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NOTE

From:	Presidency
To:	Working Party of Chief Veterinary Officers
Subject:	Draft CVO conclusions on strengthening and adaptation of the preventive measures to the existing risk of Classical and African Swine Fever introduction into the EU

At its meeting of 4-5 September 2013, the Working Party of Chief Veterinary Officers discussed the results of the workshop on *strengthening and adaptation of the preventive measures to the existing risk of classical and African swine fever introduction into the EU*, which took place in Vilnius on 3-4 September and was organised in cooperation with the Lithuanian Presidency, TAIEX and DG SANCO.

Based on these discussions and the recent exchange of views at the Agriculture and Fisheries Council on 23 September 2013¹, the Working Party will find draft conclusions presented in the Annex I to this note.

¹ Doc. 13393/13.

DRAFT CVO CONCLUSIONS ON STRENGTHENING AND ADAPTATION OF THE PREVENTIVE MEASURES TO THE EXISTING RISK OF CLASSICAL AND AFRICAN SWINE FEVER INTRODUCTION INTO THE EU

The Working Party of Chief Veterinary Officers, on the occasion of its meeting in Brussels on 8 October 2013, examined the results of the workshop organised in Vilnius 3-4 September 2013 by the Lithuanian Presidency and the Commission.

In the light of the discussions and exchanges of view among participants of the workshop,

RECALLING the CVO conclusions² on the prevalence and eradication of African Swine Fever (ASF) and other animal infectious diseases in the third countries neighbouring the EU, in particular its concern about the observed increase in the risk of transmission of ASF to Member States bordering the affected third countries and/or having intensive trade relations with them;

and SUPPORTING the conclusions of the workshop (as set out in Annex II), underlining that cooperation on preventing, controlling and eradicating CSF and ASF in European countries is based on transparency and trust, and should be strengthened at every opportunity at both regional and sub-regional level. The success of CSF and ASF prevention and control largely depends on the good functioning of veterinary services, which need to be thoroughly prepared for crisis situations.

² Doc. 16634/11.

the Working Party of Chief Veterinary Officers

CONSIDERS THAT

- the Commission's coordinating role of the preventive actions being taken by the EU should be enhanced;
- it is of key importance to ensure availability of a financing mechanism in order to help the sector to cover direct and market losses as well as restocking after depopulation of pigs in case of the occurrence of the disease.

**TAIEX AGR 53521****Workshop on Strengthening and Adaptation of the Preventive Measures to the Existing Risk of Classical and African Swine Fever Introduction into the EU
Vilnius, Lithuania, 3-4 September 2013****CONCLUSIONS****1. Introduction**

The following conclusions summarise the results of the workshop based on the contributions of speakers and participants. They represent a common understanding of the prevention and control strategies for two diseases — Classical Swine Fever (CSF) and African Swine Fever (ASF) — that have high priority in this region of Europe.

An initial version of the workshop's conclusions was presented by the CVO of Lithuania, Dr Jonas Milius, at the end of the first day of the workshop. The results of the working groups of the second day, where CSF and ASF prevention and control strategies were discussed in more detail, have been included in this revised version of the document.

2. Conclusions

The general outcome of the workshop is cooperation. Cooperation on preventing, controlling and eradicating CSF and ASF in European countries is based on transparency and trust, and should be strengthened at every opportunity at both regional and sub-regional level. The success of CSF and ASF prevention and control largely depends on the good functioning of veterinary services, which need to be thoroughly prepared for crisis situations.

2.1. Application of preventive measures

Preventive and strict biosecurity measures are an important stage of the control process. A combination of tools is needed when solving a problem; it is important, however, to choose those that are right for each and every one of us. Possible tools include:

- making ASF and CSF prevention and control the responsibility of governments, with veterinary services taking on the leading role in close coordination with relevant ministries and agencies, including customs, forestry services, internal affairs and the police;
- as a consequence, robust veterinary services that comply with relevant World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) international standards (crucial for preventing and controlling ASF and CSF, as well as other transboundary animal diseases); an effective chain of command; comprehensive veterinary legislation; consistent national prevention and control measures throughout the national territory; and adequate human and financial resources;



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- obliging countries to notify the OIE in a timely manner of their evolving epidemiological situation, and encouraging them to inform their neighbouring countries;
- strengthening surveillance programmes, which should be carried out in accordance with the national farm structure, with the possibility of backyard farms using both clinical and laboratory surveillance;
- establishing buffer zones and reinforcing biological safety measures, such as the prohibition of or compulsory heat treatment of swill feeding in these zones, as well as optimising the number of animals;
- progressively modernising the pig production sector while safeguarding backyard and traditional production systems by means of appropriate support policies;
- introducing and implementing proportional preventive measures with broader future prospects — not only to protect against one or two diseases but also as a long-term investment in the overall area of veterinary control;
- applying international standards to movement restrictions for certain risk commodities in order to prevent pathogens being introduced in a country or zone previously free of them;
- vaccinating domestic pigs and wild boar against CSF.

2.2. Control measures

In terms of control measures it is obvious that stricter measures are essential in territories having borders with affected countries. But it is also important to fully respect international standards and basic concepts of regionalisation, and to apply adequate measures, strengthen existing controls and apply new measures as appropriate. Consideration should be given to:

- ensuring that suitable and updated contingency plans are in place, including an effective compensation scheme, emergency vaccination, cleaning and disinfection, movement restriction (standstill), public information, waste and carcass disposal, and verification testing;
- drawing up an interdisciplinary collaboration plan (veterinary services with agriculture, police, municipalities, environment, finance, etc.);
- enhancing biosecurity as well as animal and animal product movement control systems, both between infected and free zones and within infected zones, in order to reduce the risk of introducing or spreading diseases, which should cover:
 - effective disinfection of livestock vehicles: all vehicles involved in the shipment of live animals or which have been in contact with animals pose a high risk of spreading disease and proper disinfection must be ensured (e.g. under certain conditions vehicles may need to be disinfected repeatedly at the border), including vehicles



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- involved in the meat trade and animal production; this requires adequate infrastructure and resources available on a routine basis;
 - o effective disinfection procedures for farms and market places, assembly centres, etc.;
 - o strengthening the control of special conditions for pig slaughter and animal and meat marketing rules, especially banning the distribution of meat from on-farm slaughter;
 - o strengthening and reinforcing border controls of passengers' luggage, animals, animal products, feeds and other potential sources of disease;
 - o controlling hunting practices, including possible limitations, compulsory pre-market sampling, etc.
- animal identification and/or a herd registration system in order to have current knowledge of the situation;
 - measures to address wildlife such as wild boar vaccination against CSF or measures to mitigate the risk posed by the transboundary movement of wild animals, if is an actual risk factor, and control of the density of those wild populations;
 - vaccination programmes in endemic zones;
 - ensuring the capacity of the rendering system, and rules for burial, incineration and other means of waste and carcass disposal;
 - applying these measures in coordination with neighbouring countries with possible joint programmes, if the infected zones are in or threaten cross-border areas.

2.3. Communication

- Transparent, open and fast communication is essential — rapid dissemination of information is the major measure that EU Member States and their neighbouring countries need to apply to build trust and ensure the coordination of surveillance activities and an adequate response to a constantly changing situation in relation to animal diseases.
- Openness and transparency also help to better implement proportional regionalisation and movement restrictions in accordance with international standards.
- Communication has to cover all sectors, from governmental to non-governmental, including the timely communication of information to the public to avoid inadequate reaction by consumers as a result of the dissemination of false or misleading information.
- There is a need to target continuous professional training, seminars, simulation exercises and other measures of communication and education, with a view to demand and efficiency because feedback is important not only at national but also international level.

2.4. Promoting initiatives at international level

To ensure appropriate as well as effective and efficient policies for preventing and controlling ASF and CSF, international standards must be applied. The damage caused by these two diseases



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to the farming community and large parts of society increases exponentially when existing international standards are not respected. To ensure success, joint transboundary preventive and control actions are also needed, for example:

- establishing a regional network of laboratories, including reference laboratories, and ensuring the timely diagnosis of animal diseases and permanent testing for the surveillance of such diseases through the participation of laboratories in various countries in the system, and modern highly efficient diagnostic testing methods for CSF and ASF like PCR and serological testing methods be validated and available;
- using the existing regional platforms for the control of transboundary animal diseases such as the OIE/FAO GF-TADs for Europe, which is a mechanism to ensure coordination of control efforts and exchange of information and best practices;
- cooperating with the European Commission with a view to facilitating the implementation of animal disease control programmes in the countries neighbouring the EU;
- promoting the continuous improvement of international OIE standards aimed at controlling CSF and ASF, risk assessments (including the actual role of wildlife and vector in the dissemination) and scientific research at regional and international level;
- conducting additional studies to better understand the exact role of wild boars and ticks in the transmission and spread of ASF.

2.5. Resources

Any creation of the human mind can be realised; however, support for its realisation requires the allocation of resources, in particular human and financial resources.

As far as priority issues and common interests are concerned, contributions both at national and European Union level are required to prevent and eradicate certain animal diseases.

We expect that upcoming new financing instruments such as the new EU Financial Regulation on expenditure in the veterinary field and on the food chain will be suitable tools for all EU Member States irrespective of their size, and that they will also facilitate access to financial support available to countries neighbouring the EU, including the co-financing of resources allocated to prevention at a rate of up to 100%.

Countries should consider the following other resources: TAIEX study tours, experts missions and workshops, and FAO/OIE CMC-AH and EU Veterinary Emergency Team missions.

As mentioned previously, there are many ways of solving a problem, but we have to choose the one that is right for each and every one of us.