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	ORGANISATION DES NATIONS UNIES POUR L'ALIMENTATION ET L'AGRICULTURE	
	ORGANIZACION DE LAS NACIONES UNIDAS PARA LA AGRICULTURA Y LA ALIMENTACION	

EUROPEAN COMMISSION FOR THE CONTROL OF FOOT-AND-MOUTH DISEASE

MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Athens, Greece, 22-24 October 1968

FAO CAMPAIGNS IN TURKEY, GREECE AND BULGARIA

Introduction

The campaigns against exotic foot-and-mouth disease viruses in south-eastern Europe and Anatolia have been continued in accordance with the programme set up at the last FAO/EEC/CIE Consultative Committee Meeting held in Turkey from 3-7 April 1967. At this meeting it was proposed to carry out one more vaccination of the buffer zones located in Greece, Bulgaria and Turkey covering possibly most of Turkish Thrace, to continue the services of the virologist and the instrument technician until the end of 1968 and to purchase certain indispensable equipment needed to speed up vaccine production at the new foot-and-mouth disease institute at Ankara.

Epizootiology

A further regression of foot-and-mouth disease outbreaks was noted during autumn and winter of 1967, the O virus having taken over completely from the A₂₂ virus which had not caused any outbreaks in Turkish Thrace since August 1967, while the last SAT1 outbreak occurred in July 1965.

In the spring, O virus suddenly reappeared in Thrace, but limited to a few animals and could be eradicated quickly. No outbreaks of O virus have been since recorded.

In June, however, several outbreaks due to A₂₂ occurred again in Yerkoy, province of Yozgat, in the centre of Anatolia in a limited number of cattle, probably animals which were sent from Kars to the Istanbul market. Yerkoy is a resting station for cattle transported by rail. Soon afterwards another outbreak occurred in Kars and other surrounding provinces, all in eastern Turkey. At present no further outbreaks have occurred in Anatolia after ring vaccination was carried out.

The fact that the A₂₂ virus seems to have been completely eradicated from Thrace is remarkable in view of the fact that no vaccination was carried out in the autumn of 1967, neither in the buffer zone nor in the remainder of Thrace.

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MINUTES

A meeting of the Executive Committee was held in Athens, Greece, on 22-24 October 1968. Dr. C. Werdelin-Denmark (Chairman), Mr. J. Reid-U.K. (Vice-Chairman) Dr. R.P. Gaier-Austria (Vice-Chairman), Dr. T. Analytis-Greece and Dr. J. Cardassis, Director, Foot-and-Mouth Disease Laboratory, Aghia Paraskevi Attikis, Dr. A. Nabholz - Switzerland, Dr. L. Polak, Czechoslovakia, Dr. E.A. Eichhorn, Secretary, a.i. and Miss Guarino of the Secretariat of the European Commission were present.

An apology for absence was received from Dr. van den Born who was represented by Dr. van den Berg.

Dr. L. Bellani - Italy - was unable to attend.

During part of the Meeting when items 1 - 4 were dealt with, a number of veterinarians and others interested in foot-and-mouth disease control attended. Dr. Th. Analytis, Director of Veterinary Services, Greece, acted as host.

The meeting was opened by the Under-Secretary of State for Agriculture, Mr. G. Tsistopolous who welcomed the members of the Executive Committee in the name of the Government of Greece. He mentioned that the subjects which the Committee was going to deal with were of great interest to his country since they concerned the most contagious and important disease, from an economical point of view, affecting the livestock of Greece.

Last year's epizootic of foot-and-mouth disease presented a serious danger for the livestock population of Greece but, due to the timely intervention of the Veterinary Services, this danger was averted and the disease eradicated from Greek territory. In this effort, Greece was efficiently supported by FAO and the success obtained was the result of close cooperation which the Government wishes to develop further in order to promote livestock production and so to expand the most important source of protein for her population. The national Government has included livestock production in its five-year plan, the main aim of which is the creation of large production units in the form of enterprise. However, all these efforts cannot give the desired results without an efficient veterinary service.

In order to potentiate the means and facilities of the Greek Veterinary Services, the Foot-and-Mouth Disease Institute at Aghia Paraskevi and other veterinary laboratories will be further expanded.

The Under-Secretary of State wished the Committee a fruitful meeting.

in Cairo to assist in the foot-and-mouth disease programme and one of its main objectives will be to develop vaccine production.

OIE

The Secretary General of the OIE Permanent Commission on Foot-and-Mouth Disease reviewed the role of OIE in relation to foot-and-mouth research. Every effort was made to ensure close collaboration with FAO, and its various Committees. At the meeting held in Paris, November 1968, a broad review was made of the developments in various aspects of foot-and-mouth disease research and, at the same time, to identify gaps in current knowledge. Discussions were based on a questionnaire which had been distributed as a working document to participants previously. Dr. Moosbrugger summarised the conclusions of this very important meeting, which referred to serological characteristics of the virus, culture methods, development of immunity following vaccination, post-vaccinal reactions and epizootiology. The minutes and full conclusions had already been distributed.

III. CAMPAIGNS AGAINST FOOT-AND-MOUTH DISEASE IN SOUTH-EASTERN EUROPE AND ANATOLIA

The maintenance of buffer zones had been dealt with during the discussion of the position of Foot-and-Mouth Disease in Europe (reported Item II, Greece, Bulgaria, Turkey). The Commission reviewed and approved the work reported in document 16/69/3, given in Appendix 4. The decision not to use the small amount remaining in the emergency reserve for further vaccine purchases under present circumstances was endorsed but efforts to secure additional vaccine from other sources were welcomed. The Chairman reported that the Federal Republic of Germany had agreed to donate 160,000 doses of monovalent type O vaccine if the cost of transport and insurance could be met. The Commission agreed to cover these expenses. The Commission was also pleased to note the progress made toward the initiation of the UNDP/SF project, being developed by FAO, for the Ankara Institute as well as the efforts being made by the Turkish authorities to continue with their own resources the buffer zone programme in Thrace aimed mainly at the protection of Europe, despite the fact that this zone has been free of foot-and-mouth disease since November 1967.

IV. REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

This appears as Appendix 5 of the Session report. In introducing this item the Chairman drew attention to the growing scope of activities being undertaken by the Secretariat, especially in Turkey, the Near East and Central Europe as well as through contacts with other parts of the world.

The prospect that Hungary may soon become a member of the Commission was welcomed and it was agreed that the membership subscription could, if necessary, be paid in national currency.

The Chairman also summarized the report (published on a separate issue) of the meeting of the Research Group of the Standing Technical Committee held at the State Veterinary Institute, Lindholm, Denmark, from 17-19 September 1968. He also expressed the Commission's appreciation for the excellence of the facilities provided and work done.

During the discussion, reference was made to the pre-clinical spread of virus. It was concluded that while the experimental evidence was irrefutable, experience in field control programmes had shown that such spread was not overwhelmingly important and probably occurred only under very unusual circumstances.

An amendment to the Group's recommendation concerning restrictions on the movement of slaughter stock or meat from areas where exotic strains had occurred, or where vaccination against them had been carried out, was approved. At the suggestion

of the Executive Committee the Paragraph 5 b) of the Group's Report will therefore read "Where vaccination is practised a similar restriction should apply for 3 months from the date of vaccination without prejudice to the requirements established in Paragraph a) above". It was agreed that this should be regarded as a guideline for member countries (Appendix 6).

The question of the reaction of young animals to vaccination was also discussed and the majority opinion appeared to be that calves did react to vaccine but to a much lower antibody level than did adults. It was agreed that the question of vaccination requirements for young stock, for which a Movement Certificate is to be issued, should be considered by the Research Group.

The Research Group's plan to hold its next meeting at Brescia from 24 - 26 September 1969, was approved. The Agenda was adjusted to take into account the various matters raised by the Commission and will be as follows:

1. Immunizing power of vaccine
 - (a) the PD₅₀ which must be contained in one cattle dose
 - (b) variation with the age of the animal
 - (c) correlation of antibody level with protection
2. Production of virus in monolayer and suspension tissue culture
3. Anaphylaxis
4. Sub-types - a situation report.

A draft paper prepared at the request of the Executive Committee, concerning the procedure for dealing with outbreaks of disease due to exotic types of foot-and-mouth disease virus, and in particular with the question of stock piling vaccines and seed virus, was considered and approved by the Commission. It appears as Appendix 7 to this report.

Future Activities

The future activities of the Commission and the Secretariat as outlined in the Executive Committee's Report, were approved.

V. BUDGET AND ACCOUNTS

The budget and accounts as shown in Appendices 8 and 9 were approved by the Session. It was noted that the budget reflected the increased contributions which had become payable by all member countries. Despite certain increases in costs there would be a small surplus for special expenses.

VI. ELECTIONS

On the proposal of the Delegation of the United Kingdom, seconded by the Delegation of the Netherlands, Dr. Christian Werdelin (Denmark) was unanimously re-elected Chairman for the next year by the Commission.

On the proposal of the Delegation of Ireland, seconded by the Delegation of Switzerland, Mr. J. Reid (United Kingdom) and Mr. R. Gaier (Austria) were unanimously re-elected as Vice-Chairmen for the next year by the Commission.

On the proposal of the Delegation from Norway, seconded by the Delegation of Sweden, Dr. J.M. van den Born (Netherlands), Dr. Th. Analytis (Greece), Dr. A. Nabholz (Switzerland) and Professor L. Bellani (Italy) were unanimously re-elected as members of the Executive Committee by the Commission.

VII. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

The draft report of the XVIth Session, as presented, was approved, subject to the amendments made at the meeting and to any necessary editorial change.

VIII. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The dates for the XVIIth Session of the Commission which will be held in Rome were fixed as 18 - 20 March 1970.

An invitation to the Research Group of the Standing Technical Committee to hold its meeting in 1970 at Ankara was recorded.

APPENDIX V

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

General activities

The activities of the Commission since the XVth Session (26-28 March 1968) have followed the programme of work initiated in 1962 when participation in the campaigns against exotic foot-and-mouth disease in eastern Europe began. Although handicapped by the lack of a full-time Secretary during most of 1968, the Commission was able to carry out its regular work in conformity with the provisions made for it in the Constitution, thanks to the special efforts of Dr. Eichhorn and Miss Guarino.

Contact was maintained between the Secretariat, the Chairman and Member Governments on important sanitary and administrative issues, meetings were arranged and attended, information was sought on foot-and-mouth disease in Europe and all activities relating to the campaigns against exotic foot-and-mouth disease in south-eastern Europe and Anatolia were sustained.

Plans have been prepared for an extension of the Commission's work to encompass new tasks which have arisen as a result of continued progress in the control of foot-and-mouth disease, as well as from additional epizootiological information on areas of particular concern to the Commission, such as the Near East and Africa, which could serve as sources of new exotic or classical strains of the virus.

In May 1968 the Chief, Animal Health Branch of FAO, was approached by the "Committee of Inquiry on Foot-and-Mouth Disease", investigating the recent epizootic in Britain, to prepare a paper on preventive and control measures. It was agreed that a joint memorandum should be prepared by Dr. E. A. Eichhorn, former Director of the Pan American Foot-and-Mouth Disease Centre and presently Deputy Director of the Animal Production and Health Division, Dr. G. M. Boldrini, Secretary of the European Commission for the Control of Foot-and-Mouth Disease, and Dr. P. R. Ellis, former Chief of Field Services, Pan American Foot-and-Mouth Disease Centre and Consultant, Animal Health Branch, FAO. Dr. Ellis also met with the Committee to answer questions after the document had been presented.

In the memorandum, an analysis was made of the reasons which led the writers to conclude that slight modifications in the existing policy might be justified. While it was felt that the "stamping-out" policy was fundamentally correct and should continue to be the method of choice for any subsequent outbreak, it was suggested that vaccination should be considered as a supplementary measure when the incidence and distribution of new cases indicated widespread infection.

Frequent exchanges of information took place with the World Reference Laboratory in connection with the evolution of the disease and, particularly, with regard to the epizootiological significance of new strains of foot-and-mouth disease virus encountered within Europe, in neighbouring regions or in countries with commercial interests in the European meat and livestock markets. Enquiries focused special attention on the occurrence of type A virus in regions where it had not been endemic for years, and the results of the serological and immunological studies made to characterize the isolated strains were carefully recorded. Of particular interest was the strain isolated in Switzerland.

More recently, attention was drawn to a strain of virus A found in Turkey which, according to the Turkish authorities and the FAO expert, Dr. Girard, appears antigenically different from A₂₂.

Particular Activities of the Secretariat Campaign in south-eastern Europe

As in the previous six years, most of the Secretariat's activity was concerned with the campaigns in south-eastern Europe. During the period 1 April to 31 December the Chief, Animal Health Branch served as Secretary a.i. of the Commission and worked in consultation with the Chairman of the Commission.

An account of the activities relating to the campaign which includes the report of the FAO/EEC/OIE Consultative Committee held in Ankara on 17 and 18 October 1968 is given in working document AN:EUFMD/16/69/3 for the XVith Session of the Commission. It will be noted that adequate quantities of vaccine were made available to ensure the maintenance in south-eastern Europe of buffer zones against the A₂₂ virus.

Following the recommendations by the Consultative Committee, additional equipment was supplied to the new Institute of Ankara to expand the production of antigen by the introduction of industrial scale tissue culture methods.

Technical assistance to the Institute was continued by extending the appointment of Dr. Girard for an additional year.

In the early months of 1969 the Secretary has been engaged in preparing, in collaboration with the officers of the Division, the plan of operation for a project, approved by the UNDP Special Fund, to assist in the further expansion of vaccine production and diagnostic services in Turkey. The Project, for which both the Turkish and FAO authorities had been endeavouring to secure assistance for several years, constitutes an extension of the campaign activities and is aimed at increasing the output of vaccines as well as improving the quality of the antigen, the potency of the final products and its fitness to local conditions in Anatolia. Typing and sub-typing activities will also form part of the project, as will the training of personnel from neighbouring countries. The Institute at Ankara should, therefore, have an opportunity of becoming a regional monitoring centre for the epizootiology of foot-and-mouth disease.

Visit of the Secretary to the Veterinary Authorities and Institutions in
Central Eastern Europe, 16 February - 1 March 1969

During the second half of February, the Secretary made a trip to Belgrade, Budapest and Prague in order to meet with the veterinary authorities of Yugoslavia, Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Roumania. The Director of Veterinary Services of this latter country kindly agreed to travel to Budapest for this purpose. In each of the three countries the Secretary also had an opportunity to meet with the staff of the national laboratories producing foot-and-mouth disease vaccines, in Zemun (Yugoslavia), Budapest and Terezin (Czechoslovakia). On his return journey, the Secretary stopped in Vienna to gather information and to discuss the results of his trip with the Director of Veterinary Services, Austria, who serves as one of the Vice-Chairmen of the Commission.

The purpose of the trip, which was suggested by the Chairman of the European Commission, was to discuss in each country the situation resulting from the spread of foot-and-mouth disease virus type C along the Danubian plain in 1968. A further aim was to explore the possibilities of an expanded prophylactic programme, and more concerted action, to control the disease in this region and prevent further spread.

The infection appeared for the first time last March on Hungarian territory not far from the Austrian border. The origin of the disease could not be established; however, the many visits paid by foreign cattle dealers to the farms involved in the outbreaks were a suspected factor.

One month later, a further occurrence of the disease was noted around Budapest and in one of the three outbreaks observed, pigs were involved for the first time. Further outbreaks followed in the Danube valley, both in Hungarian and Czechoslovakian territory. Moving southwards on both sides of the river in subsequent months the disease proceeded to infect collective farms and smaller groups of animals, almost exclusively pigs, in Hungary, Yugoslavia and Roumania. In Yugoslavia, the disease was restricted mainly to Vojvodina and in Roumania to the district of Timis. Further progress along the course of the Danube and also in the direction of the Drava valley terminated at the beginning of the winter season. Between October and November, however, the outbreaks in Yugoslavia and Roumania reached their peak and the danger of involving further pig-breeding areas was great. A reappearance of the disease in southern Czechoslovakia at the end of the year was of similar gravity to the serious situation in the south. Austria and Bulgaria were not involved at all in the epizootic, despite their proximity to the infected areas.

The outbreaks recorded in the region in 1968 totalled 110 a relatively small number by comparison with the great numbers of susceptible animals, especially pigs present in the areas concerned.

Vaccination campaigns for the cattle populations exposed to the infection, in Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Yugoslavia and Roumania succeeded in reducing the incidence of the disease in this species. These campaigns were mainly carried out with locally-produced vaccines.

Immunization of pigs was also attempted especially in the autumn when the disease was about to assume the proportions of a raging epizootic.

In the many discussions held with the veterinary authorities and laboratory workers of the Institutes at Belgrade, Budapest and Prague (Terezin), the Secretary noted the general opinion that vaccination of pigs was a good means of blocking further extension of the disease in the field. In Hungary, it was found that secondary outbreaks in pigs were either eliminated or reduced to a minimum, after vaccination. In Yugoslavia, where an extensive vaccination campaign was carried out, mainly in Vojvodina with several millions of doses of imported vaccines, favourable results were obtained: no further secondary outbreaks occurred in the affected area and morbidity in the farms already infected at the time of vaccination was reduced. However, the satisfactory results obtained in the field have not, as yet, been confirmed in the laboratory. In fact the contrary has been observed in the course of preliminary trials in which vaccinated pigs were either poorly protected or not protected at all against severe challenge.

Revaccination of pigs carried out 15 or 20 days after the first intervention has proved to be of some value and the method has been applied in vast areas, especially in Yugoslavia. It seems that the best effect is obtained with revaccination after a two week interval.

Type C virus proved to be aggressive both for cattle and pigs, although pathogenicity for the latter species, was much less accentuated than during previous epizootics in Europe. It was noteworthy that in a Hungarian piggery holding 12,000 animals, almost all pigs had recovered from the disease without serious consequences to the farm, and in a relatively short time.

The recent discovery in the United Kingdom that apparently healthy pigs may spread virus well in advance (five to six days) of the appearance of clinical symptoms was confirmed and helps to explain the previously unaccountable difficulties experienced in controlling foot-and-mouth disease in a pig population. It was stressed that extremely rapid action, including vaccination, must be taken by the veterinary authorities not only to make up the time often lost in discovering clinical disease among swine but also to overcome the effects of this preclinical spread of infection.

The Secretary made enquiries with regard to the methods used to control the disease. At the beginning of the epizootic in these countries, the outbreaks were stamped out by destruction of all affected animals. In Czechoslovakia 25,000 pigs were slaughtered in December 1968 and 5,000 carcasses were destroyed while the meat from the other 20,000 was transformed into cooked products. In Yugoslavia, 25,672 pigs and 736 bovines were destroyed. At a later stage, especially where large breeding centres were involved, animals were allowed to recover and then slaughtered for internal use four weeks after the onset of disease.

The veterinary authorities of Yugoslavia, Hungary and Roumania held a meeting on 25 and 26 January to study the situation in their respective countries and also to harmonize sanitary measures relating to international transport. The Secretary recognized that rigid sanitary measures, such as complete isolation of the farms, had made a very effective contribution to keeping considerable areas of Yugoslavia (e.g. Slovenia), Czechoslovakia and Roumania from becoming infected.

At the time of these visits, it was gratifying to note that no outbreaks had been recorded in Roumania or any of the countries visited in the previous 30 days, except for one outbreak in western Czechoslovakia caused by type A virus. It was, of course, too early to consider that a definitive result had been achieved because of the difficulties of finding all outbreaks in certain districts and due to the fact that the virus has great affinity for swine. Indeed, some of the veterinary authorities met expressed fears that there will be a recurrence of outbreaks in the future.

These doubts and fears led the Secretary to discuss with all the authorities of the Danubian region the possibility of developing an annual mass vaccination programme for all ruminants. To date, it has been the tendency to protect the most exposed frontier regions of the countries and to allow the rest of the animal population play the rôle of detectors. It was agreed that frontier vaccination should be bivalent (O/C) at least, and in Czechoslovakia, trivalent. Some of the countries also favoured bivalent or trivalent vaccination for larger parts of their territories. In fact, in 1968 two thirds of the entire cattle population in Hungary received monovalent vaccine while in Czechoslovakia bivalent vaccination was carried out in frontier areas to a depth of 20 or more kilometers as well as ring vaccination around the vaccine-producing institute and the major slaughter-houses. In the north-eastern districts of Yugoslavia the entire cattle and swine population (two million pigs) was covered by vaccination. Similarly, vaccine was applied to all cattle and part of the pig population in the Roumanian plains, situated in the Danube valley west of the Transilvanian Alps. While locally-produced vaccines were used in cattle, vaccination of swine involved the importation of almost 12 million cattle doses from abroad (France, Italy and Eastern Germany). Thus, the efforts already made by the countries to meet the great demand for vaccine and to provide the large numbers of veterinarians for control activities have done much toward saving the Danubian region from a disaster.

A common problem in these countries is the production of vaccine by methods other than Waldman. The production of "natural" virus is in fact basic in all the institutes of the region and it must be admitted that the precautions taken to prevent escape of the virus from the laboratories, in particular from the special abattoirs, are carefully observed. These measures cause great expense and still greater inconvenience. Two new institutes or laboratories are to be set up in Belgrade and Budapest and there was general agreement that the tissue culture method should be adopted in the production of antigen. All possible assistance was promised in promoting and facilitating contact with institutes where new developments in the industrial production of virus in tissue culture are being applied.

The Secretary stressed the importance of carrying out annual vaccination schemes at the time most appropriate to the risk of infection. There was some reluctance on the part of several authorities to accept the idea of general mass vaccination, but it was unanimously admitted that frontier area vaccination alone, could not prevent the disease from reaching susceptible stock occasionally.

When discussing the epizootiology of the disease in the Danubian valley, great emphasis was placed on the factors which make some of the countries particularly vulnerable. These include flat and open frontiers (despite the presence of large rivers), human populations of mixed nationalities in the frontier areas and therefore intense movements and traffic across the frontiers; large numbers of wild ruminants (deer and roe-bucks) and wild pigs frequently passing from one country to the other; a steadily increasing flow of tourists especially during the summer months; dense pig populations with numerous small and private holdings of pigs owned by the workers from collective farms, and visits to the farms by persons interested in the export of animals. These considerations and many others will make routine vaccination programmes, stricter sanitary precautions and proper notification of outbreaks advisable for many years to come.

An objection sometimes voiced against mass vaccinations was the masking effect that vaccination might have on sporadic sub-clinical forms of the disease. The evaluation of vaccines by quantitative methods, surveys of the antibody levels in vaccinated animals, problems connected with the immunization of young stock intended for export, were also subjects of discussion and offered opportunities to stress the need for further investigations and more collaboration among Institutes in Europe. Subtype differentiation in relation to vaccination schemes and export was also dealt with.

Finally, the possibility of Hungary, Roumania and Czechoslovakia becoming members of the European Commission was explored and discussed. No formal objection to such a new development was manifested by any of the consulted authorities, but difficulties would be encountered in all the countries concerned if the contribution had to be paid in dollars or other convertible currency. The Secretary drew attention to the provisions set forth in paragraph 5 of the Article XIII of the Constitution in this respect.

The Secretary concluded his tour with a visit to Vienna where he informed the Vice-Chairman of the Commission, Professor R. P. Gaier of the results of his mission. Professor Gaier's opinion on the sanitary position of the neighbouring countries was that foot-and-mouth disease will remain a problem for many years to come, despite the considerable progress made in its control. The fact that Austria was not involved in the recent epizootic wave appeared to be a gratifying demonstration of the effectiveness of precautionary measures but should not lead to an excess of optimism over the prospects of remaining free of the disease.

Meetings of the Commission's Committees

I. Meeting of the Research Group of the Standing Technical Committee

In collaboration with the Director of the Danish State Veterinary Institute for Virus Research, the Secretary a.i. organized the annual meeting of the Research Group of the Standing Technical Committee of the Commission at Lindholm on 17-20 September 1968.

The main subjects for discussion were: inactivation and adjuvants; epizootiology of O₁ virus infection in Europe; hazards connected with meat derived from vaccinated areas; airborne infection; subtyping techniques; discussions on work carried out at the Lindholm Institute.

The meeting was attended by the Members or their representatives of the Research Group (Dr. E. Michelsen, Dr. J.B. Brooksby, Dr. J.G. van Bekkum, Dr. L. Nardelli). Dr. Werdelin, Chairman of the Commission, Dr. Moosbrugger, representing OIE, Dr. Girard, FAO Representative, and Dr. Suttmoller (USA), Dr. Dinter (Sweden), Dr. Mackowiak (France), Dr. Capstick and Dr. Davie (U.K.), Dr. Lund and the staff of the Lindholm Institute (Denmark). Chairman of the meeting was the Director of the Lindholm Institute, Dr. Michelsen.

Papers were presented and interesting discussions took place, in particular on the following subjects: saponin as adjuvant, time of inactivation and pH of vaccines, observations and tentative conclusions with regard to the epizootic of foot-and-mouth disease in the United Kingdom between October 1967 and February 1968 with particular emphasis on the possibility of massive dissemination of virus in the pre-clinical stage of the disease from an outbreak; results of mass vaccination in pigs in the Netherlands; serological study of 23 samples of O virus collected in Europe between 1963 and 1968 and tentative classification of O Austria 1965 and O Great Britain 1968; recent experience with human cases of foot-and-mouth disease in Denmark and England; presentation of evidence concerning the risk that meat of carrier animals might spread

foot-and-mouth disease; vaccination and carrier state; further evidence on carrier animals; airborne infection; definition of antigenic and serological difference between strains of the virus.

A visit was paid to the various sections of the Institute and demonstrations were given on diagnostic techniques and virus production methods; plans for remodelling the Institute's animal accommodation, to improve the sanitary system of the Institute were explained. The installation of the Institute on the mainland at Viomose was also visited by the Group.

A summary of the papers presented at the meeting, the ensuing discussions and the recommendations of the Research Group concerning the movement of slaughter animals from vaccinated areas are given in the Appendix. The full report of the meeting which includes the original papers presented for discussion will be circulated to Commission members and laboratories and to all interested parties.

The dates of the next meeting of the Research Group of the Standing Technical Committee were set for 24-26 September 1969. The Group propose to hold the next meeting at Brescia (Italy).

II Meeting of the Executive Committee held at Athens 22-24 October 1968

A meeting of the Executive Committee was held in Athens, Greece, on 22-24 October 1968. Dr. Chr. Werdelin, Denmark (Chairman), Mr. J. Reid, U.K. (Vice-Chairman), Dr. R.P. Gaier, Austria (Vice-Chairman), Dr. Th. Analytis, Greece, Dr. J. van den Berg, (representing Dr. van den Born), Netherlands, Dr. A. Nabholz, Switzerland, Dr. L. Polak, Czechoslovakia, Dr. J. Cardassis (Director of the Foot-and-Mouth Disease Institute), (Athens), Dr. E. A. Eichhorn, Secretary a.i. and Miss D. Guarino of the Secretariat were present. Apologies for absence were received by Dr. van den Born and Dr. L. Bellani.

The meeting was opened by the Under Secretary of State for Agriculture, Mr. G. Tsistopolous, who emphasized the great interest of his country in the control and the eradication of the disease, the success of the close cooperation between his Government and FAO in averting the danger of exotic foot-and-mouth disease and the determination to further expand the veterinary facilities, laboratories and services of his country.

The agenda of the meeting included the following items: a) situation of FMD in Europe; b) FAO campaigns in south-eastern Europe; c), d), e) report of the Secretariat and administrative matters; f) other business.

A. Situation of foot-and-mouth disease in Europe and review of the disease situation in Greece for the period 1967-68

The Secretariat presented statistics of disease outbreaks and typing results for the first eight months of the year.

The general position of the disease in Europe was then discussed. In general it was found that the situation in western Europe was favourable, except for the problems of the Iberian peninsula and large areas of the Danubian valley. In Hungary, particularly, the situation had deteriorated since the beginning of August with large groups of pigs becoming involved, the causal virus being type C.

The possibility that animals in movement across or in transit through the Danube valley may sometimes be exposed to infection, was a matter of considerable concern, especially for the Austrian representative.

Dr. L. Polak (Czechoslovakia) gave a report on the developments in his country during the previous ten years; the disease, in general, had appeared only sporadically. Nevertheless the danger that Czechoslovakia could become infected had not lessened and was particularly significant in the plains of the Slovak republic. This was the reason why annual bivalent vaccination all along the frontiers of the country had been envisaged. Dr. Polak also gave technical details concerning vaccine production in Czechoslovakia.

Dr. Analytis reviewed the foot-and-mouth disease problems of Greece for the past six years. In 1962 and 1963 the country suffered a severe attack which caused 4,399 outbreaks distributed over large parts of the national territory. This was the last epizootic of major proportions but the country was also exposed to the exotic viruses SAT₁ and A₂₂ and the eastern part of Thrace became infected in September 1962 (SAT₁), in January 1965 (A₂₂), and in May 1966 (A₂₂). In 1967 type O virus was recorded in the same region and also in other parts of Greece. The establishment and maintenance of buffer zones in Thrace enabled the authorities to eradicate the outbreaks caused by the exotic viruses in the frontier areas and thus prevent further damage to the country. From the experience gained in the various campaigns Dr. Analytis drew the following conclusions: (a) Stamping-out is not always applicable in Greece and, even when applied has not, in all instances, led to the immediate eradication of the disease. (b) Sanitary measures combined with vaccination can give very good results in a country like Greece where the animals from the villages are fed on common pastures. (c) The immediate monovalent homologous vaccination or revaccination around, and also, according to circumstances, within the outbreaks, as soon as the typing results of the virus are known is extremely helpful. (d) Greece is not able nor would consider it convenient to apply annual mass vaccination to all ruminants in the country. (e) The policy of setting up buffer zones in the most exposed areas of the country is preferred. In Greece encouraging results were obtained with the vaccination of sheep, since immunity was promptly established, and also with the vaccination of pigs. In this latter case a threefold cattle dose was applied.

B. FAO Campaigns in Turkey, Greece and Bulgaria

It was noted that the campaigns against exotic viruses in Turkey, Greece and Bulgaria had continued in accordance with the programme set out at the last FAO/EEC/OIE Consultative Committee Meeting held in Turkey from 3-7 April 1967. Reports were presented on the last vaccination of the respective buffer zones in Greece, Bulgaria and Turkey.

It was generally felt that foot-and-mouth disease had been better controlled in Turkey in recent years and that, although some outbreaks of O virus and very few of A₂₂ had still occurred in Anatolia, the danger of one of the exotic viruses which had in the past six years appeared in Turkey, was no longer such a serious threat to western European countries.

A report was given on the VIIth Meeting of the FAO/EEC/OIE Consultative Committee Meeting which was held in Ankara on 17 and 18 October 1968. The conclusions of the Committee were that indispensable equipment should still be furnished to the Foot-and-Mouth Disease Laboratory at Ankara and that, if at all possible, a further vaccination campaign should be promoted, perhaps in Spring 1969. It was, however, pointed out that there was little likelihood of further financial assistance from western European governments and that, if funds proved inadequate, this last vaccination campaign might have to be set aside. It was agreed that the Secretary a.i. should make an effort to obtain additional aid for this purpose, in the form of vaccine.

C. Report of the Secretariat

The Secretariat presented a report on its activities since the previous Session.

The action taken by the Secretariat and the Organization to obtain new member countries especially in eastern Europe, was approved by the Executive Committee. It was felt that membership of these countries could be very valuable, in view of more coordinated efforts directed towards the control of the disease in areas of vital importance for livestock breeding and trade including export.

A lengthy discussion was also held on the extension of the work of the Commission to the Near East as well as to the African and Latin American countries which are, or may become, important potential sources of animal products for Europe. It was felt that any effort the Commission could make to diminish the risk of spread of the disease through slaughter stock or meat and to investigate more closely the sanitary situation and the foot-and-mouth disease position, in particular, in the above-mentioned countries would be much welcomed.

D. Replacement of Secretary

The applications received in reply to the vacancy announcement issued by FAO in April 1968 for the replacement of the Secretary were given careful consideration. Since Dr. Boldrini, former Secretary of the Commission, had in the meantime informed the Committee, that he had asked his Ministry to be authorized to return to the still vacant post, it was unanimously recommended that the Director-General of FAO be asked to undertake the re-instatement of Dr. Boldrini as Secretary of the Commission.

E. Reprint of the Commission's Constitution

The Committee agreed that the Constitution of the Commission should be reprinted; however, it was suggested that the scale of contributions should hence forth be left out, as changes may become necessary.

F. Any Other Business

The Committee agreed that a further meeting of the Committee should be held on 14 April 1969 to examine and approve the papers to be presented to the Commission and to discuss various problems that may arise in the meantime.

Future Activities

The Commission will continue to promote and encourage national and international action for the control of foot-and-mouth disease in Europe. To this end, close contact will be maintained with Government authorities, OIE and other specialized agencies and institutes.

Epizootiology of foot-and-mouth disease in Europe will be studied further, in collaboration with executive authorities and laboratory specialists. Coordination of activities, surveys and research is still needed to improve knowledge of immunity levels in the vaccinated animal population under different environmental and breeding conditions, and of virus persistence, including virus carrier state, in relation to different methods of control. The Secretariat will collect all available information on the timing, application and extension of prophylactic schemes in Europe; vaccine production techniques and potential, including the testing of vaccines, will also be covered.

The Member countries of the Commission should furnish the Secretary with all the information which could prove useful to him in furthering the activities provided for in the Constitution of the Commission.

Efforts will be made to expand the activities of the Commission in central and eastern Europe by promoting more closely coordinated work in disease reporting and control and by assisting research centres and vaccine-producing laboratories. Ways and means will be sought to facilitate formal adherence by the countries of the region to the Commission.

The prevention of the introduction of foot-and-mouth disease into Europe will continue to receive the fullest attention. In this connection, emphasis will be placed on securing up-to-date information on the disease position and pattern, its control and prophylaxis, in all countries or regions from which the disease is most likely to be introduced into Europe and the Near East through trade or other means. In particular the distribution of virus types and sub-types throughout the world should be a matter of permanent survey, and, whenever possible, for enquiries in collaboration with the World Reference Laboratory and any other agency engaged in the study and classification of the virus strains obtained from the field. Information on readily available sources of antisera and homologous vaccines in respect to exotic virus strains potentially dangerous to the European continent will be kept up-to-date.

Action against exotic viruses in south-eastern Europe will continue to be promoted by all available means. Assistance will be given to the countries which have been engaged in the maintenance of buffer zones, although they are expected to carry out vaccination programmes at the frontiers with the vaccines produced in their respective institutes. Visits will be made by the Secretary to survey the situation whenever it is deemed advisable; immediate action, including the mobilization of the residual funds of the campaign, will be taken should an exotic strain of foot-and-mouth disease again endanger the disease-free areas in Thrace.

In particular, assistance will be given to the Institute at Ankara and the UNDP Special Fund Project (Turkey 33) for the further development of vaccine production, diagnostic services, and training of personnel, which constitutes a follow-up of the technical assistance supplied with the funds of the campaign.

The Executive Committee felt that the Near East, Latin America and Africa are areas to which the Commission should extend its activities more than anywhere else outside the European Continent.

The Secretary should, if feasible, visit other regions of the world which could make more animal protein available either by extending the existing channels of trade or by opening new areas to export.

The possible association of other countries and institutions outside the European region should be considered and encouraged.