

Summary Report of the Meeting of the Sub-Committee on Animal Welfare held on 16 December 1997 in Brussels

Adopted 23 February 1998

List of Participants

MEMBERS

Prof. D. Broom, Prof. Dr. J. Hartung, Dr. P. Le Neindre, Prof. M. Verga

COMMISSION

Mr. J. Moynagh, Mrs. Valerie Brown, Dr. S. Beukema, DG VI , Prof. H. Bazin, DG XII

APOLOGIES

Dr. R. Dantzer, Prof. P. Jensen, Dr. D. Morton

1. Adoption of the Agenda

The agenda was adopted as proposed.

2. Election of two vice chairpersons of the Subcommittee

Because several members of the Sub-Committee had been unable to attend, the election of the two vice chairpersons was postponed to a future meeting.

3. Review and follow up of questions put to the Sub-Committee

(i) Force feeding of ducks and geese

The state of progress of this question was reviewed. It was noted that the report was substantially complete. Some additional technical information was awaited to complete the report and the conclusions required further discussion. Given this state of progress, it was decided to hold future discussions on this matter in the sub-committee rather than in a working group. Members of the previous working group would be invited to attend such meetings.

(ii) The effects of using Bovine Somatotrophin.

The Commission introduced this new question. It was explained that the Commission wished to assess the risks of using BST and that this question had been allocated to the Scientific Committee on veterinary measures in relation to public health (SCVPH) as chef de file. However aspects relating to animal welfare would be considered by this sub-committee and the member responsible would also be a member of the working group established by the SCVPH. It was decided to set up a working group chaired by Prof. Broom to examine the animal welfare aspects of BST. Prof. Broom would also be a member of the SCVPH working group on the question.

The representative from DGVI introduced four further questions which were in the process of being formally addressed to the Committee. These were as follows;

(iii) Standards for forced ventilation for animal transport vehicles for journeys of more than eight hours for the bovine, porcine, ovine and caprine species.

Professor Hartung agreed to set up a working group to prepare a report on this issue.

(iv) Advice on the use of a gas mixture containing CO₂, O₂ and N₂ for stunning poultry prior to slaughter.

This matter was relatively urgent as legislation was being drafted at present on this topic.

Dr Dantzer was suggested as Chairperson for this working group.

(v) Welfare requirements for broilers with emphasis on housing systems.

Prof. Jensen was suggested as Chairperson of a working group to report on this topic.

(vi) Relationship between animal welfare and product quality.

Prof. Verga agreed to chair this group. It was noted that the question covered a very broad field and initially could be limited to laying hens/eggs and pigs/pigmeat. The way to progress with this question can be discussed at a future meeting, based on the initial examination of Prof Verga.

In the above cases an initial list of experts was established with a view to determining their availability to participate in the appropriate working groups.

The activation of working groups dealing with questions (iii) to (vi) will take place when the questions have been formally received from DGVI.

4. Links with work of Council of Europe on Animal Welfare

A short discussion took place on the relationship between the work of the sub-committee and the Council of Europe. It was explained that responses from the sub committee should be based on science and that they were not bound by recommendations of the Council of Europe. In some cases the opinion of the scientific committee may be requested on the implementation of Council of Europe recommendations or on aspects of future research. In such cases the link to the Council of Europe will be clear from the question.

5. Miscellaneous

The preparation of a presentation on the work of the sub-committee for the next plenary meeting of the Committee was discussed. The Chairman and Prof. Broom will prepare this.