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**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COPA-COGECA WORKING PARTY ON
BREEDING LIVESTOCK ON
25th October 2011**

PARTICIPANTS: SCHONS, DAVID, MARTIN, GASTINEL, LYKKE, WIRTZ, RUTKAUSKAS, SISINNI, KUCERA, STURMLECHNER, KEATING, GARBUTT, DAVIES, JOHNSTON, DROSIO, MEZZOGORI, ROSATI, PONTAGA, FIORETTI, POLLASTRI, ERIKSSON, FARRELL, RYAN.

INVITED GUESTS: Mr. REVIRIEGO GORDEJO (DG SANCO), Mr. JOSE DEFILIFE (DG SANCO), Mr. SERGIO PAVON (DG SANCO)

Secretariat: GYORFFY, DI RUBBO

The Chairman welcomed the participants and presented the agenda points [BR\(11\)7214 \(rev.2\)](#).

The group approved the minutes of the last meeting [BR\(11\)6371 \(rev.1\)](#).

The Chairman asked the members if they experienced problems with accessing the documents on Agri-Info. Those who would like to have access to Agri-Info were advised to inform the Secretariat.

The Group welcomed that the COM had raised its support for Interbull in 2011 in order to improve the methods of genomic evaluation and found it very important to grant the same amount in 2012, too.

7b) Control post project

The chairman informed about the first meeting of the advisory board on 31 May 2011, in which he represented Copa-Cogeca. The development of certification schemes for control posts is the major objective of the project. The EU has allocated 4 mln EUR to the “preparatory action” on control posts. 12 control posts in 5 Member States will be renovated according to high quality standards. The aim is to develop a pilot certification scheme for control posts and an online booking system.

In a separate project, another 1 million € are available for the development of certification schemes for transport companies.

9) Information on REP VET and QUALIVET meetings

It was announced that Magdalena Zitara will leave the Commission at the end of the year. The Chairman expressed his gratitude for her work and highlighted also the big support that Magdalena had in the RepVet group.

The RepVet group has been in regular contact with B. Logar (DG Sanco) to discuss the Animal Health Law, but no new developments emerged recently. A RepVet working group has investigated the possibilities of approval of semen collection centers and semen processing units in varying constellations under semen directives 88/407 and 90/429. The diseases mainly discussed during the year have been Bluetongue and BVD. The problems with the tests for Brucella in pigs finally seem to be resolved as a new test method was reported at the meeting in Prague on October 18.

The future AI-Vets meeting will be held “back to back” with the annual ESDAR-meetings. The next meetings will take place in Dublin (2012), Bologna (2013) and in Finland (2014).

4) Bluetongue

Mr Reviriego-Gordejo, DG SANCO, presented this point. The situation is favourable for some MS to revert to freedom. In the Iberian Peninsula, there is a wider circulation of bluetongue. On 20th October, the proposal for amending directive 2000/75 on bluetongue was finally unblocked. The Polish Presidency is trying to accelerate the procedures in Coreper. The

European Parliament will have a second reading and hopes to have a fast adoption of the directive. This will help put it in place in the first quarter of 2012 before the disease season starts.

The Commission also prepared, in parallel, amendments to implementing rules (regulation 1266/2007) which were blocked, too, because the proposed amendments to the directive have not been in force. The COM proposals to change the regulation will take into account the recent EFSA opinions. The aim is to get rid of some reporting obligations, to define for the first time “provisionally free areas”, to facilitate the conditions for animal transport (use less insecticides) to change the sampling methods and to abolish the derogations currently laid down in article 9a.

He also mentioned that the impact assessment on the Animal Health Law is almost ready. Proposals are expected in the second half of 2012.

5) Cloning

The Chairman underlined that as it was not possible to address the cloning aspect in the novel foods regulation, the Commission will be under pressure to create a separate legislative framework for cloned animals and products thereof.

Mr Jose Defilipe, DG SANCO, presented this point. After the failure of the conciliation procedure, no decision was taken on how to proceed.

The Commission is reflecting on next steps:

- keep cloning out of the Novel Foods regulation,
- take out cloning and present the Novel Foods regulation as it is,
- present an impact assessment with all possible measures on cloning followed by a proposal by the Commission.

A decision is likely to be taken before the end of the year.

Close cooperation with stakeholders is needed and they will be involved in the discussions.

The Commission is also thinking of launching a consultation. The representative of the Commission asked if there was any change of Copa-Cogeca position compared to the 2008 position.

Mr Rosati underlined that whatever decision is taken, the views of the breeders should be taken into account. Breeders from other parts of the world have access to cloning.

The Commission representative replied that the Impact Assessment will cover everything, notably the question if traceability is feasible (for all animals). Labelling has a big impact. Regarding the market on cloning, there is not much information, but China appears to be the leader today, followed by the US, Brazil and Argentina.

The Chairman underlined that Copa-Cogeca’s proposal remains the same. This is also a matter of political decision. Regarding traceability, it cannot be guaranteed that food chain is currently free from products from offspring of cloned animals. In this respect, a practical solution is needed. This issue is important also from the trade perspective.

The Commission representative asked about the use of cloning and the members replied that – given the current legal uncertainty – there is not much interest from the European breeding industry to use cloning.

The German delegate mentioned that DE produced bovine semen from cloned bulls, but it has not been placed on the Internal market.

The Chairman mentioned that public opinion also counts but at the moment there is not much interest to do it. One should still be able to use it for research purposes. He asked the Commission representative whether there will be another EFSA opinion?

The Commission representative replied that in case the Commission decides to have an impact assessment, it will again ask for EFSA’s opinion.

The German delegate mentioned that it is very difficult to have traceability in place.

The Commission representative replied that the feasibility of a traceability system depends on the species. For cattle, the current system of traceability could be used. The impact assessment will investigate if the labeling is feasible.

The British delegate asked up to what generation an animal will be considered to be a clone and what would be the benefit of identifying the offspring of clones if there was no impact on food safety?

The Commission representative replied that the offspring issue is more an ethical problem rather than a food safety one. This is not only science-based.

2) Electronic identification of cattle

Mr Sergio Pavon, DG SANCO, presented this point. He emphasized that the current EU legislation on identification dates back to 1997 – a time when EID systems had not been ready to use. The system works, but it can be improved. The major advantage of EID is that it transforms physical information into digital information contributing to reducing the administrative burden. A positive impact will be also on cross-compliance as this system could contribute to reducing typing mistakes. The introduction of the EID system at EU level will contribute to a harmonization of the standards and systems used across the EU. The system is introduced on a voluntary basis with the possibility given to MS to make it mandatory.

On the voluntary beef labeling, a lot of complaints were received from operators as the authorization system is too burdensome. According to the COM proposal, beefmeat will in future be subject to horizontal legislation (Directive 13/2000 on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to the labelling, presentation and advertising of foodstuffs).

The Commission will work on the secondary type of legislation (technical aspects) in 2012.

The first WG at Council level took place on 23.09. and the second on 29.11. 2011.

The German delegate underlined that the high costs will stay at farm level while slaughterhouses will have the most advantages and wondered how a fair distribution could be guaranteed.

The Commission representative replied that there is no provision on funding in the regulation. In an ideal situation, this proposal would be accompanied by a financial proposal. But some MS might state aids or rural development funds, while some others could find money from the industry to pay for the additional costs at farm level.

The Danish delegate mentioned the benefits from the EID, such as reducing labour costs. For him, the mandatory option is more proper.

The Commission representative mentioned that at the end of the proposal, a provision on its revision after 5 years could be introduced.

Mr Rosati cautioned about a possible surge in the use of ear tags of poor quality if the system is introduced on a voluntary basis. He offered assistance by ICAR in order to protect farmers from poor quality tags (e. g. by adopting an ISO list of acceptable identifiers).

The French delegate mentioned that there are long term benefits of such system and that the quality of identification data is a starting point for a reliable breeding systems. He wondered if an obligatory system would not be better.

The Commission representative highlighted that the co-existence of two systems is not the ideal option but in times of crisis, the system cannot be made mandatory.

The British delegate said that the voluntary approach is important. For those who want to use it, MS should provide facilities. We have to learn from the experience with the sheep EID.

The Commission representative explained that if a farmer wants to use it, he can. For MS, it is compulsory to accept it as a system. For the COM, the long-term objective is a mandatory system.

The Polish delegate underlined that the EID system brings advantages.

The Italian delegate preferred the voluntary approach. A particular concern is the co-existence of different identification systems which could lead to possible distortions of trade. On voluntary beef labeling, Italian operators are concerned because of the controls on the information to be put on the label and the fact that the horizontal legislation does not provide for an *a-priori* control.

The Commission representative mentioned that there were some bilateral meetings on this aspect. From now on, the responsibility for beef labeling holds on the operator, but the horizontal legislation provides certain levels of control.

For the intra-Union trade of live animals, there remains a problem if a MS with voluntary EID exports to a MS where the system is mandatory. In that case, the animal needs to get re-tagged with an electronic identifier and the numbers in the databases of the country of origin and the country of destination must be linked. The obligation to electronically identify the animals should be either at departure or arrival (the first option is rejected by the legal services as the obligation can only be put on the importing country).

The Latvian delegate mentioned that the current system works well and that mandatory EID will bring costs, especially for small farmers who should be financially supported in such a case.

The Commission representative stated that MS are given more subsidiarity in this respect.

The French delegate mentioned that extra costs can be balanced by improvements of efficiency of work in the slaughterhouse. The importing country should bear the costs of the electronic identification if in that country the mandatory option is chosen.

The German delegate specified that the German authorities can order replacement tags with e. g. a French number. (the lifetime number of the animal). It is important that the animal is not ear-tagged in a new way.

The Commission representative mentioned the risk that the animal could remain unidentified for some time. The authorities in the importing countries have no legal right to remove the EID.

The Commission representative highlighted that they expect the proposal to be adopted before the summer. By the end of the year, COM ENVI (EP) will start working on this aspect.

3) Recognition of breeder organizations

Mr Sergio Pavon, DG SANCO, presented this point. He mentioned that the COM received complaints from Member States and stakeholders (also Copa-cogeca) that the current system is not working well. The COM has the intention to reactivate the Standing Committee of Zootechnics (SCZ). The COM is working on a recast of several Council directives and decisions. After having consulted with experts from the Member States, a proposal is announced for spring 2012.

The Chairman welcomed the reactivation of the existing Standing Committee on Zootechnics, which did not meet regularly in recent years despite many problems.

The French mentioned that trans-border activities of breeder organizations (BO) have increased. In that regard, the merger of BO's for small breeds should be facilitated, but it must be guaranteed that competition does not endanger the sustainability of breeding programmes. Genetic evaluation should continue to be supported in the future. He mentioned also recent difficulties in selling bulls with genomic breeding values to other Member States.

Mr Rosati highlighted that Interbull asked for more EU money for genomic evaluation. The additional support is also needed in 2012 and probably in 2013. First results were good, but the job is not done yet (as not all traits have been treated so far).

The Commission representative mentioned that genetic material with genomic breeding values has to be accepted by all MS. The Committee on Zootechnics will meet again in December. Feedback from MS is expected.

7a) Animal welfare - Transport of animals

Pasquale di Rubbo from the Secretariat presented this point by underlining that there were some improvements in the welfare conditions.

On 10th November, DG AGRI will present the report on the impact of Regulation 1/2005. This focuses on better integration of the satellite system, training of veterinarians, setting up of a database at EU level regarding the enforcement of this regulation etc. He also mentioned the study on the impact of Reg. 1/2005 by IBF consultants, which has been ordered by the Commission.

The Chairman questioned if a distinction should be made in the European legislation between animals for breeding and animals for slaughter. According to the IBF study, breeding animals are not treated different from slaughter cattle.

Mr. Rosati referred to the importance of having internationally recognized methods to measure animal welfare. Currently, there is no consensus.

7c) New EU Action Plan on Animal Welfare

Pasquale di Rubbo from the Secretariat presented this point.

The Action Plan is expected to be published in January 2012. It will most probably contain the proposal to create an EU animal welfare law, which should not be too prescriptive, cover all animals and make reference to new animal welfare indicators. A new research project (called AWIN) has recently started in order to develop such indicators for rabbits, turkey, horses, sheep and goats. Copa-Cogeca is part of the AWIN platform. As demanded by the EP, the action plan will probably strengthen the cooperation of existing Animal Welfare Centers in the Member States (the EP has made 1 million € available for 2012). Copa-Cogeca emphasizes that farmers should take part in such a network, too.

Regarding the training and education of people dealing with animals, Copa-Cogeca is in favour of better training. Certain recognition of what farmers already know is very important.

Mr Rosati highlighted that the implementation of the plan could have an impact on farm structures.

The Chairman underlined that EU animal welfare legislation used to be rather prescriptive. In future, more emphasis should be given to animal-based indicators, which, however, are more difficult to assess.

The Chairman also referred to the ongoing consultation by EFSA about the use of animal-based measures to assess the welfare of dairy cows, which will close on 11th November. Similar guidance documents are in the pipeline for Pigs, beef cattle and calves. Members were invited to take part in the process by answering the consultation.

The Latvian delegate said that account should be taken of the local specificities and practicalities.

The Chairman mentioned that there are different circumstances in different MS. Not the same level of animal welfare can be applied everywhere.

8) The new EU Strategy on Antimicrobial Resistance

Pasquale di Rubbo from the Secretariat presented this point.

The Commission will publish an ambitious Action Plan on 17th November, with clear measures: better transparency and monitoring on antimicrobial resistance, quantify the use of antibiotics per single species /MS.

Copa-Cogeca's Working Group on Animal Health and Welfare will take a more pro-active approach. The responsible use of antimicrobials is very important and we developed a European platform on the responsible use of antimicrobials (www.epruma.eu).

The resolution of COM ENVI is suggesting to phase out the prophylactic use of antimicrobials in livestock farming and to ban the use of "last resort" antibiotics in agriculture.

The Secretariat mentioned that the definition of prophylactic use is not clear. The Secretariat developed a survey which is available on Agri-Info [AHW\(11\)9702 \(rev.1\)](#).

The Netherlands set as an objective the reduction by 50% in the antibiotics by 2015. Trends in the sale of veterinary antimicrobials (CZ, UK, Switzerland) show a decrease of 11% between 2005-2010 [AHW\(11\)8218 \(rev.1\)](#).

The Austrian delegate highlighted the fact that on 18th November, some MS organize a special event to discuss this issue (www.ecdc.europa.eu).

6) EFSA consultation on draft guidance on the risk assessment of food and feed from genetically modified animals including animal health and welfare aspects

There was an EFSA consultation on GM animals. The results will be available by the end of 2011, early 2012.

The Chairman underlined that it is important to have a position on transgenic animals in the next months.

Mr Rosati mentioned that transgenic animals are much more used than cloned animals.

The Chairman suggested that the next meeting takes place on 24th April 2012. Some of the delegations mentioned that another event will take place during that week and cannot attend. Another possible date will be investigated.
