

79th SESSION
of the
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
of the

European Commission for the Control of Foot-and-Mouth Disease (EuFMD)

Stockholm, Sweden

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Summary of Agreements and Recommendations

On the state of preparedness for FMD and training of veterinarians for recognition and response to suspected outbreaks

1. **Recommends** that a handbook on the preparation of FMD simulation exercises be developed by the Commission, to provide guidance for veterinary services;
2. **agrees** with the proposal to provide an additional 75,000 US\$ in support for the WRL in 2010 in order to manage the increased complexity of international shipments and to safeguard the provision of the Proficiency Testing Service (PTS-Phase XXIII) to all EuFMD Member States and neighbouring countries;
3. **recommends** that the contract with the WRL for the upcoming 3 year period (2011-13), including the international PTS managed by WRL for EuFMD/FAO, is reviewed and a paper presenting options for the future is presented to the next Session.

On the international risk situation

4. **Recommends** Member States (MS) take note of the situation in West Eurasia, with the upsurge in FMD cases in Turkey in 2010, the movement of South Asian FMDV into the region with the first detection of the O Ind 2001 genotype into Iran, and the detection of an Asia-1 strain apparently not covered by vaccination with the Shamir antigen;
5. **recommends** -considering the risk relating to FMD in West Eurasia- that future sessions should receive a report from the representative of the West Eurasia FMD lab network on the virological surveillance and epidemic events relevant for risk assessment;
6. **recommends MS** to make use of the information in the annual FMDV surveillance report for 2009 from the WRL in their risk assessments, and take note to the unprecedented level of FMDV submissions to the WRL in 2009, particularly from the European neighbourhood;
7. **calls upon** FAO -given the current contract and financial contribution of the EuFMD and FAO to the WRL- to organise a meeting of the Steering Committee of the FAO and OIE FMD Lab Network in order to develop a common vision and clarify the commitments of the parties for the period 2011-13;
8. **urges** Member States (MS) to note the WRL recommendations on priority FMDV antigens to be kept for emergency situations, and **reconsider their holdings** in relation to the high risk of A Iran 05 and type O PanAsia II in the region;
9. **recommends** that the procedure proposed by the Research Group for identification of priority antigens should be further developed, with greater emphasis on 1) developing consensus on the risk from each virus pool to EuFMD states, 2) clear recommendations following an improved peer concluded before each Session and 3) transparent process that could be adapted or developed by MS;
10. **re-affirms** that actions to improve the submission of FMDV from the areas of concern in the African proximity should be continued, and **recommends** the Research Group further develop protocols and guidance on replacement of live virus shipments with inactivated (RNA) based methods.

Relating to the Global Initiative

9. **Re-affirms** the recommendation of the 78th Session to FAO and OIE, to put into place the working group to follow-up the recommendations of the Paraguay conference, as agreed at the GfTADS Global Steering Committee, and to include the EuFMD Commission and a representative for the West Eurasia Roadmap in this group as regional representatives;
10. **takes note** of the preparations being made by FAO, and the full consultation with OIE, for a Global Scientific Conference on FMD to be held at the end of 2011/start of 2012, and agrees that the Secretariat play a role in preparations to ensure the Conference is relevant to the EuFMD and the West Eurasian FMD Roadmap, and accessible for European participants;

11. **takes note** of the development of guidelines and support documentation underpinning the Progressive Control Pathway (PCP) for FMD, and **recommends** a greater involvement of the Research Group in technical development and/or clearance procedures, before presentation at the Open Session in Vienna;
12. **recommends** that papers summarizing 1) the status of PCP documentation, and 2) the global status of internationally supported programmes/actions which are principally aimed at improving FMD control, be tabled for the 80th Session [under the Agenda point on the Global Initiative].

Relating to the Long Term Strategy for FMD Control in West Eurasia

13. **Agrees** that the proposal presented by the representative of the West EurAsia FMD Lab Network for actions in 2010 be given support and a request to fund the proposed actions be made to the EC, in order to achieve an earlier detection and communication of FMDV threats from this region;
14. **agrees** that the Secretariat proceed with the organization of a 2nd progress review meeting for the West Eurasia FMD Roadmap, in late 2010, where possible back to back with the WELNET-FMD lab network meeting.

On the priority vaccine antigens for use in West EurAsia

15. **Takes** note that the recommended types and strains for inclusion in vaccination programmes in West Eurasia to cover the upcoming 6 month risk period remain serotype O Manisa and Asia-1 Shamir, and type A Iran-05 strain. The Secretariat **should ensure West Eurasian countries are aware of the recommendation** and encourage them to undertake risk assessments before omitting one or more of these strains from the routine programme. Countries which utilise routine vaccination should ensure access to vaccines in emergency situation against less frequent FMDV strains, in the medium priority category of the WRL.

Relating to co-operation to improve monitoring and surveillance of FMD in the south and east Mediterranean countries

16. **Re-affirms** the importance of co-operation in FMD control and **agrees** with the proposed assistance for FMD training in laboratory confirmation procedures and on design of monitoring programs (for infection and vaccination performance), and that a request to EC be made for actions to be concluded in 2010-11;
17. **re-affirms** that the Commission, working through the Secretariat, should continue to explore ways of co-operation with the FAO/OIE regional animal health centres in Beirut and Tunis, and **encourages** REMESA to make use of the technical expertise and opportunities of the Commission in its work program, as recommended by the 38th Session.

On the continuation of monitoring for FMD threats from the African proximity

18. **Recommends** that the proposed programme be considered a framework for supporting actions in this region, and be given support, to the limit indicated, with the **proviso** that a subcommittee be established to review proposed individual country or subregional actions and reach conclusions upon their support; this subcommittee would be delegated responsibility to review the proposed activities, and to establish criteria for evaluation, taking into consideration factors including the risks to the EuFMD and neighbourhood, the contribution to addressing information gaps, and to the decision upon antigen and vaccine selection for at risk countries.

On the continuation of support to FMD control in the TransCaucasus (TCC) countries

19. **Endorses** the proposed action to support FMD control in the TCC in 2010-12, and recommends a request to the EC for funding should be submitted by the Secretariat.

On the continuation of support to FMD monitoring and control in Iran

20. **Re-affirms** the importance of continued co-operation in FMD monitoring and control, and takes note of the findings of the review of Phase II and changes recommended in Phase III;
21. **recommends** that the position of the Executive on the 3rd Phase of the programme of activities with Iran be reached by the Executive AND a subcommittee of the President and Vice-presidents by the end of May 2010, on the basis of the response of the Iranian authorities to the Phase II review and proposed activities recommended by the mission team for Phase III. The secretariat should ensure that phase iii is limited to action that can reasonably be delivered within the specified timescale and for which the Iranian authorities have agreed positive and specific support as part of their overall fmd control strategy.

On the studies recommended by the Standing technical Committee

22. **Approves** support for the two concept notes which had been reviewed by the subcommittee, with the provision that the amendments or clarifications required by the Committee are addressed when the contracts are prepared with the recipient organisations;
23. **recommends** that a one day symposium be organized during the Open Session in Vienna in September, on the economics and resource implications of managing FMD outbreaks in free countries, in order to guide the Commission and Member States on the utility of tools for contingency planning.

On the financial situation

24. **agrees** that support for the proposed “Intern” programme be provided from the EuFMD Trust Fund (MTF/INT/011/MUL), for the purpose of enabling longer term training in FMD emergency management and allied disciplines for veterinary staff of the Member States, to a maximum of 50,000 US\$ per annum in 2010 and 2011, making use of the travel budget line and savings in the administrative budget to be achieved in the area of salaries for administrative staff when the position of the EuFMD Clerk is filled.

Meeting report

The Executive Committee of the European Commission for the Control of Foot-and-Mouth Disease (EuFMD) held its Seventy-Ninth Session in Stockholm, Sweden, on the 16th and 17th of March 2010, hosted by the Government of Sweden.

The Session was opened by Mr **Anders Lönnblad**, Deputy Director General, Swedish Ministry of Agriculture, who welcomed the participants to Stockholm and expressed the willingness and interest of the Ministry to support the work of the international organisations to reduce the impact of animal disease such as FMD.

Members of the **Executive Committee** present were: Dr Ulrich Herzog (UH, Austria Chairman), Dr Nigel Gibbens (NG, United Kingdom, Vice-Chairman), Dr Leif Denneberg (LD, Sweden), Dr Georgi Georgiev (GG, Bulgaria, representing the CVO), Dr Spiros Doudounakis (SD, Greece), Dr Antonio Fonseca (AF, Portugal, representing Dr Pinheiro), and Dr Nihat Pakdil, (NP, Turkey). Apologies were received from Dr Marinkovic, CVO Serbia.

Other participants were Dr Aldo Dekker (AD, the Netherlands), Chairman of the Research Group, and Dr Jef Hammond, (JH, Head of the OIE Reference Laboratory on FMD/FAO World Reference Laboratory for FMD. In addition, Dr Askaroglu, CVO Turkey, and Dr Naci Bulut, attended as President of the West Eurasia FMD Roadmap Advisory Group, Dr Kate Sharpe as advisor to Dr Gibbens, and Dr Lena Björnerot as Deputy CVO. Dr Joseph Domenech, attended as Observer, on behalf of Dr Angot, CVO France following Invitation from the Chairman and in line with decisions of the 38th Session.

Observers from the international organizations were Dr Alf-Eckbert Fuëssel, (AEF Head of Sector, DG-SANCO, Brussels), Dr Nikola Belev, (NB, Regional representative of the OIE for Europe), Dr Caroline Planté, (CP, OIE Regional office for Europe), Dr Lea Knopf, (LK, Scientific and Technical Department of the OIE, Paris), Dr Peter de Leeuw, (PdL, FAO, Senior Advisor to Dr Lubroth, Chief of the Animal Health Service). The Secretariat for the 78th Session comprised Dr Keith Sumption (KS), Dr Adel Ben Youssef (ABY, officer seconded to EuFMD by France) and Ms Nadia Rumich. The list of participants is given in **Appendix 1**.

The Session considered the current risk situation and recent events in FMD epidemiology in the region, reviewed the progress of actions that are ongoing or under development following the decisions of the 78th Session.

ITEM 1. Agenda

The agenda (**Appendix 2**) was adopted without change.

ITEM 2. Follow-up to the 78th session

The follow-up to the recommendations of the 78th Executive Committee Session were summarised (**Appendix 3**). Of the 19 recommendations, only 1 had not been followed-up (R#7, on development of a procedure for purchasing antigen from non-European banks in emergency situations). This would remain to be followed-up before the 80th Session. It was suggested in future to speed up risk communication, that information on the risk situation (e.g. R#2 & 3) would be sent to CVOs following the Session, before the main report.

Conclusion

follow up needed on the emergency procurement of non-European vaccine reserves (Secretariat, by 80th Session).

ITEM 3. FMD preparedness

3. a) Real Time FMD Training program

Nadia Rumich, EuFMD Secretariat, gave a presentation on the training program (**Appendix 4**); in 2009, four “real-time” training courses had been held in Turkey, with 40 veterinarians given opportunity to investigate suspect FMD outbreaks, with assistance of the GDPC, Turkey. Five courses were planned for 2010, and a waiting list remained for 2011; all CVOs of MS had been informed of position of their nominees. A library of online resources for training had been added in 2009, and the RealTime courses would add local PCR facilities and would investigate real-time image sharing so that distant experts could participate in reviewing signs. The last course of the year (ETC9) would have predominantly francophone participants and trainers.

The Chairman noted the report, congratulated the training team on the progress and thanked the GDPC and EC for their support.

3.b) Training in contingency planning and crisis resource mobilisation/management

The Chairman introduced the subject and called for discussion on the need for training in this area. An example of use of modelling (Exodis model commissioned by DEFRA, UK) to estimate veterinary resource requirements during FMD outbreak scenarios, and spread and duration following different control options, was given by Kate Sharpe (**Appendix 5**). Potentially, this model could be adapted for use by other countries in Europe, and although it has been implemented mainly in contingency planning, it was used during the 2007 FMD outbreak in UK, both for possible spread of infection and to identify possible vet resource constraints.

It was agreed that the model demonstrated could have high relevance to other European countries; that economic impact and resource requirement estimation is difficult for all VS, and as a result of the economic crisis most need assistance to develop economic arguments to negotiate the resources required; and that there is a need for Guidance to veterinary services in the area of simulation exercise planning, management and review.

OIE reported on the Technical Item of the 75th OIE General Session on the use of epidemiological models for the management of animal diseases. This paper was based on a questionnaire survey sent to all OIE Members, on the current situation in terms of use and needs of veterinary services for epidemiological modelling. A special issue of the Scientific and Technical Review will be published in 2011, solely dedicated to the topic of epidemiological modelling to support animal disease intervention.

Conclusions

1. it was agreed that a one-day symposium on economic assessment of FMD impact and management options be organised for the FMDWeek2010, on 30th September, immediately after the Executive Committee, to guide MS and the Commission;
2. the need for a Handbook/Guidelines on planning and management of simulation exercises was re-affirmed and the Secretariat should proceed with required arrangements.

3.c) Laboratory Preparedness

Keith Sumption reviewed the participation in the EuFMD/FAO and EC funded Proficiency Test Service (PTS) that was contracted to IAH-Pirbright (**Appendix 6**). The PTS had been instigated by EuFMD /FAO in the 1970s, in response to the need for cross-recognition of results of tests for trade purposes; it has remained the largest and most inclusive PTS for FMD, and has become the main instrument for the international ref labs (OIE and FAO) to demonstrate their performance in the key virology and serology services. Current financial arrangements and costs for EU NRLs are covered by EC (CRL contract), with EuFMD covering the non-EU EuFMD Member States and immediate neighbours, and

FAO the international reference centres (of OIE and FAO) so that the scheme does provide the backbone of a global external quality assurance support for FMD ref labs. However, gaps remain in European and larger regional participation (some western Balkan countries, North Africa), but there has been increasing participation with some recent successes (TransCaucasus). As a result of the huge increase in administrative burden (biosecurity protocols and requirements) on the WRL, discussed at the 78th Session, and the subsequent risk to the PTS delivery in 2010, he proposed an additional support package of 75,000 US\$ be provided to IAH in 2010, and that before the 80th Session in September, the WRL contract be reviewed, considering the international role, vision and responsibilities for the PTS in providing EQA to Europe and as part of a global system for quality assurance of FMD lab performance.

The Chairman asked for comments and the importance of the current system was re-affirmed. The current co-ordination, between EuFMD, FAO and EC, was seen as a good example that had avoided duplication and maintained continuity, which needs to be kept on, and which should be able to find solutions to maintain the current programme for EuFMD and neighbourhood (some 50 countries). Possibilities of using satellite PTS providers (e.g. SA Institute) to manage distribution of panels outside of the EU should be explored, to reduce administrative costs while increasing access to the service. The progress of investigations with non-laboratory partners (IATA, customs, transport companies, etc) and OIE Reference Laboratories concerning possible impairing or facilitating measures when shipping biological samples internationally was reported to the Executive Committee by OIE and FAO. Results of the survey and next steps will be discussed during the forthcoming conference of OIE Reference Laboratories and Collaborating Centres.

Recommendations

#2 and 3.

ITEM 4. International FMD risk situation

4.a) FMD risk situation

The international surveillance report was provided by Jef Hammond, WRL-FMD (IAH-Pirbright, UK; **Appendix 7**).

He drew attention to the following:

- 2009 had seen the highest level of sample submissions recorded at the WRL (circa 1000 samples), mainly from West Eurasia as a result of the A Iran 05 regional pandemic (about 30% of the submissions) in winter 2008 /spring 2009;
- the positive impact of the West Eurasia Roadmap programme, with EuFMD/FAO project support resulting in higher sample submission;
- the first detection of the India 2001 toptotype of serotype O in West Eurasia (Iran) in late 2009, a possible consequence of the domination of this strain in India in 2009, and spread to Bhutan/Nepal/United Arab Emirates;
- the first detection of a Asia-1 strain against which the Asia-1 Shamir (the normally recommended vaccine antigen), fails to give protection (low r values);
- the first breakdown of an officially free country (Republic of Korea) for many years, as a result of serotype A introduction from unknown source location in south-east Asia (Pool 1);
- the 2009 Global Surveillance Report of the OIE/FAO FMD Ref labs Network, submitted to FAO and OIE by end February, giving collated report of virus characterisation covering all 7 virus pools and with inputs from most participant labs;
- the continued importance of India and China but difficulties to obtain full participation in sharing information or FMDV strains;
- the regular reporting of the WRL (quarterly reports) and the teleconferences organised by EuFMD with the West Eurasia FMD lab network to review findings (from March 2010).

Keith Sumption drew attention to the FAO co-ordination of some regional lab network developments, to which the Secretariat provided guidance, for example the first Eastern Africa FMD Ref Lab Meeting (Nairobi, Feb 2010), West Eurasia FMD Lab network, and SADC FMD lab network (supported through the FAO ECTAD unit, Botswana). He indicated these networks have begun to contribute surveillance reports which are now used in the regional sections of the Annual OIE/FAO surveillance report¹, a very major step forward. He considered the networks had a high potential for detection and response of new epidemic threats as well as improving quality of regional services. In addition the development of FMDV typing at national level could reduce the burden on the WRL, since virus was not isolated/detected in about 50% of the submissions, probably because of incorrect sampling rather than incorrect clinical diagnosis of FMD (almost 500 negative submissions in 2009 at WRL).

4.b) Priority Antigens for the national/European banks

Dr Hammond indicated the new procedure (**Appendix 7**) introduced following the 78th Session, on the recommendations of the Research Group; the initial step had been a prioritisation (by EuFMD Secretariat) of risks from the different virus pools, the second, identification of circulating strains in the priority regions by WRL, the third an assessment of antigen suitability, including inputs from main vaccine producers operating to standards that can achieve licensing of FMD vaccines for use in EU states.

Keith Sumption indicated that the initial risk assessment had identified Pool 3 (West Eurasia) as the top priority with Pool 1 (East Asia) second. The first should be widely accepted, given that EU and EuFMD member states border the infected West Eurasian countries. However, the acceptance of East Asia as second priority (and thereby that vaccines may be required to be held) had not been peer reviewed beyond the EuFMD-WRL team involved.

To illustrate this point, the WRL presentation had one slide indicating virus circulation in both Pools 1 & 3 in 2009 and vaccine suitability; should this assessment be accepted then it implies the EC/member states will have to give greater emphasis to question of vaccine suitability for East Asia, for example by stocking A Malaysia 97 (in 2009 this was a medium priority of WRL).

WRL recommendations - March 2010

- A-IRAN-05 and O PanAsiaII still present a significant threat for further spread, matching tests revealed gaps in cover with Serotype A with A-Iran-05 isolates having a poor match with the A22Iraq vaccine strain;
- New vaccines released in 2009 by both Intervet and Merial specifically for **A-Iran-05** are expected to provide much better protection, although no independent efficacy testing has yet been carried out on these vaccines;
- Antigenic variability of serotype O viruses is less than the A serotype and **O1 Manisa** has been recommended for many years as a suitable vaccine for viruses of the ME-SA topotype;
- However, some very recent O isolates have shown poor r values by VNT but consistently higher ELISA r values. *This situation should be closely monitored;*
- **Asia 1 Shamir** has given a good antigenic match to most strains within the Asia 1 serotype, although one isolate from Pakistan in 2009 gave a very low r value by both VNT and ELISA. *Again the situation should be carefully monitored;*
- There is a need for vigilance with the SAT1 and SAT2 serotypes due to possible incursions from various trade routes but there is an issue over which vaccine strains to include as there is little information on relevance to current field strains.

¹ Annual OIE/FAO FMD Reference Laboratory Network Report 2009
http://www.wrlfmd.org/ref_labs/ref_lab_reports/OIE-FAO%20FMD%20Ref%20Lab%20Network%20Report%202009.pdf

Discussion followed on the question of cross-protection of O Manisa vaccine, as present in most European reserves, against the current type O strains in West Eurasia.

Conclusion

The recent reports of upsurge in FMD in parts of West Eurasia, and possible low protection in the field, together with the vaccine matching results, should be viewed with concern. The Chairman of the Research Group was asked to review the situation and to provide guidance on need for cross-protection studies (potency test) to determine if the low cross-protection observed in VNT tests may result in lower protection against challenge.

ITEM 5. Global FMD Initiative

Two presentations were given on progress since the International FMD Conference (June 2009, in Paraguay), by FAO (Peter DeLeeuw, FAO) and Lea Knopf (OIE).

The FAO presentation (**Appendix 8**) highlighted:

- the further development of support documentation/ guidance papers for the Progressive Control Pathway for FMD (PCP-FMD), including Monitoring and Surveillance Guidelines for PCP Stages 1-3, and a draft diagnostic laboratory services assessment tool (PCP Stages 1-3);
- the progress made in development and or implementation of Regional Long Term Roadmaps for FMD control in 2009 so that with the sole exception of **South Asia** (virus pool 2; India and neighbours in SAARC region), each region could be said to have a long term vision for FMD control that has been developed with FAO and OIE involvement under GfTADS;
- the need to annually assess progress in FMD control initiatives in these regions, using the PCP or other tools.

Discussions between OIE and FAO were expected to conclude in the next months on the ToR for a Global Working Group on FMD, reporting to the Global Steering Ctee of GfTADS; the FAO perspective was that this group would:

- Review the Report of the OIE/FAO FMD laboratories network;
- Review the status and progress of the regional activities and initiatives (roadmaps and equivalent) in FMD control for the seven major virus pools;
- Make recommendations for actions to be taken by the international organisations/GF-TAD's Global SC, at regional or global level to address constraints to progress;
- Prepare a timetable of joint global/regional meetings on FMD (pledging, scientific and control programs) in forthcoming 3 year period;
- Agree content/authorship and arrangements for publishing an Annual Report on the State of FMD control worldwide (report = lab network report + regional initiatives report + global statistics from OIE and FAO; may be presented at OIE general meeting in May each year).

The composition of the FMD Global Working Group was proposed to be:

- a. President and Vice-President appointed by global GF-TAD's SC (for 2 years);
- b. Representatives from the seven regions;
- c. Representatives from donor community;
- d. Representatives from stakeholders (possibly);
- e. Scientific advisors (Sc. Ct OIE, EuFMD research group).

He indicated that FAO, in full consultation with OIE, was in discussion with the Government of India regarding the location of the next **Global Scientific Conference on FMD**, with Thailand as another option; the location of India was seen by FAO as very significant in terms of its globally significant ruminant population and long terms plans for FMD control, as well as rapidly increasing investment in FMD research and development. The date of the Conference would be in November 2011 or January 2012.

The OIE presentation (**Appendix 9**) highlighted:

- the updating of WAHID to enable more rapid and detailed assessment of FMD events, including the possibility to submit monthly reports on outbreaks or relevant epidemiological changes in the FMD (or other diseases) situation and FMD serotype information;
- development, with FAO of a Global approach, involving:
 - Creation of a FMD-specific Working Group under the global GF-TADs;
 - Linkage of the FAO-PCP approach with provisions of existing OIE standards, including consideration of quality of Veterinary Services (PVS evaluations);
 - under consideration is the endorsement of National FMD control plans by the OIE Scientific Commission, leading to more options for trade facilitation. The criteria under elaboration being that a country reached (and progresses) a certain stage of the PCP pathway + a PVS evaluation was conducted + meeting required criteria Terrestrial Code.

Discussion

The Chair congratulated FAO and OIE on making progress within their own structures and in bilateral discussions towards establishing the framework for a common international action under GfTADS.

The move to monthly reporting of FMD by 1st administrative unit in WAHID was widely welcomed, as this was a strong recommendation of the West Eurasia roadmap meeting.

In discussion it was clarified that FAO fully recognised and was involved with the South-East Asia and China FMD control programme, and that South Asia is a distinct epidemiological region, referring to SAARC countries (India and its immediate neighbours), and that South Asia remained a strategically important gap since new epidemics have been shown to arise here and spread to West Eurasia (e.g type O PanAsia, O Ind) and South-East Asia.

The Chairman encouraged the OIE to progress in its review of its terrestrial animal health standards the consideration of certain aspects of the PCP, as a tool to assess progress and in development of incentives. He concluded, with support from the Committee members, that there is a need for a comprehensive, global report to be prepared for the next meeting on status of all ongoing projects and programmes for FMD control, to better identify who does what, substantiate gaps and assess likely progress, where appropriate. He asked the Secretariat to undertake this, and that FAO work with EuFMD Standing Technical Committee to progress and finalise the PCP Guidelines for presentation to the Open Session in Vienna.

ITEM 6. Long Term Strategy for FMD Control in West Eurasia

Background and associated papers

Recommendations of the FMDWeek 2009 meetings in Istanbul in October 2009 [EuFMD Executive R#10 and #14 of the 78th Session, and of the West Eurasia FMD Lab network group meeting given in the Report of the West Eurasia Roadmap Progress Review Meeting (**Appendix 10**), to build a functioning network of FMD labs in West Eurasia that acts also as a bridge to the European NRLs most actively engaged in surveillance support.

6. a) Support to the programme of the West Eurasia FMD Lab Network in 2010

A proposal was tabled (**Appendix 11**) for a programme of activities aimed at improving FMD lab performance in the region in the key areas of diagnostic test performance (regional proficiency test service) and training to improve serotype confirmation, including greater use of the multiplex PCR, and information sharing methods and progress in allied projects including the full genome sequencing (FGS) studies co-ordinated by the WRL. Teleconferences every 3 months, and an annual

meeting preceding the Roadmap Review meeting would be organised to ensure West Eurasian and European labs remained in close contact.

The Committee indicated its full support to the Chairman; the EC indicated agreement in principle to finance this through the Trust Fund (TF).

Dr Askaroglu, President of the Roadmap Advisory group, thanked the Chairman and EC for their support, and indicated willingness to host the 2010 Roadmap Progress review meeting in Turkey in November or December 2010, if no other country offered to host. The offer was welcomed by the Chairman.

ITEM 7. Support to improving FMD control in the South and East Mediterranean

Background

The 38th General Session of the EuFMD recommended EuFMD co-ordinate and play a supportive role to REMESA network for North African countries, through the RAHC in Tunis; an FMD training proposal was developed, reviewed (by the 78th ExCom) and sent back for changes. FAO funded FMD control projects (TCPs) have been implemented in Egypt (to 9/09) and Lebanon (to 12/09) with EuFMD providing technical expertise. EC provided FMD vaccine to Lebanon through EuFMD in 2009 as emergency response to A Iran 05 epidemic. Lebanon and Egypt are both neighbours of an EuFMD member country.

7. a) Proposal to provide support to training in design and monitoring of control programs (surveillance for FMD and associated laboratory performance requirements)

A revised version of the FMD Training Proposal was provided (**Appendix 12**) to the ExCom and summarized by Adel BenYoussef (EuFMD). In this proposal, training would be provided in the monitoring of FMD control programmes and in the area of laboratory services; the courses would be organised with Regional Animal Health Centre (RAHC) in Beirut and Tunis and thereby would be offered as support to regional activities planned under these centres. Where possible co-funding, for example of the travel costs of participants from countries that are not neighbouring to EuFMD member states. The budget estimate for the training was 108,000 US\$.

The Chairman asked for comment on the proposal; support was voiced by Turkey and Sweden and all indicated their agreement.

Conclusion

- the proposal was endorsed;
- It was further agreed that training, and on the mode of co-operation with partner organisations and networks such as REMESA, should be reported and reviewed at the EuFMD General Session in April 2011.

7. b). Status of FAO/EuFMD actions supported in 2009– Egypt and Lebanon

The recent assistance provided, and lessons learnt relating to FMD, were summarised by Dr Ben Youssef (**Appendix 13-14-15**).

In Egypt, TCP FAO funded emergency project on FMD (TCP/EGY/3105, 269,000 US\$) had ended in September 2009 and the VS of Egypt had indicated strong desire for EuFMD/FAO to continue support on laboratory strengthening and FMD surveillance. The TCP had been provided in response to FMD outbreaks in 2007 and had focussed on local management capacity, particular on QA of locally produced vaccines, and piloting a monitoring program for vaccination campaigns (improving NSP serology and interlab comparison to harmonise VNT for assessment of response to vaccination). An

innovative, sms-based reporting system had been piloted in 5 areas in order to obtain FMDV isolates from outbreaks, to test for suitability of the local vaccine; this system had directly resulted in the only reports of FMD to the OIE during the project period but had proved FMDV is circulating, both A Egy 06 (for over 3 years) and O Panasia II (following presumed introduction in 2007). The seromonitoring in 5 areas had indicated a high and widespread exposure of animals to FMD (for large ruminants < 24 months, estimated animal true prevalence was 34%), whereas repeat vaccinated dairy animals were sero-negative, suggesting NSP antibodies did not relate to use of impure vaccine. The TCP, although low cost, had been highly influential in introducing QA procedures and workable solutions. Design of a follow-on project, aimed at securing the continuity of the monitoring program and outbreak investigation (following sms-report) will be submitted to EuFMD following mission of Kees van Maanen (15-19th March). Details are given in **Appendix 13**.

In discussion, the significance of the findings and the risks of the African type A for the middle-east and Europe was re-affirmed. The WRL indicated that the FAO TCP had been essential to clarifying the epidemiologic situation. Dr Füssel expressed disappointment that the sms system had not continued after the TCP, but re-affirmed the importance of continued information flow on the situation, particularly the circulating A strain.

The Chairman concluded that continuation of technical support was required. He suggested the limit for 2010 for this support should be US\$150,000.

In Lebanon, support to improve FMD surveillance and contingency planning had been provided under FAO funded TCP (3102/Leb), which ended 12/2009. EuFMD with EC support had provided emergency support in 2009 following the type A Iran 05 outbreaks. A summary of support provided, the use made and results of monitoring programs are given in **Appendix 14**. TCP support had focussed on developing an animal health information system, contingency planning, diagnostic capacity for FMD and HPAI, and establishing a sero-monitoring program to provide baseline information on certain key diseases.

FMD outbreaks (incursion of A Iran 05) had resulted in a crisis situation in early 2009 and EC had agreed to provide monovalent vaccine; a summary of application was provided. The vaccine has been received by the end of September and has been used by the Lebanese veterinary services according to the following breakdown: 60,000 cattle, 10,000 swine, and 170,000 small ruminants. The zones of high concentration were vaccinated first. The total used at time of report was about 155,000 doses. The authorities plan to vaccinate in 2010 on two occasions using O/ A/Asia1.

Sero-monitoring for FMD indicated nearly 70% village had positive cattle reactors, and 20% of cattle (2-4 years age) samples; samples had been collected prior to the 2009 epidemic therefore indicate exposure in period 2005-8. Diagnostic kits, training and a *vade mecum* (decision tree/guidance) for FMD confirmation had been agreed and good communications established with the VS and CVL for FMD.

In addition, the EuFMD provided assistance by:

- proposing guidelines for the early detection and diagnostic of FMD outbreaks;
- providing a kit for the early virus detection (A/O/Asia1);
- supplying kits to complete the sero-prevalence study on small ruminants, to monitor the virus circulation and the effectiveness of the control measures.

The Chairman took note of the findings and concluded that it remained important for the Secretariat to keep in contact with the VS of Lebanon on the status of their FMD control programme and their capacity for rapid confirmation and typing of outbreaks of FMD.

ITEM 8. International FMD surveillance : African proximity

Background

The 78th ExCom recommended the Secretariat prepare a project document to be tabled at the 79th ExCom, taking into consideration points raised in the review of the support provided in 2005-9.

The item was introduced by Dr Sumption. In 2005-9, several low budget forms of assistance had been provided to African FMD laboratories to address information on FMD circulation in livestock populations/ecosystems which had been known to have been the source of FMD incursions in north Africa and the middle-east since 1999. The small grant program was reviewed by the Research Group, and discussed at the 78th Executive; although efficient (at less than 1000US\$ per result on the WRL website, including sample collection/transport and null results) the Executive had indicated that greater efficiencies should be sought in the new programme.

The proposal tabled (**Appendix 15**) had three major aims, to improve regional FMDV viral intelligence gathering and communication (in North-eastern and northern parts of West/Central Africa), improved submission of relevant FMDV to WRL from high risk populations, and assessment of population risk (incidence) in two selected countries. The activities would be mediated by having a) two regional focal points to gather information from labs in their areas, to improve assessment of new FMDV events and threats; b) a small number of grants, each of which would have an African and European NRL partner, in order to achieve greater technical efficiency and quality in each action, and which would generate some of the information constraining regional threat assessment. Support costs (from a budget of 900k US\$) included an element for European experts to visit/train/advise on the actions of the African partners.

The proposal was discussed; the Chairman was concerned to know if the program would guarantee greater efficiency than the previous programme. Keith Sumption explained that the new system, focussing on regional information gathering from African NRLs in addition to small projects in hot – spots, should generate information of greater relevance/importance. The inclusion of European NRL partners should address the high false negative rate in samples submitted to WRL through greater screening at the African NRLs before shipment, so efficiency should rise. He was confident the program would achieve a reduction in average cost/result compared to the first Phase.

The proposed inclusion of countries in the potential program from beyond the immediate belt of sub-Saharan belt was questioned by several participants. The secretariat outlined that the Somali-ecosystem had been shown as the source for Egypt in 2006, and Kenya provides the regional lab that handles Somali samples; Nigeria and Cameroon were potentially included as most livestock are located in northern regions in full contact with sahelian animals, and in addition NVRI Vom, Nigeria, is a leading regional lab in the regional RESOLAB network co-orientated by FAO.

Conclusion

It was agreed that the overall initiative should be considered a framework under which individual actions could be reviewed and agreed, and that a review panel should be formed to assess relevance these proposed actions against agreed criteria. The panel agreed comprised Ulrich Herzog, Nigel Gibbens, Jef Hammond, Alf Fuessel with Secretary, Keith Sumption.

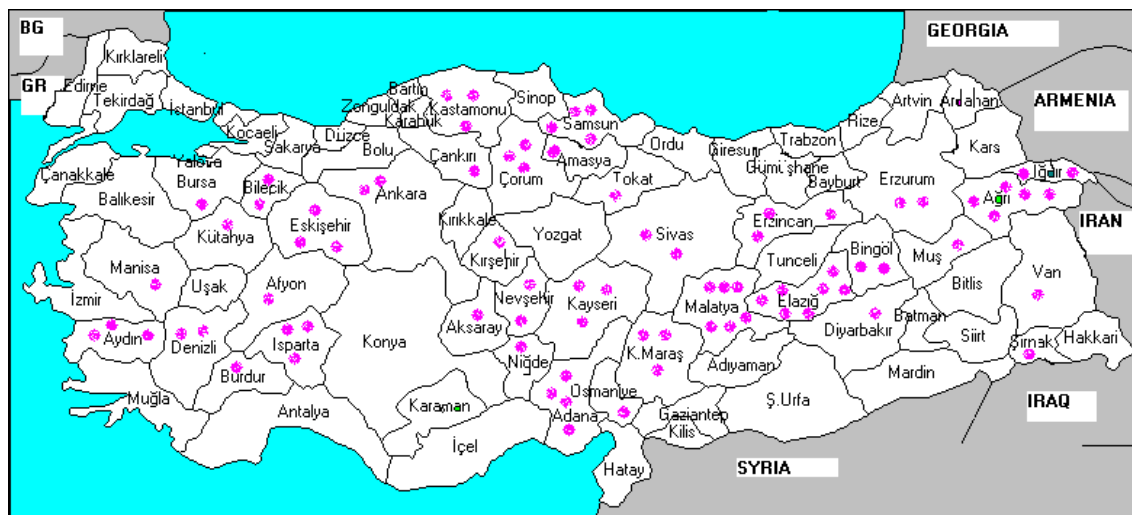
ITEM 9. Progress reports on FMD Control Projects in the Region

9. a). Turkey: FMD situation and progress of the Turkey/EuropeAid Project

The report (**Appendix 16**) was provided by Dr Askaroglu, CVO Turkey.

Situation: 98 outbreaks had been reported in 2010, of which 29 were confirmed as type A, 40 type O, and the rest remained untyped. This represents an **upsurge in cases** compared to previous years

(almost 100 cases in 2 months of 2010 compared to 253 and 214 cases in 2008 and 2009, respectively). The cases are widely distributed, except for Thrace region. A notable gap is in Konya in 2009 to present, compared to 2008 and previous years.



The FMDV strains involved are continuously evolving within Turkey, both in type O (4% VP1 sequence diversity) and type A where 5 subgroups can be seen with 6-7% diversity. There is little evidence of new FMDV incursions in the past two years except for a detection of the A TUR06 BAR-08 lineage (which spread across most of the mid-east in 2009). This suggests high vaccination rates in 2008-9 have had an impact. However, as FMDV strains are evolving, cross-protection studies are important, and two years ago (July 2008) the A22 Iraq vaccine strain was replaced with A TUR 04/06.

Turkey is engaged in a major joint project (EuropeAid Project TR060302) which ends Nov 2010. Full vaccination of large and small ruminants was planned and in autumn 2009, the highest rates of vaccination were achieved; 91% LR (96% in Thrace) and 63% of SR.

The 2009 national sero-monitoring had detected 10% overall prevalence (1.7-22.8% by region). Response to vaccination was assessed by testing sera (3900) from seven regions, with 69%, 82% and 80% positive for type O, A and Asia-1 by LBPE ELISA at a 1/100 dilution, respectively.

The 2010 serosurveillance plan is for collection from Thrace region in the autumn and Anatolia in the spring time, from 1075 villages in 7 regions, based on prevalence observed in 2009 in each region; in villages 31 LR + 32 SR will be sampled, assuming 10% seroprevalence; in total 67,000 sera will be collected with 3400 sera collected 30 days post-vaccination for SP antibody responses, based on expected 80% prevalence.

Turkey had high hopes that the recognition by the OIE of the status of **freedom of Thrace region from FMD with vaccination**, would be recognised in May 2010. This would be a historic moment for Turkey and the EuFMD, given the enormous importance placed on control of FMD in Thrace region for the biosecurity of south-eastern Europe.

Discussion

The Chairman congratulated the GDC on the progress made in past two years, and for the strong commitment to maintaining this with a new Phase of support in 2011-13.

Keith Sumption drew attention to the very long history of EuFMD activities including emergency actions, development of FMD vaccine production, and frequent missions, and in support of FMD control in Thrace region, starting from the SAT epidemics in the early 1960s, so for almost 50 years the region had been of high importance as a route, or barrier, for FMD spread into South-East

Europe. Official recognition of FMD freedom for Thrace region, if maintained, would be an enormous step forward and all parties should recognise the achievement of this joint effort.

However, he also brought attention to the upsurge in FMDV in Turkey, which remained unexplained, and all the more concerning as vaccination in autumn 2009 involved record levels of LR and SR (19 million; and almost 63% of sheep, for the first time a mass vaccination of sheep in Turkey). Was this further evidence of the cyclicity of FMD in the region, occurring despite mass vaccination? It was also disappointing that detailed accounts of the circumstances of outbreaks were lacking, despite the training of Turkish vets in the real-time courses; to assess if breakthrough of A TUR06 or O Manisa was occurring, or simply lack of vaccination in key ages or units. Is there any association of outbreaks with provider of vaccine, as 3 companies are involved? He considered it would be surprising, and very worrying, if the outbreaks had occurred following use of all three vaccines in an appropriate manner and coverage. The lack of detailed follow-up to outbreaks remains a concern and should be addressed.

Other points raised: Dr Georgiev indicated that a fully functional ID&R system should be high priority, with a compensation system. More effort needed to analyse NSP findings in relation to vaccine use, and greater effort to deal with illegal movements.

Dr Sumption in addition thanked GDPC for observing the reporting of exotic diseases in Thrace region, such as PPR (Report received 17th March, PPR in Gelibolu). He requested GDPC provide maps of type A and O distribution, and that using the Research Group/WRL activities supported by EuFMD, effort be made to

- apply the FLS project to the current situation – as part of identifying factors responsible for apparent increased FMD;
- identify if cross-protection has decreased, and make recommendations (JH, AD, NB).

9. b). TransCaucasus countries (TCC): situation and project proposal for 2010-12

Background

R#17 & #18 of the 78th Session: 1) A new project support document should be developed, and negotiated with the countries and the EC, that takes into consideration the conclusions of the review of the 2007-9 program; 2) Given the risk associated with lack of vaccination in Georgia, access to an emergency reserve of FMD vaccine is urgently needed; the Secretariat should agree with the EC on the arrangements.

Current Situation and actions undertaken

Dr Carsten Potzsch, EuFMD, presented the 6-month report on the FMD situation in the TCC since October 2009, and on the outcome of meeting held in Tbilisi, February 2010, to reach agreement on use of donated FMD vaccine for the spring campaign 2010, and on the status of the discussions with TCC veterinary services on objectives and activities of a new Phase of support in 2010-11. **(Appendices 17-18).**

In summary:

- Draft project document 2010-12 had been developed and agreed with TCC vet service representatives;
- the spring 2010 FMD vaccination plan had been agreed, based on FMD risk situation;
- increased live animal export from the region changes the risk of FMD from and within this region.

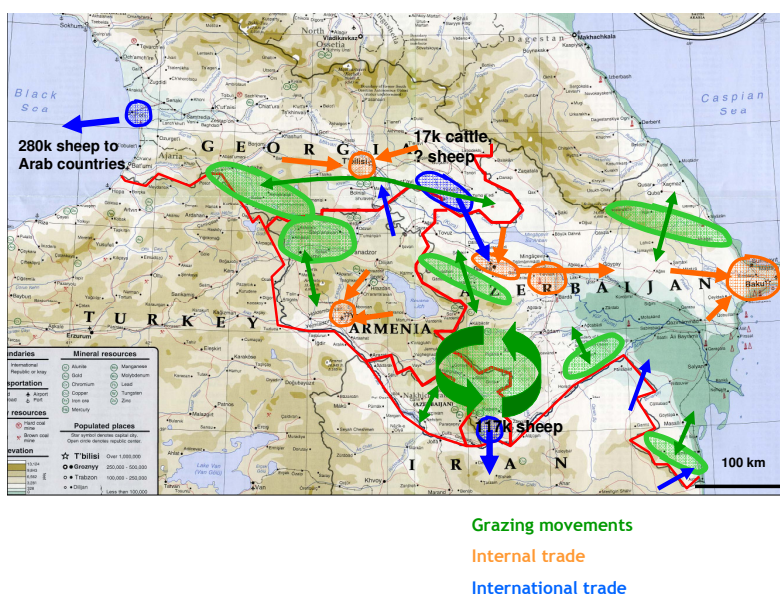
Since October 2009 (78th Session), major activities undertaken were:

- nationally organized autumn vaccination campaign undertaken without FMD project vaccine supplied;

- Drafting project document for 2010-2012;
- Project meeting with TCC representatives in Tbilisi in March, spring 2010 vaccination plan (with project vacc.) agreed based on assessment of FMD risks;
- regional vaccination database development, funded under 2007-9 EuFMD/EC funds; through FLI, Germany;
- TCC participation (2 countries) in the 2009 WRL proficiency tests, for first time;
- Testing of Azeri sera at IZSLER (conclusion; good vacc. coverage/immunity; national NSP diagnosis still needs assistance).

The risk situation:

- Increasing in spring and summer, with earlier movement to seasonal pastures this year (mild winter);
- Movements due to Nouruz bayram (20./21.3.) in Azerbaijan & Iran;
- Population immunity good but decreasing in Arm & Azb, low and decreasing in Geo;
- Booster vaccination (since 2nd half of 2009)
 - Azerbaijan 312,000 LR (11% of total)
 - Armenia 451,000 LR & 55,000 SR (81% & 11% of total)



Vaccination plan spring 2010

	Azerbaijan	Armenia	Georgia
Project vacc.	483,000 doses	283,000 d.	184,000 d.
National vaccine	± 4 mill. doses, tri-valent, ARRIAH	tri-valent, Pokrov (ordered)	-
Total vacc. plan	100% of LR 20% of SR (to summer pastures & border regions with Iran)	90% of LR (high risk) 60% SR (to summer pastures & border with Turkey) 40,000 does to N.Karabakh	15% of LR and 0.5% of SR 80% & 4% in former BZ (esp. on migration routes and summer pasture)
Booster vacc.	yes (LR)	yes (LR)	-
Planned start	end March/April	end March/April	end April - May

- Reporting: monthly project reports, project database
- Reserve of 150,000 doses tri-valent, at FGI-ARRIAH

Draft project - support to FMD control in 2010-12

The proposal presented was for a 3 year program as a continuation (Phase 2010-12) of the support provided under the European Commission/EuFMD program (MTF/INT/003/EEC) to reduce the risk of transboundary FMD movement across the eastern European borders, including the borders of the Caucasus countries with Turkey and Iran. The proposed action is in line with the West EurAsia FMD Roadmap, in which risk reduction is achieved by each TCC undertaking actions to achieve and complete Stage 2 activities which have the aim of preventing virus circulation in the TCC, and entering Stage 3.

The programme for the Caucasus countries has 3 main components:

1. Regional Coordination of national FMD prevention actions, policy development and implementation support, in line with the EuFMD 38th Session and vision of the West Eurasia FMD Roadmap;
2. FMD monitoring and FMD control, incl. vaccination, information management, and emergency planning, in line with requirements of Stage 2;
3. Laboratory capacity to support FMD monitoring /surveillance and control programmes.

The aim of the project is to re-enforce regional bio-security, especially at the borders between the TransCaucasus and Turkey and Iran. Of note is the escalating meat import trade, and the risk of entry into free range pig production since most pigs are kept on a scavenging basis, and FMD has frequently entered other countries by such a route.

The project strategy is:

1. **Reinforce** preventive vaccination measures in high risk zones including the border regions with Turkey/Iran in spring 2010-2011 through the provision of a quality assured FMD vaccine containing the appropriate antigens;
2. **Identify** the impact of control measures upon FMDV circulation and incidence, and to re-assess and guide the NVS on control measures to be taken to prevent virus circulation;
3. **Establish** in each country and at regional level sufficient access to quality assured laboratory services that will enable improved national monitoring of the vaccination programs, and able to achieve early confirmation of FMD if it occurs.

Regarding the inputs required, the budget for the action is circa 2 million US\$, which is a lower amount compared to the 2007-9 Phase as a result of a reduction in the annual vaccine purchase component (2010-11), with no purchase foreseen for 2012; in that year an emergency reserve is proposed instead, with the decision on level of input for that year being made at the mid-term project review in 2011.

Discussion

The Chairman thanked Dr Potzsch for the work to develop the new Phase and opened the discussion. Dr Füessel indicated that the use of EC funded vaccine in a risk based approach could be supported but if the countries will agree to full national vaccination as planned, with project supplied vaccine as a component, then the latter input should be seen as being for the Buffer Zone (BZ). He questioned what prevents project inputs from maintaining the BZ while national inputs are risk based. Dr Potzsch replied that this was the reality in the planning of the 2010 spring campaigns, since the major areas for risk based vaccination were in the borders with Turkey/Iran. All countries wanted to maintain BZ using a combination of national and international supplied vaccine, and the benefit of the EuFMD/EC input was to guarantee vaccine meeting our requirements will be used. However the financial crisis has had an impact, with Armenia reducing from 100% coverage in 2009. He confirmed that there is no other EC support (through EC to the national budgets) as occurred several years ago, for FMD vaccination in the 3 countries and therefore the EuFMD/EC support was of high significance.

The quality of clinical surveillance was questioned, as the monthly reports do not mention suspected FMD; the suspicion remained that given the export trade, that if they have something they may not report it.

The Chairman sought reassurance that a functional vet service is present in Georgia for planning of preventive measures; Dr Potzsch reported that the situation appears to be improving, the current Minister (following meetings held with EuFMD/FAO officers) has changed towards a positive position, recognising the national importance of contributing to the joint vaccination programme to prevent FMD, and that they have agreed to use national budget to pay private veterinarians to undertake FMD vaccination.

Conclusion

The need for the proposed action was reaffirmed by the Committee and the proposed support for 2010-12 was agreed in principle by the Committee; the EC requested to review the proposed action after submission by the Secretariat and indicate its position at the earliest opportunity.

9. c). Iran: situation, review of Phase II and proposed actions for Phase III

Background

Item discussed at 78th Session with **Conclusion:** The Committee noted with concern the problems to implement Phase II, given the importance of the risk for Turkey and the wider region, and endorsed the proposal that a review of Phase II and of proposed actions for Phase III be conducted, by early 2010 before submission of a Phase III project to the EC.

Situation and actions undertaken

Dr Francis Geiger introduced the item with a presentation (**Appendix 19**) which summarised the report of the mission team (FG, Labib-Bakkali, AFSSA France, lab expert, and Nenad Petrovic, Serbia, information systems expert) which had reviewed Phase II and gave recommendations on the management of the potential Phase III. The mission team had met with IVO to prepare for the review, in January 2010, and to identify Phase III areas of interest identified in the request of the Head of the IVO by letter to the EuFMD Secretariat, and the team had visited Iran to conduct the review in Feb 2010.

The overall conclusion was that Phase II had been too ambitious for the 15 months agreed when the project was signed between FAO and IVO in September 2008. Of the 5 components, some had exceeded expected progress, such as the progress to harmonise regional measures (the West Eurasia Roadmap made greater than expected progress), but national components, which relied on the actions of the Project Steering Committee, were limited as the PSC had rarely met and a project management approach by the national counterparts (in the IVO) had not been implemented. Some external training components, such as the lab twinning with WRL Pirbright, could not be implemented because of issues constraining UK institutions working with Iran, and alternative arrangements had been similarly difficult to implement with European partners. Despite this, the first major sero-survey had been conducted with >23,000 sera being tested in Iran, for the first time. In addition the lab networking/early warning system had functioned, providing a warning of the O Ind 2001 incursion, but overall still required a new approach to address the time between the event and virus typing being achieved.

For the 3rd Phase, the main objectives had been proposed by the IVO and the Secretariat had drafted a project document in line with the EuFMD Strategic Plan and based on the provisional budget presented at the 78th Session. The mission team considered that the 3rd Phase must be based on a commitment to follow an appropriate project management system, with a regular meeting of all the actors, improved project reporting (no project steering committee reports under Phase II), and time-

table for actions. Further, where training is involved this commitment must be there to use the trainees to continue within the project to achieve agreed objectives.

Regarding Phase III, the mission team reviewed the five components proposed by the IVO, and identified activities where external inputs could be critical to progress at national level. These components were mainly in technical guidance in FMD monitoring and surveillance (components 1,3 4) and laboratory support to FMD monitoring (incidence, rapid FMDV typing, and vaccination monitoring; Component 2). The IVO had requested support to establish a Control Zone in Western Iran, which could be a major success if it achieved progress to reduce impact of transboundary animal movements; inputs here would be to support regional meetings and guide local investigation/planning of control measures. Component 5, on animal ID and movement control systems, could be assisted through technical guidance (consultancy to design I&R systems). Overall the objectives identified by Iran were high, and therefore national commitment obtained would achieve significant progress.

Regarding the next Steps, Dr Geiger indicated that the Iranian authorities were reconsidering the need for external assistance for Phase III objectives identified in 2009, there being caution in developing new projects with external agencies. Based on their recommendations, they would formulate a revised Draft of Phase III and send to the EuFMD Commission, and if agreed by EuFMD/EC, this could proceed to signature of a new MoU (agreement).

Discussion

The Chairman thanked Dr Geiger for his work in leading the review team and for the clear summary of issues to be addressed.

Concerns were expressed to ensure lessons were learnt from the recent Phase, particularly to ensure the objectives for Phase III are achievable, with a clear commitment of the parties to local project management system and that external training or inputs are possible under the current circumstances.

Dr Domenech, France, indicated their strong interest to see a Phase III in order to maintain links and knowledge of situation in a difficult country.

In conclusion, the Committee

- Reaffirmed the importance to Turkey, the EC and EuFMD for continued activity to develop and agree with the IVO the way forward and type of support that will be most effective;
- agreed that a Phase III proposal should be, if possible, approved by the ExCom in May 2010 for decision/finalisation with the EC. decide /finalise/with EC.

It was agreed that France would organize, at the time of the OIE May2010 Session, a meeting place for the ExCom to meet separately and together with Iranian authorities to agree upon the way forward with Phase III.

9. d) Syria

Background

Support to FMD surveillance in Syria was agreed between EuFMD/EC in 2008 and a small project implemented that focussed on design of a monitoring system and laboratory capacity for sero-surveillance.

Situation

FMD has not been reported in Syria since 2002, an apparent anomaly given that all neighbouring countries have had recent epidemics of A Iran 05 or type O. Progress of the project was summarised by Dr Ben Youssef (**Appendix 20**), following his joint mission with Dr Potzsch in February 2010. Progress to implement agreed surveillance plan had been slow, but results (for LR) provided during the mission, all 5000 sera had negative results, a surprising finding. A timetable for follow-up actions

was agreed, including completion of the SR sampling and serology, and laboratory training in NSP test interpretation and follow-up actions. In view of the negative results, external testing of a subset was recommended.

Discussion

It was agreed that the development of the PCP process, including official recognition of Stage 2 (national control strategy) may assist with countries to improve trade prospects from non-free areas, which could benefit exporting countries such as Syria.

Conclusion

A report on the project and perspective for continued co-operation in 2011-12 was requested for the 80th Session.

ITEM 10. Report on activities of the Standing Technical Committee (Research Group)

10. a) Open Session of the Standing Technical Committee

The venue and programme for the upcoming Meeting in Vienna was discussed. The *FMDWeek2010* (27th September-1st Oct) would include the following back to back meetings :

- 80th ExCom Session (Mon-Tues);
- Open Session of the Technical Committee (Wedns-Friday);
- parallel meeting on Economic Impact assessment of FMD in free countries (Wedns);
- parallel meetings of FMD projects (GFRA, EC DISCONVAC, and FAO/IAEA collaborative research project on FMD) – Tuesday;
- Annual Meeting of the OIE/FAO FMD Reference laboratory network (Mon-Tuesday of following week, Pirbright).

The FMDWeek would therefore make efficient use of the time, minimise travel and maximise participation from international reference centres as well as EuFMD Member States.

The programme was endorsed, with full support from the Committee.

10 .b) Marketing authorisation issue

Dr Dekker, Chairman of the Technical Committee, reviewed the issue, followed by additional remarks. from Dr Füessel. The issue was raised as one that affects MS and the EC that hold antigens. At present buyers depend on market authorisation being sought by vaccine producers; for antigens older than 5 years, considered to be satisfactory but beyond the conditions of the MA, the emergency derogation procedure cannot be applied as it was considered that 5 years without gaining an MA does not equal an emergency situation. Consultations in the EC are ongoing as the DG-Enterprise unit responsible has been assigned to DG-SANCO and new possibilities arise including possible application for MA by EC. There is scope and possibility for rationalising the national and EC holdings, but complex area for negotiations.

In conclusion, the EC would update the 80th Session and a summary could also be provided to the Open Session (Item on vaccine and antigen bank selection/priorities).

10 c) Concept Notes for proposed technical studies

Dr Dekker presented the two Concept Notes (CN) which had been submitted to the Secretariat and reviewed by the panel in line with procedures adopted at the 78th Session; the panel had comprised members of the Executive, EC, and Chair and Vice-Chair (Dr de Clercq) of the Research Group (RG).

Both CN relate to the priority of the RG for improving procedures for vaccine matching, for type A and SAT viruses.

The first CN (costed at 20,000 €) was for activities that would generate biological reagents (antisera) for studies on antigenic diversity of type A viruses using VNT and LPBE. The Review group endorsed the proposal although they questioned if sufficient animals were involved.

The second CN concerned SAT vaccination monitoring, and generation of suitable standard sera for PTS. The group endorsed the proposal but required that at the contract stage the main component costs be clarified and better justified, and that there should be SAT1&2 sera made available as an output to EU labs, from both vaccinated and also vaccinated/field exposed cattle. As these antisera could not be generated without a higher cost in EU labs, the CN was therefore considered good use of funds. The CN was therefore endorsed with the proviso that the Chairman undertakes to revise the final agreement with input of the Working Group (Dr Paton, WRL –Leader).

10. d) Other issues

The apparent reduction in r-values by VNT of type O manisa and recent circulating type O in Turkey/Iran was raised.

Conclusion

The situation requires to be continually monitored, and the Chairman would produce guidance (decision tree or similar) on when the cross-protection and other results justify a potency test (cross-protection), as the latter generally cost at least 50,000 US\$, and take time to arrange (often 4-6 months) as facilities are limited in Europe.

ITEM 11. Financial Report

Dr Sumption presented the Financial Statements for the three Trust Funds managed by the Secretariat (**Appendix 21**).

11. a) Status of country contributions to MTF/INT/011/MUL

The cash balance at the end of 2009 for the TF which is used to support administration of the Commission was 291, 055 US\$, but with outstanding contributions of 155kUS\$. The positive cash balance, as a result of savings in salaries, enables the decision to support the WRL contract with an additional 75,000 US\$ in 2010, and to propose supporting “Internships” (Item 11c) through use of savings in the travel budget line.

Note: the Final Statements for 2009 will have some adjustments to those provided to the Session as a result of the need to charge the EC Trust Fund for actions paid from the 011/MUL during the period while waiting for the 1st instalment of the EC Funds under the new agreement, to be paid to FAO.

11. b). Status of MTF/INT/003/EC

Dr Sumption explained that the occasion of the signing of the new agreement with the EC for support to the Commission in 2009-12 gave rise to a necessity to close the accounts on expenditures made prior to signature, in order to improve budget control and reporting on expenditure under the new agreement. Since the 2005 agreement was for 48 months from September 2005, expenditure on pre-agreed actions in 2009 occurred from the TF of 1.144mUS\$, resulting in a deficit of almost 248k US\$ at the time of closure of the account; a new account (Trust Fund number) was opened and Statement 5 indicates the receipt of 2.23mUS\$ under the new agreement, and a balance of 1.633mUS\$ at the close of 2009.

The true balance of the TF at end of 2009, with correction for the deficit of 248kUS\$ was therefore 1.38mUS\$.

He explained that the 248k deficit was not an overspend, rather the opposite, there was significant underspend over the 4 year period and FAO had not received the funds in 2008 in line with the pre-agreed level of activities, so that a deficit occurred as the 2009 payment by EC was made on the basis of the new agreement signed in mid-2009.

The situation could be rectified by either EC making a payment of 248k USD in line with the terms of the 2005 agreement, or giving FAO permission to write off the deficit with the funds received under the new agreement.

It was concluded that FAO would write to EC with the suggested options.

11.c). Use of the Trust Funds to support “EuFMD Internships”

The Secretary presented a proposal (Appendix 22) to use the “travel costs” budget line of the MTF/INT/003/MUL to the maximum amount of 50,000 US\$ each year, to support professional officer attachments to the EuFMD Commission, with the objectives of providing international experience and training in FMD prevention and management, and assisting the Secretariat. He provided a paper outlining how the Intern positions would be managed. The minimum term of attachment would be three months, and the scheme was proposed as a pilot study to the 2011 General Session when the Commission could decide upon its longer term continuation.

Dr Füessel indicated that the EC could in principle support the programme, which could be considered a part of the training initiative.

The proposal was supported unanimously.

ITEM 12. Other business

-Membership of the Executive: it was agreed to discuss the vacancy that has arisen from the retirement of Dr Pinheiro, with the incoming CVO of Portugal.

-FAO/OIE/EC Tripartite on FMD and other disease control in the Balkan region: it was agreed that the future of the Tripartite meeting, and its possible extension to other Balkan region countries, be discussed at a meeting to be held during the May OIE General Session, to be convened by Dr Herzog in consultation with OIE and EC representatives and of the interested countries.

Dr Belev agreed to discuss this with the DG of OIE, and the representatives of Bulgaria and Greece strongly supported the proposal to extend the country involvement in the TPT meeting, with inclusion also of rabies and CSF.

-Items for the Provisional Agenda for the 80th Session (Vienna, 27-28th September)

Note: if the September Session is the last ExCom before the General Session (39th, April 2011) it should also decide upon the Administrative Budget (and country contributions) to be proposed at the 39th Session, for biennium 2012-13.

1. Review of the WRL contract 2008-10, and proposal for 2011-13;
2. Vaccine and antigen banks:
 - risk assessment and priorities for national/EC bank;
 - market authorisation procedures and outlook for European vaccine bank management ;
3. Report of the West Eurasia FMD Lab network on virus circulation and epidemic threat.
4. Global Initiative:
 - report of the GfTADS Working Group on FMD (if occurred);
 - status/Adoption of guidelines relating to the Progressive Control Pathway;
 - report on the (Global) review of international projects supporting improved FMD control ;
 - preparation of the FAO/OIE Global FMD Scientific Conference, 2011.

5. West Eurasia – status/progress of FMD control programmes:
 - focus upon new programmes under negotiation or implemented (Iran, TransCaucasus).
6. South & East Mediterranean:
 - update on new programmes under negotiation or implemented (Egypt);
 - report of meeting held in Jordan for improved regional FMD control.
7. African proximity surveillance:
 - report on decisions made by the subcommittee.
8. Standing Technical Committee:
 - report on decisions of the Concept Note subcommittee.
9. Financial situation:
 - see Note about budget preparation for 39th Session;
 - report on Uptake of Intern positions.

Closing – Acknowledgement

The Chairman thanked the Swedish hosts from the Ministry and the Board of Agriculture, particularly Mr Anders Lönnblad, Dr Denneberg and Dr Björnerot, for their participation and for the excellent hospitality in Stockholm. He thanked all participants for making the effort to come to the north of Europe and for their vital contributions to the work of the Commission. He invited all to attend the 80th Executive Committee Session to be held 27-28th September in Vienna, and would do his best to match the marvellous atmosphere of Stockholm.