BR(12)5782:1

MINUTES OF THE WORKING PARTY ON BREEDING LIVESTOCK ON 24.04.2012

PRESENT: SCHONS, DAVID, ROSATI, FIORETTI, POLLASTRI, SISINNI, LYKKE, ERIKSSON, WINTERS, DAVIES, COSTELA PENA, PIEDRA GUTIERREZ, MOTYCKA, MATOUSEK, PONTAGA, STURMLECHNER, VENNEMAN,

GUESTS: Francisco REVIRIEGO (DG SANCO), José Luis DEFELIPE (DG SANCO), Anne Sophie LEQUARRÉ (DG RESEARCH), Francesco BERLINGIERI (DG SANCO)

SECRETARIAT: DI RUBBO, GYORFFY

The Chairman welcomed the participants and the Commission representatives.

The group approved the agenda and the minutes of the last meeting.

The Chairman presented the points on the agenda by underlining that Sergio Pavon (DG SANCO) could not join the group due to a Council WP meeting on cattle EID, but that Paco Reviriego (DG SANCO) replaces him and will update the group on the recast of zootechnical legislation and cattle EID.

1. Zootechnical legislation

Mr Francisco REVIRIEGO (DG SANCO) mentioned that the recast of the zootechnical legislation involves several directives and a decision (a first, unofficial draft dates from mid-February). Due to some mistakes in the document, which the COM corrected, and ongoing legal discussions within DG SANCO the inter-service consultation has not been started yet.

Recognition of breeders organizations is a sensitive issue.

The Commission representative underlined that this is a recast not a major exercise for reviewing the legislation.

The English delegate asked about the time scale. The Commission representative explained that it is difficult to give a time scale because of the problems with the alignment but the inter-service consultation should be, in principle, launched in 2-3 weeks.

The Italian delegate underlined some issues which are critical for Italy and which involve the herd book. In Italy, the herd book is managed by the government and the herd-book is in charge of the selection schemes. The selection activity aims at the quality of products and this should be mentioned in the new zootechnical legislation. The principle of one country – one organization should be maintained., otherwise, traceability and quality of the product would be damaged.

The Dutch delegate underlined that bringing together all the legislation does not imply changing it. This is not the right time to change the rules. He dismissed the Italian claim for one organization per country, stating that this does no longer exist. In most countries, more than one organization is active and denying access to reproduction is an infringement of EU rules (semen of bulls that are not in the top 2% in Italian breeding list is not accepted). Italy should accept European rules and there should be fair competition in the European Union. Italy has the right to advice farmers what is the best semen but it is not allowed to say that bulls which are not in top x%, could not be used. The Ministry of Agriculture in Rome has to solve this issue.

The Czech delegate criticizes that the EU draft puts all species together. There are different roles for herd books according to each species. Farmers need objective breeding values (i. e. expressed on a

national scale). He feared that competitiveness could decrease if parts of a herdbook go to another country. One proposal could be that the document is prepared separately for each species.

The Commission representative mentioned that he will transmit the concerns to his colleague.

The Chairman concluded that even if there are diverging views, it is important to analyze this draft to see if the new proposals are creating problems or if we are speaking about old problems. The new text is not so bad. Some people call the COM to be pro-active but from a legal point of view, there is no possibility to go further. The ideal would be that the COM comes with something new but maybe the legislative procedure would take longer. In the EP, there are discussions on sensitive aspects. It is important to collect proposals and propose something as our position.

The Dutch delegate asked the Commission about the meaning of the first sentence in art.10 (according to the draft text): Are the institutions meant to "setthe rules" or should they rather execute the performance testing?. The situation differs from one countries to the other – in some, breeders' organizations have strong influence on artificial insemination, in other countries (like UK), the artificial insemination is working independently.

2. Cattle EID

Mr Francisco REVIRIEGO (DG SANCO) mentioned that the attachés are discussing the proposal, another meeting of them is scheduled by the end of week. There is a positive perspective as regards bovine EID, but there are less positive perspectives on voluntary beef labeling. The major difficulties on cattle EID are with the alignment procedure (delegated/implementing acts are now necessary according to the Treaty of Lisbon). Only one MS said that there are additional expenses to accommodate the database. In the EP there are two committees discussing this issue but the leading committee is COM ENVI. Some MS are strongly against abolishing of voluntary beef labeling.

ICAR representative asked why is this the case? The Commission representative mentioned the technical problems, additional costs for them.

The UK delegate said that UK threatens to go compulsory if forced to have the database in the first year.

The Chairman mentioned that Copa-Cogeca is in favour of voluntary EID for cattle and deletion of voluntary beef labeling. Having the database in place is important. In the EP, some of the MEPs, including Germans, have requested to make the system mandatory or include in the proposal a date when it becomes mandatory.

The Latvian delegate mentioned that the industry is insisting on a compulsory system because of the benefits it brings to them but the costs are born by farmers. Only if industry pays, farmers and society can accept it.

The Chairman agreed and underlined that one stage in the chain pays but all the others benefit.

The ICAR representative favoured this tool.

3. Cloning

José Luis DEFELIPE (DG SANCO) made a presentation on this point BR(12)3132 (rev.1). The public consultation should be open for two weeks (scheduled for end of the week or beginning of May).

The Chairman mentioned that Copa-Cogeca is in favour of discussing this on a scientific basis. Based on a demand of some stakeholders to focus also on ethical issues, is it foreseen to ask the Ethics Group (EGE) about this?

The Commission representative underlined that the COM did not ask for a new opinion.

The Dutch delegate asked that if semen and embryos could not enter EU, which option would be chosen?

The Commission representative mentioned that it would be the last option in the roadmap BR(12)1813 (rev.1).

The Dutch delegate underlined that the genetic material could not enter EU because of the difficulties with identifying and registering this material.

The Commission representative mentioned that the 5 options are not definitive. In the end it will probably be a mixture of several measures, it can be adapted taking into account the results of the Impact Assessment.

The Chairman signaled the difficulty with these options. Status quo cannot be considered an option, but baseline. The fifth option cannot be foreseen without any kind of traceability system.

The Commission representative agreed that the fifth option implies much more than the rest.

The Chairman asked if the Impact Assessment would also consider the long term effects? Third countries would have comparative advantage and European producers will lose out export markets.

The Commission representative mentioned that if voluntary labeling is foreseen, there will be measures on traceability.

The Chairman asked about the state of play with the novel foods regulation. Currently, in the PE, some amendments refer to the inclusion of cloning in other pieces of legislation.

The Commission representative underlined that the need for an impact assessment. The intention would be to present it at the same time as the cloning proposal.

The Chairman mentioned that we need coherent legislation on cloning. Including (isolated) elements in other pieces of legislation is not regarded as coherent.

4. Genomic selection

The Dutch delegate stated that there are still problems with the acceptance of GBV's in IT, PL, RO (they are changing their legislation). Interbull is having a working group meeting in May, if they could do a GMACE in August, it would help to solve the problemThe British delegate points to the Interbull and ICAR meeting in Cork (28 May-1 June 2012).

The Chairman stated that the COM is informed and aware of these problems. Bilateral meetings are organized with the countries in question. In April and May, some results of the meetings could be available.

5. GM animals

The Chairman underlined that GM animals is a more complex issue. If the COM asks Copa, we should be able to react. We need a position on GM animals as well. Recall the presentations we had last time on Pegasus project. It is a question for future but if China started with sheep, than we would have a big problem.

The British delegate referred to the pig sector also. It is dangerous to highlight the GM. If they want to block GM they could do it in link with cloning.

The Czech delegate proposed that a workshop is organized regarding these new techniques, with the participation of EFSA, universities, this group; this workshop could be a starting point for future work. It would need first to be approved by POCC.

The Dutch delegate stated that this could be discussed in ICAR or in EAAP. Breeding is trying to improve things. GM might become very important for the breeding industry. It would be interesting to see the state of play in third countries.

The ICAR representative mentioned that GM is much more important than cloning. If an animal is cloned or not you don't know it but for GM animals, it is possible to know this detail. The industry would need a business plan.

6. Research

Anne Sophie LEQUARRÉ (DG RESEARCH) made a presentation on this point BR(12)3134 (rev.1). Horizon 2020 is a proposal for a 80 bln EUR research and innovation funding programme for 2014-2020. It combines the traditional framework programme with the Competitiveness and Innovation Programme (CIP) and the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT). Funding in the area of food security, sustainable agriculture and bioeconomy is around 4.1 bln EUR. First calls are expected in July 2013.

The Czech delegate asked if the organizations will be consulted on the projects. The Commission representative answered that there are different advisory bodies, technological platforms which come with suggestions. Stakeholders are listened to.

The Chairman asked about the difference between topics on agriculture and bio-based industry. The Commission representative mentioned that bio-based industry is referred to in different parts but livestock research is referred to in societal challenges.

The ICAR representative mentioned that research should be more focused on genetic selection, improving production level, increasing production efficiency. Now we have 80 billion allocated to research, before we had 53 billion. The Commission representative mentioned that a decision on the budget will be taken before the end of the year.

The Dutch delegate asked if research on GM could be part of the programme. The Commission representative answered that this could be part of the impact study the Commission will provide.

The Chairman asked about the future of the technology platforms. Are KICs (Knowledge and Innovation Communities) comparable to the existing Technology Platforms?

The Chairman concluded that Copa-Cogeca will stay in contact with DG RESEARCH for research priorities.

7. The Schmallenberg Virus

Francesco BERLINGIERI (DG SANCO) made a presentation on this point BR(12)3133 (rev.1).

The Chairman asked if there is a summary of the seminar organized on 2nd April.

The Commission representative replied that the presentations are available on the website, but no official summary.
http://ec.europa.eu/food/animal/diseases/schmallenberg_virus/scientific_seminar_en.htm

The French delegate asked if it would be possible for the Commission to change its position on semen, embryos since PCR tests are available. Otherwise, European companies will lose market share.

The Commission representative underlined that there is no justification for asking for these tests, moreover we can end up with having these tests on a permanent basis. SBV does not deserve a particular treatment. MS should resist this temptation.

The Dutch delegate mentioned that EU has to prove that SBV is not transmissible via semen and genetic material. EU is not paying the losses to the breeding industry. Some countries, important trading partners, are closing the borders

The Commission representative mentioned that he will refer this to his hierarchy but particular attention should be paid to temporary additional declarations for this year. For live cattle, it would be more complicated. Some countries postponed the measures until the seminar but decided to take them after.

The Chairman raised the issue of vaccination as a proper control tool.

The Commission representative mentioned that there will be no financial contribution in relation to SBV (the losses do not justify any vaccination strategy).

The Dutch delegate underlined that it is unlikely that OIE withdraws its recommendations. There is no guarantee that Brazil, Argentina will take away the requirements.

The Chairman urged the Commission to look for a quick solution to the trade problem.

8. New EU Animal welfare Strategy 2012-2015

Pasquale di Rubbo from the Secretariat presented this point. Stakeholders are accused of lack of knowledge on animal welfare but it is important to show to the Commission that they are getting training activities. The Commission is now looking at the animal rather than looking at measures to achieve certain level of animal welfare. There are ongoing discussions at MS level on how to use outcome based indicators. Copa-Cogeca is critical about welfare indicators and is calling for a simplified framework law (use of welfare indicators in a simplified manner). A group was constituted and members are requested to specify if they wish to attend such a group. Other NGOs are calling for a simplified approach covering all species (including dairy cows, turkeys). European Partnership on Agriculture could have a role in knowledge transfer. The EP report, the Paulsen report, is very good, taking on board a lot of points. The vote on it will be during the next COM AGRI meeting.

The Chairman mentioned that there is a specific chapter in the EFSA opinion on outcome based indicators for dairy cows which refers to genetics and breeding and which is currently analyzed by the breeding organizations. It is difficult to rely on few indicators only. Germany also makes reference to welfare quality. What it is written in the EFSA opinion is already known by us. What is missing is the point on conflicts of interest.

The Secretariat underlined that the selection of indicators is a difficult process and needs to be further discussed. The European Animal Welfare Platform selected a number of issues which need attention: for dairy – transport, genetics, longevity. Copa-Cogeca was also consulted but it is not part of the Steering Committee. Copa-Cogeca has sent a letter to the Commission to complain how this project is run. Welfare indicators project (AWIN) is another research project which focuses on turkeys, horses, sheep and goats.

9. Animal transport

Pasquale di Rubbo from the Secretariat presented this point. The Commission will focus on the enforcement of legislation, satellite system and development of European guidelines. There is an ongoing petition to limit the transport of animals to 8 h. This has received 1 million signatures and the EP adopted it. The report is not good in term of content. It will be voted on 30th May in next COM AGRI meeting for which Copa-Cogeca has prepared a list of amendments, rejecting the 8h limit. Within the Council, Denmark also wished to limit the transport of animals to 8 h and the Danish Presidency will prepare draft Council Conclusions which are scheduled for adoption in June.

The Dutch delegate asked if there are provisions on the time to rest for drivers.

The Chairman replied that some MS have requested this.

The Secretariat mentioned that the Commissioner for Health and Consumers does not want to revise the legislation.

The Chairman underlined that it should either be a complete revision or leave the legislation as it is. It is complicated to include in the implementing regulation provisions on the driving time. New legislation is needed in order to include this. In Germany, there were complaints about transporting bulls to the slaughterhouse. In one of them many animals were found injured. But this is not necessarily due to long transport time (in fact, the transport might have taken less than 4 hours) but rather to bad handling of the animals during loading/unloading and insufficient equipment of the lorry

The Chairman informed the Group about his activity in two EU funded research projects on Control posts (CP), where he represents Copa-Cogeca in the Advisory Board. The aim of the first project is to upgrade existing control post (in order to have a kind of “model CP”) and to establish a certification scheme and an online booking tool for the CP’s. In the second project there are even more CP’s which are upgraded and another certification scheme will be developed for transporters that transport animals for more than 8 h. It will be interesting to see which indicators will be chosen and how it will be implemented.

10. Antimicrobials

Pasquale di Rubbo from the Secretariat presented this point. AHW(12)1244 (rev.5)

The Chairman cautioned that the use of antimicrobials for the conservation of semen must not be put into question. The proposals to ban veterinary use of antibiotics are problematic.

The Secretariat mentioned that the Danish Presidency is very active on this, the conclusion of the conference does not reflect what has been discussed in different Working Parties: for ex. only vets can prescribe medicines but in some MS there is a lack of veterinarians. The final conclusions will be presented in June.

The Dutch delegate mentioned that antibiotics in semen should be a topic in the RepVet group (some certifications from 3rd countries are depending on this).

The Secretariat underlined that USA has already banned the use of antibiotics.

The Chairman mentioned that next meeting of RepVet will take place on 9th May.

The Chairman thanked the participants and concluded the meeting by announcing the date of the next meeting: 23.10.2012.