

## **Legal and Policy Affairs Unit**

### **REPORT**

#### **The Pre-Accession Seminar on BSE and other TSEs**

Zagreb, 26-27 March 2008

#### **Objective of the seminar**

Within the programme of this seminar the general work in EFSA on BSE, other TSEs and Animal By-Products (ABPs) was presented. Scientific Officers of the EFSA's BIOHAZ Unit presented the future role of EFSA in the TSE area and its collaboration with the Member States. Representatives from the 3 Member States, Belgium, France and Ireland informed the participants on their work and organization on BSE and other TSEs. Experiences from the Candidate Countries were presented as well.

#### **Audience**

The number of participants from the three Candidate Countries was 51 (15 experts from Turkey, 10 experts from the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and 26 experts from Croatia). Different authorities were represented in the seminar as follows:

From Turkey:

Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs (MARA) - General Directorate of Protection and Control (GDPC), Department of Animal Movement and Quarantine, Department of Food and Feed Registration Services, Department of Food Control Services, Department of Public Health Services, Ministry of Health, Ankara University-Faculty of Veterinary, Istanbul University-Faculty of Veterinary

From Croatia:

Croatian Food Agency, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Rural Development, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine Zagreb, Croatian Veterinary Institute Zagreb, Rijeka, Križevci and Vinkovci, Croatian Chamber of Economy, Zagreb County – Economic and Agribusiness Affairs Administrative Department.

From the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia:

Ministry of Health-Food Directorate, Ministry of Agriculture-Veterinary Directorate-Sector for animal health protection, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine.

#### **Interpretation**

Simultaneous interpretation (to/from English, Turkish, Croatian and Macedonian) was provided.

## General considerations:

The Seminar was welcomed by *Sanja Miloš*, Scientific Officer in the Croatian Food Agency and the EFSA Pre-Accession Programme National Coordinator. She gave her views on the importance of such seminars for development of cooperation and networking between representatives from Candidate Countries and Member States and EFSA. The programme continued with the presentation by *Goran Kumrić*, Policy Officer in the EFSA's Legal and Policy Affairs Unit, Seconded National Expert from Croatia, with an introduction to EFSA and its role in the EU Enlargement. He briefly presented the results of EFSA Pre-Accession Programme 2006-2007 for Turkey and Croatia and gave an overview of the main objectives and activities within the Pre-Accession Programme 2008 for the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey and Croatia.

The next speaker *Luis Vivas-Alegre*, Scientific Officer in BSE Team – Biological Hazards Unit presented EFSA's general work on BSE, other TSEs and ABPs. The speaker mentioned the activities the EFSA Panel on Biological Hazards is dealing with and the procedure of issuing a scientific opinion on the case of Vertebral Column as Specified Risk Material. Further to this *L. Vivas-Alegre* presented the development of Geographical BSE Risk Assessment Methodologies and used a case of a BSE diagnosis in goat as an example of EFSA's rapid reaction to new findings. In the end he concluded that the TSE tests evaluation, BSE-TSE Networking activities and the assessment of alternative methods for ABP use or disposal are standing items in the agenda of this Panel.

The programme continued with a presentation by *Pietro Stella*, Scientific Officer – BSE Team – Biological Hazards Unit on EFSA Principles in the Assessment of Alternative Processes for the treatment of ABPs. The speaker explained what the ABPs are, how they are managed and which methods of processing and disposal are in use. The participants were informed about the criteria EFSA uses in evaluation of an application that propose new alternative methods for the disposal or use of ABPs.

Before the break representatives from the three Candidate Countries asked questions and exchanged views on specific topics of mutual interests with the speakers from EFSA and the Member States.

The next speaker was *John Griffin*, Head of Veterinary Division responsible for TSEs and Animal By-Products, Department of Agriculture and Food, Ireland and the member of EFSA's BIOHAZ Panel who presented the work and organization on BSE and other TSEs in UK and Ireland. The speaker gave a comprehensive overview of the identification and development of BSE crises as well as the BSE surveillance and control programme.

The work and organization on BSE and other TSEs in Belgium was presented by *Stefan Roels*, Head of the NRL for Veterinary TSE and Head of the Unit of Pathology Section - Department of Biocontrol, Veterinary and Agrochemical Research Centre VAR-CODA-CERVA. *Rozenn Saunier*, Unit for Biological Risk Evaluation, French Food Safety Agency, AFSSA presented the work and organization on BSE and other TSEs in France.

She informed the participants about the application of TSE control measures and presented the analysis of the trend of the BSE epidemic in her country.

The second day of the seminar started with a presentation done by *Şebnem Gürbüz*, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, Department of Animal Movement and Quarantine on the work and organization on BSE and other TSEs in Turkey. After presenting the legislative framework she informed the participants about the monitoring programmes and testing methods. The work of the National Reference Laboratory was presented as well. The topic of the next speech by *Toni Kirandziski*, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy, Veterinary Directorate, Department for Animal Health Protection was the work and organization on BSE and other TSEs in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The speaker gave an overview of the national surveillance programme and methods used by the National Reference Laboratory. The next presentation was on the work and organization on BSE and other TSEs in Croatia by *Sanja Šeparović*, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Rural Development, Department for Veterinary Science. The speaker presented the work and cooperation between different institutions on the BSE issues on the national level and informed the participants about the work of National Reference Laboratory.

Representatives from EFSA and Member States took the possibility to ask questions to the speakers from the Candidate Countries in order to better understand the situation on BSE and other TSEs in those countries.

The last presentation of this seminar, the future role of EFSA in the area of TSE in collaboration with the Member States was presented by *Fulvio Barizzzone*, Scientific Officer – BSE Team–Biological Hazards Unit, EFSA. He concluded that regarding the epidemiological situation at the EU level protective measures in place are effective. What concerns the situation with BSE outside the EU, according to the speaker EFSA should expand its views beyond EU borders and use a global approach in order to avoid possible further spread of BSE or reintroduction into the EU.

### **Conclusions:**

There was a very good debate on the situation today in the EU and in the Candidate Countries and on what the Candidate Countries need to do to live up to the EU legislation on TSEs. The BSE team had a very good dialog with the representatives from the 3 Candidate Countries based on their presentations and it was agreed that an expert from each of the 3 countries will be appointed as contact person for the BIOHAZ BSE Network and will join the next BSE network meeting which will take place in Cyprus 26/27 June 2008. Their participation will be financed by the Pre-Accession Programme.