grateful for the help provided and reacted by considering the recommendations made. In this context it must be pointed out that this reaction may in the short and medium term lead to an increase of infected animals and holdings mainly due to increased testing and more severe interpretation of testing results. This increase should not be interpreted as a failure of the programme!
3. In the evaluation of the situation in the Member States it became obvious that the difficulties in some programmes is often due to the lack of political support, which results in basic problems for the veterinary services.