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**COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN
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COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS**

on

**A new Animal Health Strategy for the European Union (2007-2013) where “Prevention
is better than cure”**

SUMMARY OF THE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

New Animal Health Strategy (2007-2013)

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SUMMARY

New Animal Health Strategy (2007-2013)

The Community Animal Health Policy (CAHP) has come a long way since its initial stages of development in the early 1960s. The adoption of common rules at EU level for the trading of animals and marketing of animal products has played a key role in guaranteeing adequate safety and health standards, enabling intra-community trade and enhancing animal health in general. The CAHP has been further built upon as a result of a succession of major crisis and disease outbreaks that have happened in recent years.

An evaluation was launched by DG SANCO in 2004 to assess the performance of the CAHP over the last decade. During the evaluation period, a number of issues were identified and these are summarised in this document. This initiative intends to address these issues as well as the new challenges that the CAHP faces today.

The main issues identified during the evaluation included the high complexity of the current CAHP, the lack of an overall strategy, and in particular an insufficient focus on disease prevention. These issues have in turn resulted in additional problems, such as a lack of sufficient consistency and coherence with other related policies. Other issues that were raised during the evaluation process were the need for better communication and involvement of stakeholders in the policy making and the need to clarify roles and responsibilities. In addition, problems related to the current financial framework and to the implementation of controls on imports at Member State level were also highlighted. Finally, it was recognised that the assessment of the performance of the CAHP has been too limited.

The global objectives of the CAHP are to ensure a high level of public health while contributing to economic growth and competitiveness and to promote good farming practices which prevent the transmission of animal diseases and comply with animal welfare standards whilst enabling a sustainable development. To achieve these overall objectives, specific objectives were established for the CAHP. Firstly, the EU should focus intervention on animal diseases of high EU-relevance by profiling and categorisation of biological and chemical risks, setting of priorities, quantifiable targets and performance indicators, and the amount of resources to be committed to the identified threats. Secondly, an increased transparency and effectiveness of disease prevention and control should be achieved by setting up a single and clearer regulatory framework, establishing rules and mechanisms that facilitate international trade, while safeguarding a high level of public and animal health, providing incentives for risk-prevention at farms and more responsibilities to the farming sector on disease prevention, improving surveillance and crisis preparedness. The EU will stimulate innovation, science and research to provide better tools to fight against animal diseases. This initiative also seeks to contribute to EU-wide objectives, in particular those related to better regulation and the Lisbon Strategy.

To address the problems identified during the evaluation, three broad options were considered in this document. The impact assessment does not go into detail on the different sub-options that have been considered for each specific issue as this analysis has already been done in the context of the evaluation and is included in the final report of the evaluation. The three broad options incorporate the preferred identified sub-option for each specific issue. The first approach identified was the no-change option, which is based on continuing with the current CAHP. The second option is to introduce a new "soft" Animal Health Strategy. This Strategy would focus on soft-regulatory tools, and would aim to improve communication, cooperation and the technical assistance to third countries. In addition, it would aim to support science and research and it would tackle enforcement issues at Member State level. The last option considered was to introduce a new multi-faceted Animal Health Strategy. This strategy would be based on the actions described in the second option, but would also include additional legal elements and in particular the introduction of a new horizontal legal framework, the possible development of an harmonised cost-sharing scheme, the development of an export strategy at EU level, and the implementation of electronic means for animal identification and certification.

The social, economic and environmental impacts of these three options were analysed in this document. The analysis has remained mainly qualitative at this stage due to the broad nature of the initiative and also considering the fact that further studies are planned to fully consider the implications (especially in terms of cost and benefits) of the most important actions envisaged. Annex II provides details on the various studies that are planned. In any case, any new legal proposal will have to undergo a specific impact assessment before it is submitted.

Following this analysis, the overall conclusion was that option 3 was the best option to respond to the issues identified in the evaluation as well as the new challenges that the CAHP is facing, as option 2 despite its positive impacts would not fully address the problems identified.