



Organisation
Mondiale
de la Santé
Animale

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Health

Organización
Mundial
de Sanidad
Animal

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OIE Regional Commission
for Europe
Kuusamo (Finland), 10-13 September 2002

FINAL REPORT



Office international des épizooties

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List of Abbreviations

BSE	:	Bovine spongiform encephalopathy
CAC	:	Codex Alimentarius Commission
CCHF	:	Crimean-Congo hemorrhagic fever
CSF	:	Classical swine fever
CSR	:	Communicable diseases Surveillance and Response
EAAP	:	European Association for Animal Production
ELISA	:	Enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay
FAO	:	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United
FVE	:	Federation of Veterinarians of Europe
GOVS	:	General Organisation of Veterinary Services
IPPC	:	International Plant Protection Convention Measures
MZCC	:	Mediterranean Zoonoses Control Centre
MZCP	:	Mediterranean Zoonoses Control Programme
NGO	:	Non-Governmental Organisation
OIE	:	Office International des Epizooties
RVF	:	Rift Valley Fever
SFVS	:	State Food and Veterinary Services
SPS	:	Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures of the WTO
TCP	:	Technical Cooperation Programme
VCJD	:	(BSE)-variant-Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease
WHO	:	World Health Organization
WTO	:	World Trade Organization

Introduction

1. On the invitation of the Government of Finland, the 20th Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe was held in Kuusamo, from 10 to 13 September 2002.
2. Eighty-four Delegates and Observers attended the Conference from thirty-two OIE Member Countries and six international or regional organisations. The speakers for items I and II also participated in the proceedings of the Conference. These were Dr Aristarhos Seimenis, Director of the Mediterranean Zoonoses Control Centre (WHO/MZCC) in Holargos (Greece), and Dr Ruud Huirne, Professor of Farm Management at the University of Wageningen (Netherlands).

Tuesday 10 September 2002

Opening Ceremony

3. Dr Nicola Belev, President of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe, extended his thanks to the Government of Finland for its kind invitation to hold the 20th Regional Conference in Kuusamo. He stressed the importance of the Conference in that the OIE is in the process of further strengthening its activities as an inter-governmental organisation. Its responsibilities are related to the activities of the Veterinary Services in the field of animal health, especially with regard to acute infectious disease control, animal welfare, food safety and protection of consumer health. Safety of food and products of animal origin has to be based mainly on the good cooperation between the animal and public health services and production, while risk analyses must be one of the key factors ensuring high quality and safety of any food of animal origin. The successful establishment and maintenance of buffer zones in Europe against foot and mouth disease, bluetongue and rabies is to be considered of utmost importance for guaranteeing the implementation of the Third OIE Strategic Plan.
4. Dr Belev recalled that the agenda of this Conference enables discussions on one of the most important issues concerning the future activities of the OIE – namely, the organisation of Veterinary Services, which have a crucial role to play. He then commented on the positive results obtained through workshops and seminars that play a considerable role in the harmonisation of the working methods applied by the Veterinary Services in the region. Scientists and experts have shown that in the next ten to fifteen years, the threat posed by certain epizootic diseases, such as FMD, bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) in cattle, rabies, classical swine fever, bluetongue, Newcastle disease, tuberculosis, brucellosis and salmonellosis, will continue to be a serious threat to the livestock and economies of the different countries.
5. Dr Belev noted that the activities laid down in the plan for ‘Cooperation between the East and West European countries’ have created an atmosphere of trust, transparency and integrity among the Veterinary Services of Europe. This is due, to a great extent, to the Governments of the OIE Member Countries, with whom permanent contacts are maintained and who provide constant support and assistance. He also stressed that relations with the mass media are a guarantee for enhancing public knowledge for the activities of the OIE and of the Regional Commission for Europe, to ensure the successful implementation of all OIE programmes and activities. In conclusion, Dr Belev wished all the participants much success in their deliberations.
6. Dr Romano Marabelli, President of the OIE, extended his sincerest thanks, on behalf of all participants, to the Government of Finland for the invitation to hold the 20th Regional Conference for Europe in Kuusamo. He briefly summarised the particular measures that have been designated and undertaken with the assistance of the OIE Central Bureau and the Director General, following the recommendations and resolutions adopted at the 70th General Session and that have been carefully considered by the Administrative Commission and the Representation for Europe. These include: qualification of veterinarians; preparation of workshops and seminars planned for 2003; identifying the role and place of veterinarians in compliance with the provisions of the OIE *International Animal Health Code*.

7. Dr Marabelli stated that one of the priorities in the future activities of the OIE is public awareness of the activities exercised by the National Veterinary Services and the OIE, respectively. In this respect, he put forward the concept of establishing in the Representation for Europe a Permanent Media Forum, representing television, radio and the press. The task of this Forum would be to discuss the events of the National Veterinary Services and to promote to their parliaments and governments the need for support that should be provided for the implementation of the most important activities of the Veterinary Services.
8. The Bureau of the Regional Commission is already actively engaged in the realisation together with the Administrative Commission, the Regional Representation for Eastern Europe and the OIE Central Bureau.
9. Dr Marabelli also highlighted the fact that as an inter-governmental organisation, the OIE is responsible for uniting the efforts of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and other groups, unions, associations and economic entities that should fully respect and comply with the OIE's basic documents, the *International Animal Health Code*, as well as the basic texts of the OIE. He expressed the OIE's commitment and confidence that the 20th OIE Regional Conference for Europe will manifest its support to all the OIE activities in animal health control, animal welfare and protection of consumer health. In conclusion, Dr Marabelli extended his thanks to all the participants for their presence and wished them much success in this Conference.
10. Dr Bernard Vallat, Director General of the OIE, expressed his appreciation to the Authorities of Finland for having honoured the OIE by welcoming participants to their magnificent country. He also extended his thanks to Jaana Husu-Kallio and congratulated her on her well-merited promotion to the European Commission, in which the CVOs take great pride. He noted that this Conference is, to a great extent, a reflection of the ongoing changes of the OIE in compliance with the recent requirements of the organisation. This fact was especially underlined at the 70th General Session in May. Dr Vallat pointed out the necessity for continued cooperation with the WHO, WTO, FAO, World Bank, European Union, CIS and other regional institutions, with regard to globalisation and the increase in international trade. He recalled that Europe has consistently played a crucial role, taking into account its geographic, political and economic situation.
11. The Director General emphasised that harmonisation of the veterinary legislation in European countries is of the utmost importance and that the changes in the structure of the national Veterinary Services must be undertaken in compliance with the OIE *International Animal Health Code*. For this purpose, participation of veterinarians in seminars and workshops is important. He added that the achievements of the Regional Commission and the Regional Representation for Europe in this respect are significant and must be continued in the future.
12. Dr Vallat underlined the importance for Europe of the technical items to be discussed during the Conference. They include one of the most important issues that the OIE handles – the organisation of national Veterinary Services. Article 1.1.3. of the *International Animal Health Code* gives the guidelines for this organisation and the requirements to which the public and private veterinarians must adhere. He then briefly outlined the aims of the Third Strategic Plan, stressing the fundamental role that the Regional Commission for Europe will play in this process, and wished all participants a successful Conference.
13. The Mayor of Kuusamo, Mr Kyösti Turnberg, welcomed the participants to Finland and to Kuusamo in particular, the centre of northern Finland. He stated that agriculture, mainly cattle and reindeer production, as well as the plant industry are the main concerns of the region. He added that no infectious animal disease is known to be present in Kuusamo, thus guaranteeing food safety.
14. Dr Jaana Husu-Kallio, Director of Veterinary Services and Animal Health, and Delegate of Finland to the OIE, welcomed the participants to the Conference on behalf of the Government of Finland and the Finnish Veterinary Services. In the absence of the Minister of Agriculture and Forestry of Finland, Mr Jari Koskinen, who was, unfortunately, unable to be present, Dr Husu-Kallio read his opening address to the participants.

15. The Minister expressed his pleasure that so many Delegates and participants were able to attend the meeting and welcomed them to Kuusamo. He remarked on the OIE's achievements over the past nearly eighty years, of which many were initiated and shaped by the Regional Commission for Europe. He noted that the Finnish Veterinary Services have made a significant contribution to these accomplishments. Nevertheless, as with all international organisations, the OIE must also plan for future challenges. The Third Strategic Plan, including the Work Programme of the Director General, is an important step in this direction. The incorporation of animal welfare issues into the work programme of the organisation is an excellent example of foresighted planning. The OIE's scientific expertise on animal health issues is an important element in the development of standards and expert advice on good animal husbandry and welfare practice.
16. Co-operation and co-ordination in the food and health sectors is another topic related to the OIE's future activities. The Minister indicated that in 2001, the Finnish Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry restructured its organisation in relation to food safety issues, by setting up a single department responsible for all questions concerning food safety and health. The same might be true for international organisations operating in the field of food safety, and animal and plant health. At the 70th General Session of the OIE a resolution was adopted that formulated the OIE's mandate in food safety issues, an important step towards the co-ordination and integration of food safety issues within the international framework. The Agreement on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures of the World Trade Organisation provides a framework for all trade-related issues in food safety and animal and plant health. Joined capacity building initiatives, the joint development of international standards dealing with principles set in the SPS Agreement, and the organisation of joint working groups dealing with special interdisciplinary subjects are examples of how far the co-ordination and co-operation between international standard setting organisations could extend.
17. In conclusion, the Minister underlined the importance of meetings of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe. They provide a forum to discuss and formulate our common European veterinary values and subsequently to introduce them into the global policy of the OIE. These discussion fora are also important for the environment that depends on our expertise and care. In conclusion, the Delegate from Finland extended her thanks to the Organising Committee of the Conference, the OIE Secretariat and all those who had collaborated in the preparation of this Conference. She then wished the participants fruitful discussions and a constructive meeting, and declared the 20th Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe officially open.
18. The texts of the above speeches were distributed to the participants.

Election of the Conference Committee

19. Delegates elected the following Conference Committee:

Chairperson:	Dr Jaana Husu-Kallio (Finland)
Vice-Chairperson:	Dr Michael C. Gaynor (Ireland)
Rapporteur General:	Dr Karin Schwabenbauer (Germany)

Adoption of the Provisional Agenda and Timetable

20. The draft Agenda and Timetable were adopted with one additional item, proposed by the Delegate from Denmark: The contribution of the Regional Commission for Europe to the OIE Strategic Plan, in particular with regard to animal welfare. This suggestion was unanimously accepted.
21. A few Delegates and participants volunteered to draft a recommendation on this topic: Dr Karin Schwabenbauer (Germany), President, Dr Josef Holejsovsky (Czech Republic), Dr Pirkko Skutnabb (Finland), Dr Isabelle Chmitelin (France), Dr Leif Denneberg (Sweden) and Dr Howard Batho (European Commission).

Designation of Session Chairpersons and Rapporteurs

22. Chairpersons and Rapporteurs were designated for the technical items and animal health status as follows:

Technical item I:	Prof. Dušan Magič (Slovakia), Chairperson Dr Josef Holejsovsky (Czech Republic), Rapporteur
Technical item II:	Dr Preben Willeberg (Denmark), Chairperson Dr Robert Houston (United Kingdom), Rapporteur
Animal health status:	Dr Alexandr B. Ponomarev (Russia), Chairperson Dr Sanja Separović (Croatia), Rapporteur

Animal Health Status of Member Countries since 1st January 2002

23. Dr Alexandr Ponomarev, Chairperson of the Session, invited Delegates of Member Countries to report on any changes that had taken place regarding the animal health status of their country since 1st January 2002 and especially since the 70th General Session of the OIE International Committee.
24. The animal health situation in the region, summarised according to the written or verbal reports presented to the Conference, as well as the most significant points or comments supplementary to those examined at the OIE General Session, are referred to below.

List A diseases

Foot and mouth disease

25. In January 2002, the United Kingdom recovered its status as a foot and mouth disease (FMD) free country where vaccination is not practised.
26. In Turkey, 26 outbreaks of foot and mouth disease (virus types A, O and Asia 1) were reported between January and July 2002. No outbreaks were reported in the Thrace region of the country during that period.

Swine vesicular disease

27. Italy was the only country that continued to report the presence of swine vesicular disease. From January to June 2002, 172 outbreaks were reported in the country, including Basilicata, Calabria, Emilia-Romagna, Lazio, Molise, and Piedmont regions, where no outbreaks had occurred since over one year.

Peste des petits ruminants

28. In Turkey, four outbreaks of peste des petits ruminants were reported in the first half of 2002.

Bluetongue

29. In Italy, 11 outbreaks were reported from January to March 2002 in Cagliari and Reggio Calabria provinces.
30. In France, 95% of the ovine livestock (140,000 animals) on the island of Corsica, where cases of the disease were recorded in 2001, was vaccinated against bluetongue from January to June 2002. No cases have been recorded in 2002.

Sheep pox and goat pox

31. In Turkey, 15 outbreaks of sheep pox and goat pox were reported in the first half of 2002.

African swine fever

32. In Italy, African swine fever continued to be reported on the island of Sardinia. From February to June 2002, four outbreaks of the disease were recorded.

Classical swine fever

33. In Croatia, where classical swine fever had not been reported since 1999, one outbreak occurred in Sisac county in a small holding for fattening. Stamping out was applied.
34. In France, where classical swine fever had not been reported in domestic pigs since 1993, one outbreak occurred in a cooperative rearing unit in the Moselle department at the end of April 2002. Control measures were applied in accordance with national and European Union provisions. On July 2002, France declared itself as free from classical swine fever in domestic pigs in the absence of any new cases. On the other hand, a case was diagnosed in a wild boar found dead in April 2002 in the Moselle department. Following the detection of this case, a control plan was introduced in this department and in the neighbouring Meurthe-et-Moselle department. Between April and July 2002, samples were tested from a total of 126 wild boars in the Moselle Department. Evidence for the circulation of classical swine fever virus was found in 11 animals, all of which were from the intensified surveillance zone.
35. In Luxembourg, where classical swine fever had not been reported in domestic pigs since 1987, 11 outbreaks were reported in domestic pigs from February to August 2002. Forty-one outbreaks of the disease were reported in wild boar. Control measures were applied in compliance with national and European legislation.
36. In Moldavia, where classical swine fever had not been reported since 1998, two outbreaks were reported in domestic pigs in July 2002. Strict quarantine measures and stamping-out were applied.
37. The following countries, which reported outbreaks of classical swine fever in 2001, have reported further outbreaks since January 2002: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Germany, Romania, Slovakia, Spain and Yugoslavia.
38. In Bulgaria, 27 outbreaks were reported in domestic pigs from March to May 2002.
39. In Germany, 244 outbreaks of the disease were reported in wild boars, from January to June 2002. Seven outbreaks were reported in pigs in the *Land* of Rhineland-Palatinate. All the animals on the farms were destroyed.
40. In Romania, two outbreaks were reported in domestic pigs: one in Arad in March 2002 and one in Bihor in July 2002. These outbreaks occurred during the implementation of a non-vaccination policy. Within the framework of the implementation strategy for the non-vaccination policy against classical swine fever, a five-year programme was developed in order to gradually prohibit vaccination.

In 2002, vaccination was forbidden in six districts of the western border. In six districts near the western border vaccination with marked vaccine has become mandatory.

41. In Slovakia, six outbreaks were recorded since the beginning of the year in wild boars.
42. In Slovenia, 14 out of 64 samples, taken from shot wild boars within the framework of regular monitoring from March to May 2002, reacted positively to an ELISA test for detection of antibodies against classical swine fever virus.
43. In Spain, 16 outbreaks were reported in domestic pigs from January to May 2002. In August 2002, Spain declared that the country was free from classical swine fever as a result of the expiry on 31st July 2002 of the period of application of the last European Commission Decision restricting the movement of animals, which had previously been in force because of the presence of the disease in that country.

Newcastle disease

44. Newcastle disease was reported in Austria, Denmark, Israel, Russia and Yugoslavia in 2002.
45. In Austria, one outbreak of the disease occurred in pigeons in the federal province of Oberösterreich (district Linz-Land) in March 2002. This case concerned a hobby flock of 10 pigeons; all of them died.
46. In Denmark, where Newcastle disease had not been reported since 1998, 132 outbreaks were reported from July to August 2002, of which 123 were in backyard flocks. Only 9 commercial flocks have been infected. All the animals in the infected holdings have been destroyed. Around the infected flocks, 3 and 10-km veterinary controlled zones depending on the case were established. Within the zones, poultry cannot be moved without permission from the Danish Veterinary and Food Administration. Regionalisation was applied in order to allow the export of broiler poultry and of hatching eggs from some counties.
47. In Israel, 10 outbreaks were recorded from January to May 2002.
48. In Russia, one outbreak was reported in the Lipetskaya region in April 2002.
49. In Yugoslavia, 15 outbreaks were reported in the Zrenjanin department in May 2002.

List B diseases

Anthrax

50. The disease was reported in the first half of 2002 in Turkey.

Rabies

51. In Austria, 24 animals with a rabies-positive result were found in a rabies-free zone (the federal province of Kärnten) between the end of January and the end of June 2002.
52. In the Czech Republic, 3,095 wild animals and 503 domestic animals were tested for rabies presence in 2002. Only three positive cases were found in foxes.
53. In Denmark, bat rabies was diagnosed in one sheep and one bat in the first half of 2002.
54. In Latvia, 214 cases were detected in the first half of 2002.

55. In Norway, one new case of rabies was detected in a fox in the archipelago of Svalbard. The mainland remains free from rabies.
56. In Romania, the number of outbreaks decreased in the first six months of 2002 (57) compared to the same period in 2001 (255). This can be explained by the implementation for the first time of a programme of oral vaccination of foxes within the epizootic areas.
57. In Turkey, the disease continued to be reported in domestic animals during the first six months of 2002; 153 cases were diagnosed.

Bovine brucellosis

58. The disease was reported in the first half of 2002 by Austria, Ireland and Turkey.

Bovine tuberculosis

59. The disease was included in the reports submitted by Ireland, Romania and Turkey for the first half of 2002.

Bovine leucosis

60. The disease was reported in the first half of 2002 in Latvia and Romania.

Bovine spongiform encephalopathy

61. In 2002, Israel (1 case) and Poland (2 cases) reported the occurrence of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) for the first time.
62. At the time of writing this report, the number of cases reported in European countries since 1 January 2002 are as follows: Belgium 21, Denmark 1, France 159, Germany 54, Ireland 209, Italy 4, Luxembourg 1, Netherlands 13, Poland 2, Portugal 18, Slovakia 5, Slovenia 1, Spain 84 (on 27 August 2002), Switzerland 8 and United Kingdom 534.

Ovine epididymidis (*B. ovis*)

63. Nine cases of ovine epididymidis were found in the federal province of Tirol, in Austria, between January and May 2002.

Scrapie

64. In the Czech Republic, seven cases of scrapie in two herds were diagnosed during the first half of 2002.
65. In France, 55 cases were detected from January to July 2002.
66. In Iceland, scrapie was diagnosed on one farm. All sheep were destroyed and the farm will remain unstocked for at least two years.
67. In Ireland, there were 46 outbreaks, 60 cases and 17,259 sheep destroyed during the first half of 2002.
68. In Israel, two cases were found in two close sheep flocks (one in Akko district and one in Kineret district). Both herds were destroyed.
69. In the Netherlands, 12 of a total of 178 sheep on a farm in the province of Friesland were positive for scrapie.

70. In Norway, three new cases of scrapie were diagnosed in the first half of 2002. Two of the cases were found in brain material sampled from sheep at slaughter. These were the first scrapie cases detected at slaughter in sheep showing no signs since the launch of the national surveillance and control programme in 1997.

71. The United Kingdom did not give any details on this disease in its reports.

Porcine reproductive and respiratory syndrome

72. In Ireland, five outbreaks were reported.

Equine infectious anaemia

73. A case of this disease occurred in Austria in the province of Niederösterreich, in May 2002.

Avian chlamydiosis

74. One case was diagnosed in Austria.

Rabbit haemorrhagic disease

75. In Iceland, rabbit haemorrhagic disease was diagnosed for the first time in farmed rabbits on two farms in 2002. All the animals were destroyed and thorough disinfection procedures were carried out.

Viral haemorrhagic septicaemia (VHS)

76. In Austria, two outbreaks of VHS occurred in March and May 2002.

77. In Finland, varying mortality with VHS was observed on 12 new brackish water rainbow trout farms in the restriction area of Åland Islands in May-June 2002.

78. In Sweden, VHS was detected in a fish farm during May 2002. The same farm was tested positive during 1998 and 2000. VHS virus of the marine type was responsible for all three outbreaks. All fish have been destroyed and the farm is decontaminated. All fish farms in Sweden with salmonides are tested once a year for VHS. Sweden is free from VHS with the exception of an area demarcated by a semicircle with a 20-km radius from the affected farm and the river Höta catchment area as far as the first migration barrier.

Infectious haematopoietic necrosis

79. In the federal province of Oberösterreich, in Austria, one outbreak of the disease occurred in March 2002.

Acariosis

80. Acariosis was detected for the first time in Norway in the counties of Sogn and Fjordane, in April 2002.

American foulbrood

81. A total of 21 cases occurred in the first half of 2002 in Austria.

Other diseases

Blackleg

82. In Austria, eight cases of blackleg occurred in the first half of 2002.

Bovine virus diarrhoea

83. In Finland, a total of 18,308 bulk milk samples and a total of 929 blood samples were analysed during the first half of 2002 for bovine virus diarrhoea. Only one virus positive dairy farm and one virus positive beef cattle farm were detected.

Infectious salmon anaemia

84. In Norway, nine cases of infectious salmon anaemia were diagnosed during the first half of 2002.

In May 2002, a parasite belonging to the genus *Parvicapsula* was identified in three aquaculture farms in the north of the country.

Bovine ephemeral fever

85. In Tajikistan, 5,000 cases of bovine ephemeral fever were reported in July 2002.

Discussion

Bluetongue

86. The Delegate from Croatia indicated that BTV type 9 has been confirmed and that two studies concerning testing of sentinel animals and vector control are being carried out in the field.
87. The Representative from Greece declared that the established surveillance systems on sentinel animals and vectors have determined that there is no virus in circulation.

Classical swine fever

88. The Delegate from Belgium underlined that there were no cases of classical swine fever during 2002. Surveillance zones of 12-km on average have been established along the borders with neighbouring countries.
89. The Delegate from Luxembourg confirmed that classical swine fever had not been reported in domestic pigs since 1987, but that 11 outbreaks were reported in domestic pigs and forty-one outbreaks in wild boars from February to August 2002. He added that the whole territory of the country has been declared as an infected zone for wild boars, and that all protection and surveillance zones for domestic pigs have been lifted.
90. A Representative from Switzerland informed participants that following an extensive surveillance system on wild boars from the affected area, it was concluded that the measures taken to control this outbreak have been successful and that the Swiss wild boar population is again free from CSF.
91. A Representative from Russia reported that two outbreaks of CSF occurred during 2002. A vaccination policy has been implemented.

Newcastle disease

92. The Delegation from Denmark confirmed that 135 outbreaks were reported from July to August 2002, of which 126 were in backyard flocks. Only 9 commercial flocks have been infected.

Scrapie

93. The Delegate from Austria declared that no outbreak of scrapie had been reported in his country during 2002.

Bovine virus diarrhoea

94. The Delegation from Finland indicated that their country is at the end phase of a control programme for this disease.
95. The Delegation from Norway remarked that 10% of herds have been infected and that the country aims to eradicate the disease before the end of 2003. Norway requested that this disease be included in the OIE lists.

ITEM I

The role of Veterinary Services in the food chain ‘from the stable to the table’

96. Prof. Dušan Magič, Chairperson of the Session, briefly introduced Dr Aristarhos Seimenis, speaker for this item, and called upon him to present his report.
97. Dr Seimenis commenced his presentation by recalling that food-borne diseases affect hundreds of millions of people around the world. The globalisation of trade in animals and food has made food safety an international issue. Consumer pressure and the responsibilities of competent authorities have forced the control of risks in every stage of the food chain, i.e. from the ‘stable to the table’. New Regulations, particularly the EU Basic Food Law, require objective and transparent scientific analysis and assessment of risks from foods. Veterinary Services and veterinarians should adapt their role and activities, in close collaboration with other sectors and professionals in a risk-based approach to cope with hazards and risks to human health from foods.
98. The speaker noted that responses to a questionnaire distributed to the Member Countries of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe, aiming to collect information from the National Veterinary Services, could be summarised as follows: All the countries that responded (32) consider food safety to be a priority among other public health issues. Biological hazards are reported to be the most prevalent followed by chemical hazards. Different degrees of awareness on risks to humans from food are reported. Public Health and Veterinary Services, together with food safety agencies and institutions are most aware of these risks. Out of 30 countries, 23 (77%) stress that the risk-based provisions of the WTO/SPS Agreement had a significant impact on governments’ food safety strategies, while 19 out of 30 countries (63%) report that quantitative microbiological standards and criteria for food of animal origin have been derived and implemented from quantitative risk assessment.
99. Furthermore, Dr Seimenis stated that all countries agree, at different levels, that the OIE could complement the work undertaken by the Codex Alimentarius Commission by elaborating standards, guidelines, etc. in food safety and for the establishment of formal links with the above-mentioned Commission.
100. Dr Seimenis added that veterinary activities at the farm level, aiming at protection of public health from food-borne hazards, are implemented mainly by state veterinarians, and to a lesser degree by private veterinarians and those of food safety agencies. At the same level, programmes of good hygienic practices are implemented mainly by state veterinarians with some assistance from

veterinarians employed in industry and private veterinarians. Thirty countries report that veterinarians are involved at primary processing level of at least eight kinds of foods of animal origin.

101. In conclusion, the speaker remarked that present developments in food safety issues at international level create new responsibilities to veterinarians and the State Veterinary Services.

Discussion

102. The Session Chairperson congratulated Dr Seimenis on his comprehensive and informative presentation, and invited comments and questions from the participants.
103. The Delegate from Sweden underlined the importance of better integration of animal welfare considerations with regard to food safety from the stable to the table. He believed that it was essential that the Regional Commission for Europe strongly supported the working group on animal welfare within the OIE and suggested that the Regional Commission include in this technical item some recommendations concerning animal welfare during transport.
104. The Delegate from Israel presented the concept of an integrated approach to guarantee food safety. He raised the question on what the role of veterinary authorities in the integrated system of risk management should be and how risk management should be divided amongst the veterinary authority, health authority and other organisms; however, indicating that the entire food chain from the stable to the table should be under the supervision of one governmental agency. He also expressed concern about the threat of bio-terrorism for food safety.
105. The Delegate from Lithuania presented the role and experiences of the State Food and Veterinary Services (SFVS) of Lithuania in the field of official food control. He gave information on the implementation of the SFVS's centralised control system with three levels of control, namely, central, regional and local.
106. The Delegate from Austria stressed the importance of veterinary training and the role of the veterinary profession in improving food safety control. In his opinion, the veterinary profession should play a leading role, a fact that should be acknowledged by the Codex Alimentarius Commission.
107. The Delegate from Latvia underlined the importance of public awareness with regard to the role played by the Veterinary Services in the area of public health, especially in consumer health protection.
108. The Delegate of Norway noted the importance of animal health as a basis for food safety. He also pointed out the need for a global development of food legislation based on that of the European Union. He recalled the important role of veterinarians in safety control in the food chain, and pointed out the need for an analysis on the fulfilment by the Veterinary Services in the respective countries of the challenge in the food safety area.
109. The Delegate from Finland remarked on the need for increased cooperation between the OIE and the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC) in the field of animal feeding and food safety, expressed in the joint CAC/OIE text.
110. The Delegate from France expressed her agreement with the previous comments and pointed out the need for and importance of cooperation between the Veterinary Services and farmers' associations in relation to risk management.
111. The Delegate from Germany underlined the importance of the integrated approach in food safety control.

112. The Delegate from Denmark questioned the separation of the institutions responsible for risk assessment and management, and the usefulness for the institutions of continuing to work separately.
113. Dr Vallat, Director General of the OIE, briefly outlined the activities of the OIE relating to the topic under discussion. With regard to the OIE mandate on international sanitary standardisation, he recalled the terms of the SPS Agreement with respect to the role of standard-setting organisations (OIE, CAC, IPPC). He underlined the risk of establishing contradictory standards relating to health safety of food of animal origin, and in fields for which no organisation has as yet established standards. Dr Vallat mentioned the practical difficulty of signing an official agreement between the OIE and the Codex, due to the two-fold tutelage of the FAO/WHO Codex. The OIE thus signed an informal agreement in 2001 with the President of the Codex for mutual participation of the two organisations in international committees and meetings of common interest, an agreement that has come into effect. One difficulty remains to be solved at the Codex Committee level on General Principles: the OIE wishes to propose to the Codex Committees, for discussion and possible adoption, some draft standards of common interest prepared in accordance with the usual OIE procedures.
114. The Director General confirmed that the OIE is determined to promote the veterinary profession through its general mission of scientific and technical information of the Veterinary Services, as well as the standards included in the *Code* to improve the quality of the benefits of Veterinary Services. He emphasised the importance of veterinary training in public health and food health.
115. Dr Vallat subsequently described the work timetable of the Permanent OIE Working Group on Food Safety, of which the President of the CAC and the President of the Codex Committee on 'Meat Hygiene' are members. The Group will without a doubt handle as a priority, the improvement of *Code* chapters on food transmissible zoonoses and microbiological pathogen agents that could be found in food, but that show no visible signs in animals. This issue will also be part of the discussions relating to the reform of the classification of diseases with obligatory notification to the OIE.
116. Prof. Magič, the Session Chairperson, concluded by thanking all the participants, and then requested a small group consisting of the Chairman, Dr Preben Willeberg and Dr Jesper Mygind (Denmark), Dr Karin Schwabenbauer (Germany) and Dr Tadzysz Wijaszka (Poland), to draft a recommendation on this technical item under the Chairmanship of Dr Seimenis.

Wednesday 11 September 2002

ITEM II

Cost-benefit analysis as a tool for decision-making to prevent the spread of infectious animal diseases

117. The Session Chairperson, Dr Preben Willeberg, introduced this session by stressing the importance of training in cost-benefit analysis for veterinary students. Within Europe, there were many opportunities for gaining such knowledge and a number of centres of excellence in this discipline, such as Wageningen University in the Netherlands. He then briefly introduced the speaker for this item, Dr Ruud Huirne.
118. Prof. Huirne began his presentation by underlining that decision-making to prevent the spread of infectious animal diseases is very complex and has extreme economic consequences. He pointed out that the study focused on classical swine fever (CSF), foot and mouth disease (FMD) and avian influenza (AI). An economic model was developed, based on an epidemiological model. Data required for both models are not readily available in individual countries; they were thus collected through a questionnaire sent to the CVOs of the OIE Member countries of Europe.

He updated the written paper by indicating that one further questionnaire had been received from Croatia, which brought the total to 22 questionnaires received out of a possible 48, 14 of which had sufficient data for analysis.

119. The speaker indicated that based on the responses in the questionnaires, the expected size of an epidemic and the expected economic losses were calculated. These vary widely in each country. Optimal one-size-fits-all approaches to disease control for all European OIE countries are hard to find. As an example, an extended economic analysis was carried out to demonstrate the power of the economic model for decision support with respect to controlling FMD in the Netherlands (a data-rich country). Direct losses as well as consequential losses (resulting from export bans) are determined. Consequential losses depend to a large extent on the export or import position of a country. Economic losses also vary widely among individual countries.
120. In conclusion, Prof. Huirne noted that the paper demonstrates the richness and complexity of infectious disease control, including the importance of the permanent availability of a reliable and complete epidemiological and economic data set. He underlined the importance of introducing these issues in courses for veterinary students.

Discussion

121. The Session Chairperson, Dr Willeberg, warmly thanked Prof. Huirne for his informative presentation and invited comments and questions from the floor.
122. The Delegate from Bulgaria supported the use of qualitative analysis, but felt that it is most useful when based on past experience of previous outbreaks. Bulgaria was concerned that eradication of an epizootic disease within 5-14 days, expressed in the responses of certain countries to the questionnaire, was unrealistic. This latter concern was also expressed by Finland.
123. It was accepted that modelling based on disease outbreaks was useful where the data was updated on a regular basis. It was also agreed that delays in detection of disease was certainly an area of concern when developing control strategies.
124. The Delegate from Iceland felt that there was insufficient data in his country concerning farms to complete the questionnaire and proposed that the OIE should consider an ad hoc group to propose a model for data collection and standards for recording of such farm data.
125. The Director General indicated that certification for many diseases require the Veterinary Services to have knowledge on the locations of the farms and their structure. The OIE together with the Codex is progressing in the task of developing such standards with regard to data on production structures and traceability of movements.
126. The Delegate from Iceland enquired if such modelling had been applied to food safety issues, such as campylobacter in poultry.
127. The speaker replied that similar modelling had been frequently applied to other areas, such as tuberculosis, leptospirosis and biological milk contaminants.
128. Israel and Italy were concerned that such models were based on very incomplete data, extended into areas where economic data was not possible (for example ethics), and that they could be substituted for veterinary expert decision-making. These concerns were also expressed by France.
129. It was agreed that such modelling was merely a decision support tool and not one for final decision-making. In outbreaks, decisions would have to be made and modelling was only a tool amongst others that could be employed to help this process. At best, the models also give rise to the parameters to be taken into account for decision-making. It is possible to indirectly consider areas, such as ethics, but they are secondary to the veterinary control of the disease.

130. The method of gathering the data by questionnaire was of concern to France and Denmark. The Delegate from France felt that the questions required yes and no answers, which were not possible in many instances. The Delegate from Denmark was concerned that the wide variations in the conclusions of the analysis may have been due in part to the speaker's personal interpretation of the data.
131. The speaker indicated that the data had not been interpreted, but rather presented to the model in the way the responses were returned. He acknowledged that there were occasions when certain responses could have needed further expansion to truly reflect the actual situation in the responding country. In certain cases, countries had had insufficient resources at their disposal to collect the data for completing the questionnaires satisfactorily.
132. The Delegate from France also considered that Veterinary Services have a fundamental role to play in tempering policies with regard to decision-making during an outbreak.
133. The Delegate from Denmark enquired whether the results of the FMD model had been fed into the contingency planning and control strategies of the country mainly under study (the Netherlands). The Delegate from the Netherlands responded that they had learned a great deal from the model and that the analyses of the model had been fed into a decision-making policy, and during the epidemic were released to politicians, the veterinary profession and the wider public.
134. The Representative from Italy was concerned that with the lack of hard data during a possible crisis, proper veterinary decision-making would be unduly influenced by models and complex mathematical analysis could not replace all the missing data in the model. He also questioned the ability to fight disease in a scenario where, in certain cases, it could improve the income for farmers by compensation. In response, the speaker confirmed that such models are above all decision support tools. In the case of the Netherlands, they had been shown to be quite accurate. On the matter of compensation, it was clear that economic advantage should not hamper disease control and there were many opportunities for improvements in this area.
135. A Representative from Finland questioned whether the model was too sensitive in relation to population densities. In Finland, with low population densities, contact probabilities could be less significant. The speaker agreed that such models were at an early stage and that there was still progress to be made in animal densities.
136. The Delegate from the Czech Republic indicated that such models should be largely for internal decision tools for Veterinary Services. There was a danger in dissemination to the public. They were, nevertheless, of some benefit in contingency planning in the early stages of an outbreak.
137. The Delegate from Norway felt that these models were a useful tool if used in a critical way. They would have to include ethical and social aspects in future decision-making. He asked what interest in such models had been shown by politicians. The speaker responded that in the Netherlands, there had been contacts with politicians, farming representatives and the general public, all of whom were interested in the analysis used to support their decision-making.
138. The Delegate from Spain also had concerns about the questionnaire and felt that no model covered all scenarios. She enquired if the longer term effects on trade and prices had been taken into account in the analysis. The speaker replied that the organisation of workshops could perhaps provide feedback on this type of analysis if funding were available, but that the variations in prices were taken into account on the basis of a sample carried out in Europe.
139. The Delegate from Russia agreed fully with France and Spain and pointed out that in Russia, the producer is always a 'loser', as there is no financial compensation for stamping-out procedures. He appealed to the OIE to develop guidelines to take account of this situation and to assist his country in soliciting a new government policy on this issue.

140. In response to the discussion, the Director General of the OIE considered that the timing of the conference (shortly after the summer vacation) may have been largely responsible for the fact that the questionnaires from Denmark, Spain and Sweden had not been included in the analysis. He pointed out that farm data was a prerequisite for the validity of many certificates defined by the OIE, but commented that the OIE together with the Codex Alimentarius would in the future work on all issues relating to traceability of animals and their products. In the current economic world environment, it was impossible for many countries to compensate farmers financially for stamping-out policies, but that the OIE can only assist Member Countries to propose to their Governments improvements in this area. The OIE also considered modelling a useful tool and Member Countries should use them to develop contingency plans and facilitate simulation exercises of outbreaks. However, care needs to be taken where the outputs from such modelling are used in a more public forum. One can recall the use by the media of erroneous models giving a forecast of 500,000 human deaths due to VCJD.
141. The Session Chairperson concluded the discussion by thanking all the participants and the speaker, and then requested a small group consisting of Dr Preben Willeberg and Dr Torben Grubbe (Denmark), Dr Ago Pärtel (Estonia), Dr Halldór Runólfsson (Iceland), Dr Oded Nir (Israel), Dr Ivar Vågsholm (Sweden) and Dr R. Houston (United Kingdom), to draft a recommendation on this technical item under the guidance of Prof. Huirne. Prof. Huirne agreed to complete his report with the responses of countries that had not been included in his first report and to forward the results to the OIE.

Presentations by international organisations and other institutions

World Health Organization

142. Dr H. Peter Braam, Department of Food-borne Diseases of the World Health Organization, gave a brief description of the WHO Global Food-borne Disease Surveillance Network.
143. Dr Braam recalled that food-borne pathogens that cause human illness are ever present throughout the world. They regularly cause outbreaks in developed and developing countries and have serious health and economic implications. In developing countries, the impact of food-borne diseases on people who may have limited access to healthcare and may be of marginal nutritional status, is potentially much more severe. By establishing surveillance systems, particularly in developing countries, it will be possible to better define and assess the global burden of food-borne diseases, and better estimate the number of people who are ill or dying from them. This information is critical to select appropriate food safety measures and define effective control and intervention strategies. He added that the WHO's Department of Communicable Disease Surveillance and Response (CSR) assists countries to strengthen their national and regional food-borne disease and pathogen surveillance systems. In addition, the CSR coordinates WHO Global Salm-Surv, a global surveillance network on Salmonellosis set up in January 2000. The network comprises institutions and experts who work on the isolation, characterisation and surveillance of food-borne pathogens. The WHO Global Salm-Surv is designed to assist Member States to strengthen surveillance and control activities for major food-borne diseases through the following four components: regional and national training courses for microbiologists; external quality assurance and reference testing programme on *Salmonella* serotyping and antimicrobial susceptibility testing; communication and information exchange between laboratories and experts via an electronic discussion group; web-based databank containing annual surveillance results of national and regional laboratories.
144. Dr Braam commented on additional activities of the WHO that include Sentinel sites to be established for food-borne disease surveillance in different WHO regions in certain developing countries. The WHO will propose model strategies for each selected location to assist developing countries in their evaluation of the burden of food-borne disease, in the identification of appropriate and priority control strategies, and in building their capacity to assess food-borne risks. To do this, developing regional and local initiatives and partnerships are essential. The concept of risk assessment was introduced in 1995 and was endorsed by the Codex Alimentarius. Surveillance data

are critical to the various activities involved in risk management: danger profiling, risk assessment and communication. Moreover, improving data on surveillance and food monitoring will help develop more appropriate strategies for control of food-borne diseases.

WHO/Mediterranean Zoonoses Control Centre (WHO/MZCC)

145. Dr Aristarhos Seimenis, Director of the WHO/Mediterranean Zoonoses Control Centre in Athens, Greece, described the Mediterranean Zoonoses Control Programme of the World Health Organization and its Plan of Work for 2002-2003.
146. The WHO Representative recalled that the Mediterranean Zoonoses Control Centre (MZCC) was established in 1979 in Athens, Greece, following the creation in 1978 by the WHO of the Mediterranean Zoonoses Control Programme (MZCP). The participating countries in the Programme are Bulgaria, Cyprus, Egypt, Greece, Lebanon, Kuwait, Portugal, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Syria and Turkey; Italy is a close collaborating country; countries associated with the Programme are Algeria, Jordan, Malta, Morocco and Tunisia. Participating countries meet every two years in a Joint Co-ordinating Committee, which, together with the WHO, is the governing body of the Programme, to evaluate the activities implemented during the past two years and define the Programme's plan of work for the next biennium.
147. Dr Seimenis added that the MZCP closely collaborates with the Department of Communicable Diseases Surveillance and Response (CSR) at WHO headquarters, Geneva, as well as with the WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean in Cairo, Egypt, specialised WHO Collaborating Centres and the MZCP network of National Participating Institutions. Moreover, it maintains close relationships with the Office International des Epizooties (OIE) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO/UN).
148. Dr Seimenis briefly outlined the main objectives of the Programme, namely to foster, both at national and inter-regional levels, programmes for the surveillance, prevention and control of zoonoses and related food-borne diseases as an integral part of national health programmes, to strengthen the co-operation between national animal health and public health services in order to improve surveillance, prevention and control of these diseases, and to foster collaboration between MZCP Member States. He added that the MZCC, in close co-operation with specialised WHO Collaborating Centres, implements and co-ordinates the activities of the Programme. Such activities include: exchange of information; planning and co-ordinating research projects; planning and conducting training courses; organising seminars, workshops, conferences, expert consultations; organising training in laboratory techniques and epidemiology; publishing and distributing educational and informative material; conducting surveys; promoting surveillance and reporting systems; and promoting public health education.
149. With regard to the MZCP plan of work for the period 2002-2003, Dr Seimenis explained that it included mainly training activities at international and national levels on subjects selected by the member countries. These activities aim towards improving the quality of human resources in the member countries. This orientation of MZCP activities enables it to respond to the necessities of its participating countries in this and other crucial sectors.
150. In conclusion, Dr Seimenis indicated that the MZCP has been recognised as an essential tool towards meeting the following important targets:
 - Development, in its field, of long standing collaborative practices between participating countries as well as other countries of the region.
 - Promotion of surveillance, prevention and control of the most important zoonoses and food-borne diseases affecting the region through joint efforts.
 - Contribution for better understanding of the importance and the need of intersectoral collaboration between animal and public health services, as well as other services with overlapping competencies to optimise resources and co-ordinate activities.

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

151. Dr Keith Sumption, Secretary of the European Commission for the Control of Foot and Mouth Disease, Animal Health Department, Division of Animal Production and Health, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), presented FAO activities in the region.
152. The representative from the FAO expressed the Organisation's satisfaction with the excellent quality of the relations developed with the OIE. In particular, the close links that have been established in the past years between the European Commission for the Control of Foot and Mouth Disease (EUFMD) of the FAO and the OIE Commission for Foot and Mouth Disease and other Epizootics. The FAO is confident that these relations will continue and be reinforced over the years.
153. Dr Sumption noted that since 2001, foot and mouth disease has become one of the major animal health issues in Europe and the epizootic outbreak in the United Kingdom revealed the vulnerability of Europe regarding FMD. Considering that the problem must be tackled at the source, the FAO is willing to cooperate with member countries and other international organisations to promote the control and possibly - as an ultimate phase - the eradication of FMD world-wide. This project should be developed through regional approaches and the FAO and EUFMD have already proposed the establishment of a centre for surveillance of the disease in Central Asia, based in Iran. Another programme for resuming the buffer zone project in the Caucasian region in 2003, is also under preparation by the EUFMD, with the support of the European Union and the OIE. The FMD situation has improved in Turkey, but the risk of introduction into Europe through Thrace still remains. Support from the European Commission to the amount of \$1 million to Turkey through the EUFMD Trust Funds to maintain the buffer zone in Thrace has been agreed. The Conference was also informed of the regional technical cooperation project (TCP) for surveillance of FMD and other exotic diseases in the Balkans, which has been jointly submitted to the FAO by Turkey, Greece and Bulgaria. The initiative of Turkey to promote Euro-Asiatic Veterinary cooperation is in line with the FAO policy in the region.

Federation of Veterinarians of Europe

154. Dr Pierre Choraine, Executive Director of the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE), thanked the Director General of the OIE for having invited FVE to attend this Conference. He reminded the participants that FVE was the umbrella body for the veterinary profession in Europe, with veterinary organisations from more than 30 European countries involved in its activities.
155. In respect of veterinary medicinal products, Dr Choraine called on countries involved in the discussion of the new Directive of the European Union to ensure that the definition of a veterinary prescription clearly states that it must be written by a veterinarian, that the advertising of prescription only medicines is prohibited and that the legal framework for the off-label use of medicinal products (the cascade) should allow for more flexibility. He also explained the concerns of the veterinary profession over the availability of equine medicines and the consequences that the withdrawal of a number of specific products licensed for horses, which are not intended for the food chain, would have for the equine industry. He then explained the latest developments in the field of education and licensing of veterinary surgeons. He stressed the efforts made by FVE to build a link between the Evaluation System of veterinary schools, operated by FVE and the European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education, and the European Directive on the mutual recognition of veterinary degrees.
156. With regard to animal welfare, the FVE Executive Director commented on the need to minimise the transport of live animals over long distance and instead to encourage the slaughter of animals as closely as possible to the point where they were raised, as well as the transport of carcasses rather than live animals. When transport is necessary, FVE would like to see controls being performed in the country of final destination and findings reported to the country of departure, where sanctions should be taken against transporters not observing animal welfare requirements. On animal health, and further to the killing of millions of healthy animals during the 2001 outbreaks of foot and mouth disease (FMD) in four countries of the European Union, Dr Choraine reported that the European

veterinary profession could no longer support the killing of healthy animals, when vaccines and diagnostic tools were available and could be used in the control of FMD as well as other contagious diseases.

157. In conclusion, the FVE Executive Director presented the European Code on Good Veterinary Practice, which should set the basis for improving the quality of the services provided by the veterinary profession, especially for those tasks, which might be delegated by the Competent Authorities to private veterinarians.

European Association for Animal Production (EAAP)

158. Prof. Hannu Saloniemi of the University of Helsinki, gave a brief overview of the European Association for Animal Production (EAAP).
159. Prof. Saloniemi recalled that the EAAP is an international federation of national member organisations from 37 countries in Europe and the Mediterranean area. The association was founded in 1949 in Paris under the auspices of the FAO. The EAAP promotes the advancement of scientific research, sustainable development of production and the welfare of farm animals. The majority of the participants in EAAP congresses, workshops and meetings are animal scientists from universities, research institutes and related organisations. Some veterinarians also participate in these events.
160. The scientific and technical arm of the EAAP consists of Study Commissions. The most relevant commission for the OIE is Animal Management and Health chaired by Prof. Francois Madec from France. In the annual congresses of the EAAP, the programme of this Commission regularly includes animal health and welfare related topics. This is an important channel to inform animal scientists about current questions and problems in animal health and diseases. The EAAP has good cooperation relations with the OIE, for example, in 2001, the Budapest Congress concerning the session 'Disease spreading, risk evaluation and consequences in international trade'.

European Commission (EC)

161. Dr Howard Batho, Head of the Sector Animal Health (Sector Imports) of the European Commission, indicated four main areas of importance, namely, control of certain diseases, communication of information, animal welfare and food safety. The FMD crisis in the United Kingdom had provided a catalyst for a number of important developments, such as its various Committees on FMD, the FMD conference in Brussels and the European Parliamentary Committee on FMD. These experiences are initiating a number of Commission proposals to strengthen its import checks (including passengers' personal imports), to try to prevent entry of organisms causing exotic disease, to strengthen internal control measures (draft a new FMD directive) and a proposal to attempt to limit spread of disease. It was highlighted that the Community's non-vaccination policy had not changed, but that recourse to emergency preventive vaccination could be used more readily than in the past.
162. Dr Batho reminded the participants that the Commission's import policy was not called into question, but that the problem arose from illegal introduction of food containing foot and mouth disease virus. The Commission representative thanked the OIE for the excellent work on the new FMD chapter of the *Code* agreed to in the General Session in May. However, more work is being undertaken on guidelines for restoration of the disease free status, a very important section of this dossier; this aspect was underlined. He also noted other fundamental work being carried out by the OIE in the areas of avian influenza, and notification and listing of diseases.

163. The Commission representative stressed the importance of detailed information exchange, and the need for regional cooperation in activities relating to disease control, highlighting classical swine fever in wild boars as an example in the European Union. The importance of 'the farm to fork' approach, including the close interrelationship between animal health, animal welfare and food safety was underlined. The OIE now has a mandate for animal welfare and certain aspects of food safety, resulting in an increase in work, requiring additional resources, proper planning and new negotiations. Dr Batho gave the assurance that the Commission would continue to support the OIE in this work.

Presentation and discussion of draft Recommendations Nos 1, 2 and 3

164. Draft Recommendations Nos 1, 2 and 3 were put forward for discussion. Several amendments were called for in all three Recommendations, which were presented again on Friday.

Dates, venue and agenda items for the 21st Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe

165. The President of the Regional Commission asked the Delegates whether any country would like to host the 21st Conference of the Commission. On behalf of the Government of her country, the Delegate of Spain offered to host the next Conference of the Commission in her country. The invitation was unanimously accepted and applauded by all participants. The exact dates were not fixed, but Delegates agreed that the Conference would be held in October 2004.
166. The following technical items were adopted for the 21st Conference:
- Contingency planning and simulation exercises for the control of epizootics;
 - Structure and organisation of Veterinary Services to implement the concept 'from the stable to the table'.

Thursday 12 September 2002

Field trip

167. Participants were given an insight into local agricultural production and enjoyed the beautiful lakes and forests of the region.

Friday 13 September 2002

Presentation of draft Recommendations Nos 1, 2 and 3

168. Draft Recommendations were distributed to participants and put forward for discussion.

Adoption of the draft Final Report and Recommendations

169. The Conference adopted the draft Final Report and Recommendations Nos. 1, 2 and 3 pending a minor amendment in Recommendation No. 2, which is given in this report.

Closing Ceremony

170. The Governor of the Ulea region of Finland, Mr Eino Siuruainen, expressed his pleasure in addressing the Conference participants in Kuusamo. He said that he was mindful of the enthusiasm and efforts that had been brought together to enable this Conference to produce the successful outcome that it had so evidently achieved.
171. During a short presentation of slides on this northern region, the Governor commented on the geographical, social and agricultural aspects of the province. He indicated that the region is sparsely populated and still mainly of an agricultural nature, although the percentage of the population active in agriculture and forestry has decreased. With regard to agricultural production, cattle are mainly reared in the southern parts of the region, cattle and reindeer in the central and eastern parts and reindeer in the northern parts. A considerable amount of agricultural products of this region are to be found on the European Union market. The Governor remarked that industry has not yet been developed in the region and that unemployment is high. He concluded by thanking the Delegate of Finland and the organisers for having given him the opportunity to address the Conference.
172. Dr Vallat noted the conclusions to be drawn from the proceedings of the Conference and praised its success and the interest of the technical items chosen by the Commission. He remarked on the capacity of the Regional Commission for Europe to make decisive choices in OIE standards. He expressed his sincere gratitude to the Authorities of Finland for the welcome they had accorded to all participants and commented that the success of the Conference was to a great extent due to the excellent organisation, gastronomy and beautiful surroundings. He extended his sincere thanks to Dr Jaana Husu-Kallio for having organised and presided over the meeting with such efficiency, and wished her every success in her new functions at the European Commission in Brussels. He also wished the new Chief Veterinary Officer for Finland, still to be nominated, much success. The Director General congratulated the speakers for their presentations and all those who had contributed to, and enriched, the discussions. He expressed his gratitude to the Conference Secretariat and the interpreters for the quality of their work. A final expression of thanks went to the Delegate of Spain for offering to host the next Conference of the Regional Commission for Europe.
173. Dr Belev underlined that the perfect organisation and cordial hospitality ensured by the host country enabled all the participants to hold fruitful discussions and prepare a number of useful recommendations on the future activities of the OIE. He remarked on the high levels of activity, proficiency and competence of the Delegates, speakers and all the other participants, which greatly facilitated the work. He said that the help rendered by the assistants of the OIE Central Bureau and the personal participation of the Director General, Dr Bernard Vallat, and the President, Dr Romano Marabelli, played an important role in this excellent organisation. The President of the Regional Commission for Europe remarked that the Conference has proved that there are no unsolvable problems, and that in the atmosphere of transparency and credibility between countries these problems could be easily overcome. He noted that a number of international organisations also took an active part in the Conference thus contributing to its successful outcome.
174. In conclusion, Dr Belev extended his thanks to the Head of the National Veterinary Services of Finland, Dr Jaana Husu-Kallio, to all her assistants, to the members of the Secretariat and the interpreters for their dedicated work before and during the entire conference. On behalf of all the participants, Dr Belev then read out a motion of thanks to the Governmental Authorities of Finland, to express gratitude for the warm hospitality received.
175. Dr Husu-Kallio recalled the useful exchanges, conclusions and recommendations that were made during the Conference. She then thanked all the Delegates and other participants who had made the Conference possible. Special thanks went to the speakers, session chairpersons and rapporteurs, in particular the Rapporteur General, and the OIE Secretariat and Ministry staff. She also extended her sincere thanks to the Director General, Dr Bernard Vallat, and the President, Dr Romano Marabelli, for their valuable support. The Delegate of Finland wished all a safe journey home and declared the 20th Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe officially closed at 11.30 a.m.

MOTION OF THANKS

The OIE Regional Commission for Europe, the Director General of the OIE, members of Delegations, observers and representatives of countries and international organisations, wish to express their gratitude to the Government of Finland, the Host Country of the 20th Conference of the Regional Commission, for the excellent welcome accorded to the participants and for all facilities made available to them during their stay in Kuusamo from 10 to 13 September 2002.

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