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European Commission for the Control
of Foot-and-Mouth disease

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

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Report



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the European Union



FAO Four Better's. Better life, Better environment,
Better nutrition, Better production.

EuFMD's programme, tools and initiatives

FAST

Foot-and-mouth And
Similar Transboundary
animal diseases

Dt

EuFMD digital
transformation

Tom

EuFMD training
management system

Micro learning

EuFMD micro learning

Vlearning

EuFMD virtual learning

SimExOn

Simulation exercises
online

Get prepared

Emergency preparedness toolbox

Risk Comms

EuFMD risk communications

RMT-FAST

Risk monitoring tool for foot-and-mouth
and similar transboundary animal diseases

Pragmatist

Prioritization of antigen management
with international surveillance tool

EuFMDiS

European foot-and-mouth disease
spread model

Vademos

FMD vaccine demand
estimation model

GVS

Global vaccine
security

PQv

Vaccine
prequalification

PCP

Progressive control
pathway

PSO

Pcp practitioner
officers

PPP

Public private
partnership

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Appendix 13 – Membership contributions and proposed budget 2024–2025 (F. Rosso, EuFMD)

The appendices are available online and upon request.

Preamble

The 45th General Session of the European Commission for the Control of Foot-and-Mouth Disease (EuFMD) was held on 4 and 5 May 2023 at the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) headquarters in Rome, Italy. The meeting was streamed online to accommodate those who could not travel.

Delegates from most of the 39 Member Nations of the Commission, official observers from the European Commission, FAO, the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH, founded as OIE), and civil society organizations participated in the two-day meeting.

Abbreviations and acronyms

ANSES	French Agency for Food, Environmental and Occupational Health & Safety
DG-SANTE	Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety of the European Commission
EuFMD	European Commission for the Control of Foot-and-Mouth Disease
EURLs	European Union Reference Laboratories
FAST	Foot-and-mouth And Similar Transboundary animal diseases
FMD	Foot-and-mouth disease
FMDV	Foot-and-mouth disease virus
FMD-WG	Foot-and-mouth disease Working Group
GF-TADs	Global Framework for the Progressive Control of Transboundary Animal Diseases
GVA	Groups for Vaccination Advice, guidance and consultation
LSD	Lumpy skin disease
MBRMS	Minimum Biorisk Management Standards
NSP	non-structural protein
PRAGMATIST	The Antigen Priority tool
PCP-FMD	Progressive Control Pathway for Foot-and-Mouth disease
PCP	Progressive Control Pathway
PQv	Prequalification scheme for FMD vaccines
PPR	Peste des petits ruminants
RTT	Real-time trainings
RVF	Rift Valley Fever
SEEN	Southeast European Neighbourhood
SCBRM	Special Committee for BioRisk Management
SCPQv	Standing Committee on prequalification system for FMD vaccines
SCRISAR	Standing Committee on Risk Monitoring, Integrated Surveillance and Applied Research
SPGP	Sheep Pox Goat Pox
STC	Standing Technical Committee
TADs	Transboundary animal diseases
TC	Training Credit
WHO	World Health Organisation
WOAH	World Organisation for Animal Health

WRL-FMD FAO/WOAH World Reference Laboratory for Foot-and-Mouth Disease

Conclusions and recommendations

Considering

1. The economic consequences of even a single foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) outbreak in FMD-free countries and the cost-benefits of programmes aimed at improving emergency preparedness and response capacity
2. The recent amendment of the EuFMD Constitution that allows the Commission to build on good principles for FMD preparedness and control, and extend them to similar transboundary animal diseases (TADs) threatening Europe, ensuring a cost-effective combination of actions and keeping the focus on FMD
3. The repeated FMD incursions into the direct European neighbourhood over the past years and the concern raised by long-distance movements of FMD virus (FMDV) causing outbreaks in unexpected locations
4. The risk of introduction of FMD virus from areas of West, Central and East Africa to North Africa and the Near East associated with trans-Saharan animal movements and the related threat for Europe
5. The FMD virus spread pathways from South Asia, Near East and Gulf States to Southeast European neighbouring countries and the risk represented for EuFMD Member Nations in the region
6. The scale of the FMD susceptible animal population and intensity of animal movements in countries neighbouring Europe, with the associated increased risk of Foot-and-mouth And Similar Transboundary animal diseases (FAST) introduction and spread to Europe
7. The significant efforts made by the EuFMD Member Nations Türkiye, Georgia and Israel in the prevention, surveillance and control of FAST diseases and the emergency actions taken to contain the FMD virus SAT2 serotype spread within the national borders (Türkiye), and therefore reduce the risk of introduction to Europe
8. The difficulties encountered in the European neighbourhood in responding to the incursion of new FMD strains with significant constraints reported in diagnostic services, surveillance capacity and control options
9. The consequences of the Russian aggression against Ukraine on transboundary animal disease control in the close Member Nation neighbourhood
10. The relevance for the EuFMD to maintain a strong network with the European neighbouring countries to provide tailored assistance in their progression along the Progressive Control Pathway for Foot-and-Mouth Disease (PCP-FMD), to provide adequate support during emergencies, and to ensure updated risk information to Member Nations
11. The core partnership with the FAO/WOAH World Reference Laboratory for FMD (WRL-FMD) to support the global FMD laboratory surveillance, which gives updated information on FMD threats and vaccine recommendations to Member Nations
12. The results of the collaboration with FAO and European Union Reference Laboratories (EURLs) to implement training initiatives for laboratories and veterinary services, to provide assistance to neighbouring countries in surveillance, post-vaccination monitoring and proficiency tests services
13. The impact of increased costs and logistical challenges of international sample shipment on surveillance activities of the WOAHA/FAO FMD Reference Laboratory Network, which has led – over the past biennium – to a reduction both in the number of samples submitted, and in the number of countries submitting samples

14. The progress made in the implementation of the Global FMD Control Strategy and the relevance of the continued support provided to the Global Framework for the Progressive Control of Transboundary Animal Diseases (GF-TADs) partners for an effective implementation of the PCP-FMD
15. The benefit recognized by Member Nations of field-based training courses held in endemic settings and the opportunity to extend these to other FAST diseases
16. The importance of collaboration, coordination and synergies with regional organizations and programmes for successful global control or eradication of FMD and similar priority transboundary animal diseases
17. The efforts dedicated to the development of digital technologies, know-how and tools which were essential to the programme delivery during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the benefits provided to ensure better impact (i.e. wider audience of training) and a cost-effective approach in the delivery of the work programme
18. The relevance of adopting actions to improve FAST vaccine security, recognizing that a multistakeholder approach is needed to engage with both public and private stakeholders at a global level and designing and implementing solutions
19. The opportunity to improve the monitoring of FMD virus vaccine quality and performance and to provide information and tools to assist the selection of appropriate vaccines according to threats
20. The relevance of improving the procurement procedures that allow the identification and selection of quality FMD vaccines for emergency and prophylactic use
21. The opportunity to address the main constraints identified in the operational capacity of Member Nations to implement an emergency vaccination rapidly and the difficulties connected to the recovery of free status after vaccination
22. The increased demand for support to national training programmes to better equip veterinary workforce and the relevance of adopting a system to evaluate skills and critical competencies of individuals and veterinary services
23. The relevance of the application of the Biorisk Minimum Standards for containment in FMD virus laboratories responsible for diagnosis and vaccine production
24. The outcomes of the Open Sessions 2020 and 2022, and the relevance of the development of innovative and digital tools to improve surveillance and control of FAST diseases, and in particular the potential of digital tools for the timely communication of genomic information
25. The opportunity to develop a new strategy that will guide the work of the EuFMD in Phase VI (2023–2027), building on the results of the three pillars programme to ensure a safer Europe from foot-and-mouth disease and similar transboundary animal diseases
26. The FAO strategic objectives' focus on actions to ensure better production, better nutrition, better life, and better environment recognizing the interconnected economic, social, and environmental dimensions of agrifood systems

Member Nations acknowledge:

the support of the **Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety of the European Commission** (DG-SANTE) through the four-year **Phase V** of the work programme of the Strategic Plan (2019–2023) agreed in 2019 and the support granted to the four-year of the Strategic plan – **Phase VI** (2023–2027) which was endorsed during the current 45th General Session in 2023.

Member Nations recognize:

progress with the **implementation of the current Strategic Plan** and the **positive development of collaboration** with the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) and with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) on matters relating to the programme of the EuFMD for improving preparedness, reducing risk and improving control of FMD and similar TADs.

Member Nations agree upon:

1. the **Move FAST – GET prepared strategy** for 2023–27 with these three focus objectives: 1) protect the livestock sector in EuFMD Member Nations from FAST introduction and spread, 2) ensure adequate capacities to respond to crises and improve resilience of the livestock sector to FAST diseases in Member Nations, and 3) sustain control of FAST diseases in risk areas to reduce the spread of diseases and their impact on the livestock sector;
2. the need to **further improve** the support provided to Member Nations through **capacity-building initiatives** aimed at enhancing capacity to respond to the incursion of FMD and similar TADs, with reference to the real-time training programme and specific programmes in areas of Member Nations considered to be at highest risk (i.e. Balkans);
3. the **new Training Credit (TC) system** proposed with TCs assigned according to the livestock units of countries and with cascading opportunities to improve the impact of the training programme;
4. the relevance to continue the **Thrace programme** considering cost/benefits and the possibility to adapt it to other risk areas of Europe and its neighbourhoods, to improve both the confidence of freedom from FMD and early detection of FAST diseases;
5. the further development and adaptation to FAST diseases (if appropriate) of **tools** (Get prepared Wall, EuFMDiS model, Risk Monitoring Tool, the Antigen Priority tool [PRAGMATIST]), **field studies** and **technical networks** to assist the improvement of **emergency preparedness** and **risk monitoring** and to regularly assess the level of uptake and impact;
6. the development and implementation of a specific programme to assist **simulation exercises** and other initiatives aimed at assessing the **level of preparedness of veterinary services and laboratories**;
7. the development of specific initiatives to improve the **diagnostic capacities** of national laboratories with the possibility to **quickly scale-up diagnostics and other resources during emergencies**;
8. the further progress of capacities for the implementation of risk-based surveillance **in risk areas of Europe and neighbouring countries** for an improved **early-warning of FAST** and the further development and application of systems to facilitate timely **risk information sharing**; and
9. the methodology adopted for the **prioritization of FAST diseases** (FMD remaining the core priority of the Commission) in the EuFMD work programme and the proposal to focus on – in this order – **Rift Valley Fever (RVF) and Sheep Pox Goat Pox (SPGP)** in the next biennium, considering their impact on animal and human health, the level of preparedness of Member Nations and the reduced number of international initiatives.

10. the methodology adopted for the **prioritization of regions** within the EuFMD work programme, with the identification of the Southeast European Neighbourhood (SEEN), the Middle East and North Africa regions considered at highest risk for Europe with regards FMD and similar TADs;
11. the further **development of capacity-building opportunities** for virtual learning training courses for FAST diseases to be delivered by the EuFMD vLearning platform or through other virtual learning hubs;
12. the relevance to continue the programme (Stage 2) of the **prequalification system** for FMD vaccines aimed at improving quality, safety and efficacy of FAST disease vaccines procured and the identification of mechanism for ensuring its **financial sustainability**;
13. the need to continue to support the **global FMD surveillance** and **regular reporting** of new threats for Europe and other regions and build upon the **know-how** developed to assist the establishment of global surveillance and laboratory networks **for similar TADs**;
14. the opportunity to continue to provide **support to the Global FMD Control Strategy** and to the GF-TADs **FMD Working Group** providing technical assistance, making available technical skills, resources and tools to support countries in their PCP-FMD progression;
15. the adoption of the **Minimum BioRisk Management Standards** as presented in item 13 of the agenda of the 45th General Session (2023);
16. the proposal to establish a **Standing Committee on Risk Monitoring, Surveillance and Applied research** as presented in item 14 of the agenda of the 45th General Session (2023);
17. the membership of the **Standing Technical Committee (STC)**, the **Special Committee for BioRisk Management (SCBRM)**, **Standing Committee on Risk Monitoring, Surveillance and Applied Research (SCRISAR)**, and the **Standing Committee on prequalification system for FMD vaccines (SCPQv)**, as presented in item 14 of the agenda of the 45th General Session (2023);
18. the **contributions of the Member Nations for the biennium 2024–2025**, as proposed in item 16 of the agenda of the 45th General Session (2023); and the **budget of the MTF/INT/011/MUL** (administrative fund) for the forthcoming biennium;
19. the budget for the **Emergency and Training Fund (MUL004)** for the next biennium and the extension of the date to 31 December 2025; and
20. the outcomes of the **election procedures** with the election of the Chair, two co-chairs, six members and three observers of the Executive Committee as resulted from the election procedures.

Member Nations recommend the following:

1. the EuFMD develops a **detailed workplan** according to the MOVE FAST – GET PREPARED strategy adopted at the 45th General Session (2023) considering **synergies with GF-TADs partners**, their work programmes and priorities;
2. the EuFMD continues and further improves the **collaboration and coordination** with DG-SANTE, GF-TADs partners (FAO, WOA), their Regional Offices and other regional organizations for an improved combination of actions towards common goals of improving preparedness, surveillance and control of FAST diseases;
3. the EuFMD improves capacity to **mobilize resources** for the implementation of activities included in the strategic plan and with particular reference to **vaccine security**, providing regular evidence of the progress and benefits provided to the control of FMD in emergencies and endemic settings;
4. the EuFMD implements actions aimed at improving **passive surveillance** and encourages the assessment of the surveillance **sensitivity** in risk areas;
5. the EuFMD collaborates with the **FAO/WOAH Reference Laboratory Network** to identify **priority areas for improved FMD virological surveillance** in endemic pools and develops training and alternative mechanisms to improve storage and safe shipment of samples;
6. the EuFMD promotes the development of **awareness** material on on-farm **biosecurity** measures targeting livestock owners, avoiding duplications with other initiatives;
7. the EuFMD continues to promote, in collaboration with the FAO/WOAH reference laboratory network, **evaluation of vaccine effectiveness in the field** and **post-vaccination monitoring** studies, and sharing of the results to inform **vaccine selection** in the European neighbourhood and globally;
8. the EuFMD continues to monitor the **impact of the training programme** and provides **evidence of the improvement** in **emergency preparedness** of Member Nations.
9. the EuFMD assists the establishment of **multilateral collaboration and cooperation agreements** between countries in the neighbourhood for improving the sharing of risk information and the collaboration to mitigate the risk of introduction and spread of FAST diseases;
10. the EuFMD progressively expands its **technical expertise to TADs**, similar to FMD, prioritized within the work programme, according to the resources available and building upon the established partnerships with FAO/WOAH and European Union Reference Laboratories and centres of expertise;
11. Member Nations continue strengthening their **communication** and **collaboration** during emergencies for better sharing of **risk information, resources, and vaccines**; and
12. Member Nations provide **evidence of the application of Minimum Biorisk Management Standards (MBRMS)**, and the EUFMD establishes a system to facilitate mutual assessment of MBRMS implemented in FMDV laboratories.

Member Nations urge:

the **GF-TADs** to continue their efforts to provide confidence of the **global eradication of FMDV serotype C**, to avoid reintroduction through inadvertent escape from laboratories or bioterrorism, and to extend initiatives to improve **laboratory biosecurity and biosafety** to other TADs similar to FMD.

Member Nations call upon:

the international community to recognize the **importance of coordinated actions** in emergency preparedness and progressive control of FMD and similar transboundary animal diseases, under the **One Health framework**, where improved biosecurity and epidemic preparedness will make a valuable contribution towards the efforts to build a more **sustainable, efficient, resilient and inclusive** livestock sector that can significantly contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Item 1. Official opening and adoption of the agenda

Lajos Bognár, Chief Veterinary Officer (CVO) of Hungary and Chair of the European Commission for the Control of Foot-and-Mouth Disease (EuFMD) greeted participants and wished everyone a successful meeting.

He handed over to **Maria Helena Semedo**, Deputy Director General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), who stated that FAO is honoured to host the EuFMD and to have contributed to the EuFMD's growth from 6 to 39 Member Nations since 1954. The strong involvement and evolving partnership with the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH, founded as OIE) and Directorate General for Health and Food Safety (DG-SANTE) around the Commission has done much to reduce the risk of FMD And Similar Transboundary (referred to as FAST from now on) animal diseases in Europe. The work of the Commission in international capacity development has catalysed FAO's delivery of virtual learning across the world. The EuFMD, FAO and Member Nations have jointly delivered real change and connected thousands of animal health workers globally, with appropriate professional training. She stressed that the continued collaboration with FAO will be important in years to come. The EuFMD Constitution was amended in 2022 to expand preparedness and risk reduction activities to TADs similar to FMD. Europe is still threatened by FAST diseases, and the recent outbreak of Sheep Pox in Spain underlined that preparedness, the capacity to respond and continuous monitoring shall remain the priority. The EuFMD initiatives such as digital systems to share risk information, the emergency toolkits and systems to enhance the security of quality FAST vaccines have built the resilience of the livestock sector to threats and crisis. The fight against FAST diseases also makes food production systems more efficient and sustainable. Member Nations are encouraged to deliberate on a new strategy to be adopted for 2023 to 2027, ensuring that partnership and services to Member Nations are maintained in the face of the challenges of FAST diseases. FAO will support the Member Nations' decision, to ensure the EuFMD continues to make a valuable contribution to the FAO Strategic Framework and towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Montserrat Arroyo Kuribrena, Deputy Director General of the WOA, outlined the current world animal health situation, mentioning outbreaks of Avian Influenza, African swine fever (ASF), Lumpy skin disease (LSD) and Sheep Pox (SP), the spread and establishment of FMD SAT2 serotype in new areas (Iraq, Jordan, Türkiye), and other FMD serotype spread in formerly free countries or zones such as Southern Africa, Asia and Eastern Europe. Now more than ever the support to control the spread of TADs, to strengthen veterinary services' (VS) capacities, to implement preventive measures, and to ensure that free countries and zones maintain their annual health status is of utmost importance. Support to the GF-TADs Global FMD Control Strategy implementation is even more relevant in this sense, and a good example of the coordination mechanisms under the GF-TADs is the alignment of the WOA and EuFMD work programmes. She mentioned the successful collaboration between WOA and EuFMD on the delivery of the international Phoenix exercise. The work done so far by the EuFMD for the Progressive Control Pathway for FMD (PCP-FMD), the continuous support to the work of the FMD Working Group, and the PCP-FMD Support Officer (PSO) system have all certainly assisted endemic countries to better control FMD. She stressed the need to keep building the capacities of the veterinary services (VS) and deliver high-quality training, targeting the VS as one essential component in TADs control. She commended the work done by the FAO/WOA Reference Laboratory Network for FMD and the World Reference Laboratory for FMD (WRL-FMD) in their support to global surveillance, proficiency testing and support to countries for post-vaccination monitoring.

Francisco Reviriego Gordejo, Head of Unit of the Directorate General for Health and Food Safety (DG-SANTE) of the European Commission (EC), encouraged Member Nations to recognize the progress achieved in recent years

in the drastic reduction of FMD occurrences in the European region. He noted that FMD remains endemic in some areas, with the constant threat to livestock industries and food security in Europe and globally. The recent ratification of the EuFMD Constitution is a way of optimizing the activities with limited resources and seeking synergies in FAST preparedness and surveillance efforts. Furthermore, DG-SANTE stressed that the core task of EuFMD shall remain FMD. The 45th General Session of the EuFMD will examine the proposed new strategy, and DG-SANTE recognizes it as a welcome balance between the need to include new FAST diseases into the Member Nations' priorities and building on lessons from the past. He encouraged all to consider the risk of not being prepared for a future FMD outbreak. Training and preparedness of European vets that have never faced FMD physically, is essential for the EC, who relies on the EuFMD to deliver field training courses, acknowledging that the EuFMD's level of expertise is unique. With the recent Russian aggression against Ukraine, the European Commission is seeing concrete risk in the region. He called for swift appointment of a EuFMD Executive Secretary to ensure the successful deployment of the ambitious four-year new strategy. He concluded by stating that the European Commission stands ready to further support technically and financially the EuFMD and play an active role in FMD prevention and eradication.

Lajos Bognár, Chair of the Executive Committee, introduced the meeting agenda. The agenda was adopted (**Appendix 1**).

Item 2. Report of the Executive Committee on the actions since the 44th General Session

Presenter: Fabrizio Rosso, EuFMD Deputy Executive Secretary

The Executive Committee provided a brief overview of the EuFMD activities carried out in the past biennium (2021–2023) and noted **item 6** in the agenda will offer more details of the EuFMD activities.

Fabrizio Rosso mentioned the amendment of the EuFMD Constitution as one of the main achievements that builds upon good principles, but he also underlined trainings, tools for the control of FMD and extending them to similar TADs, with a cost-benefit approach. He underlined the EuFMD focus on FMD. Over the past years, the COVID-19 restrictions, which had created a lot of difficulties in implementing field and face-to-face activities, have slowly been lifted. However, Covid-19 also spurred the EuFMD to develop new tools, increase know-how and deliver virtual trainings. The EuFMD had a very good buy-in of virtual trainings by countries; thirty-five virtual learning courses were delivered with over 5 000 learners enrolled. Pillar I focused on development and delivery of high-quality training to Member Nations. The training quality management system was developed to assess the impact of EuFMD training and magnitude of cascade initiatives. An external evaluation of the quality of EuFMD trainings was carried out. The training management system (TOM) was developed to allow Member Nations to monitor skills at individual level and competencies at the Veterinary Service level. Within Pillar II, new tools were further developed, such as the PRAGMATIST, the European Foot-and-Mouth disease spread model (EuFMDiS) and the Get Prepared toolbox, with the aim to adapt these tools to new FAST threats. The work done in specific risk areas such as the Thrace programme was maintained, with the methodology developed to assess confidence in FMD freedom now extended to three FAST diseases. The work in the Balkans to improve preparedness through training, proficiency testing schemes (PTS), and simulation exercises was continued. The innovative system for Prequalification of vaccines (PQv) was taken forward, with technical and administrative procedures developed. The programme for applied research continued, with eight applications awarded over the past two years. Mr Rosso particularly commended the Team in Pillar II who managed to keep daily contact with countries in the European Union neighbourhood, which facilitated emergency responses to the SAT2 crisis and an understanding of the country epidemiological situation and needs. The risk information that came from the neighbourhood regions was used to feed a newly developed tool: the Risk Monitoring Tool (RMT), which alerts Member Nations to the FAST risks. The Groups for Vaccination Advice, guidance and consultation (GVA) are now established in three neighbouring regions and are fully operational, contributing to the effectiveness of FMD control programmers. The Pillar III continued to sustain the Global FMD Control Strategy implementation, through the PCP-FMD support officers (PSO) scheme and models to facilitate the assessment of FMD vaccine demand at various levels. Pillar III also contributed to establish the multistakeholder platform on FAST vaccine security, allowing private and public sectors to discuss issues and identify possible solutions around global vaccine security. High-quality training, global surveillance and direct assistance to laboratories were achieved through fruitful collaborations with the World Reference Laboratory for Foot-and-mouth disease (WRL-FMD) and EURLs. The Open Session 2022 focused on innovation and digitalization applied to the control of FAST, and France as a host country was thanked warmly. The collaboration with other units of FAO's Animal Production and Health Division (NSAH) and Decentralized Offices was acknowledged, including the scientific conference on LSD delivered in March 2023 at FAO headquarters, or the emergency support to the Near East countries coordinated with FAO's Emergency Management Centre (EMC) and Emergency Prevention System programme (EMPRES) which are among the successful examples of these collaborations, bringing potential for more cost-effective approaches to the implementation of the EuFMD work programme. All these activities were supported by DG-SANTE, and other smaller projects were mentioned at the end of the presentation such as the Phoenix exercise, FMD Investigation Training Course (FITC) Canada, virtual real-time training for the USA and

Australia, the prequalification system for veterinary medicine building upon the prequalification scheme for FMD vaccines (PQv), and the project called “Sustainable business through training for veterinary paraprofessionals”.

The Deputy Executive Secretary stated that the conclusions and recommendations formulated by the Member Nations at the 44th General Session have been applied over the past two years, and all of them were either addressed or the work started. He stressed the work done by the communications team, steering EuFMD social media presence and fostering information sharing through new platforms. For instance, the corporate newsletter is now sent to over 11 000 subscribers.

Item 3a. Global foot-and-mouth disease surveillance reports

Presenter: Donald King, head of the FAO World Reference Laboratory for FMD, *The Pirbright Institute* – on behalf of the WOA/FAO FMD Laboratory Network (**Appendix 2**)

Key Messages

1. There are new FMD risks for EuFMD Member Nations, particularly SAT2/XIV, which is spreading rapidly in the Near East in naïve susceptible populations without any immunity conferred by previous infection/vaccination.
2. During 2022, FMD outbreaks were reported across the islands of Indonesia, a country that had previously maintained an FMD-free status without vaccination. The WRLFMD has provided support to this FMD Emergency, which represents further onward spread of the pandemic O/ME-SA/Ind-2001e lineage in Asia.
3. The FMD situation in the European neighbourhood has also been characterized by fresh incursions of O/EA-3 into North Africa and the circulation of a new O/ME-SA/PanAsia-2^{ANT-10} in eastern Mediterranean countries.
4. Foot-and-mouth disease outbreaks due to serotypes O and A viruses of South American origin have been described in Egypt.
5. Real-time exchange of laboratory and epidemiology data are critical to support contingency planning. To this end, increasing costs and logistics provides impetus for alternative approaches to collect FMD surveillance, and new web-based dashboards developed with financial and technical EuFMD support will be available shortly.
6. A biennial agreement with the EuFMD supports the global GF-TADs Strategy via international FMD surveillance activities of the WR-LFMD. This work is coordinated with partner and affiliate laboratories of the [WOAH/FAO FMD Laboratory Network](#).
7. The World Reference Laboratory for Foot-and-Mouth Disease and other network laboratories are providing training opportunities to build capacity for FMD diagnostics, or vaccine evaluation.

Summary

Donald King started by listing the composition of the FAO/WOAH Reference Laboratory Network and its core activities as follows: collation and exchange of data, diagnostic test improvement and harmonization across FMD laboratories, vaccine performance assessment, review of the FMD risks and support to the GF-TADs during regional meetings.

Current challenges faced by the reference laboratories for FMD relate to international shipment of samples from representative cases, stressing that Covid-19 had a massive impact on sample submission, and a decrease in the number of submitting countries. Despite the efforts deployed by EuFMD and the Laboratory Network to facilitate sample shipment, the associated costs remain very high and logistical paperwork associated with these

shipments are an additional challenge. This may encourage alternative methods to be deployed for testing in country, rather than shipping samples to international reference laboratories.

From a global perspective, the situation with lineage O/ME-SA/Ind-2001^e is the most dramatic one. It became dominant in countries in mainland Southeast Asia, but also caused devastating outbreaks in Indonesia with an associated loss of FMD-free status, and further outbreaks in the Russian Federation and Kazakhstan. He mentioned that many viruses that become pandemic viruses originated from South Asian countries such as India, Bangladesh and Nepal. Emergence of a new virus lineage O/ME-SA/SA-2018 is another threat to be considered. It is very well established in India where it represents 40 percent of all cases relating to that serotype in India. Recently, this lineage has spread outside of Pool 2 within Pool 3. South Africa has also experienced a lot of FMD outbreaks lately, related to serotype SAT2 and SAT3 and occurring in previously FMD-free zones, generating some challenges for the country to control FMD. Southern Africa (Pool 6) experienced an alarming situation where serotype O/EA-2 established in Zambia and further spread in neighbouring countries. In the European Mediterranean region, O/ME-SA/Pan Asia-2 ^{ANT 10} circulation is still ongoing; O/EA-3 has been reported in Tunisia, Algeria, and Libya, and FMD viruses originating from South America were detected in Egypt in 2022. The latter is an usual event, raising the possibility of new epidemiological threats for the region.

Clade O/ME-SA/Pan Asia-2 ^{ANT 10} in Pool 3 caused widespread outbreaks in eastern Mediterranean countries (Jordan, Palestine and Israel), and this lineage has supplanted the ^{QOM-15} clade. This is another example of an exotic incursion into a region hosting naïve livestock. Most closely related viruses are from Pakistan (2021) and United Arab Emirates (UAE) (2021). The World Reference Laboratory for Foot-and-Mouth Disease is supporting field trials in Jordan and Israel to evaluate FMD vaccines against this lineage.

The FMD situation in North Africa since 2013 was reviewed, with recurring outbreaks since then, characterized as O/ME-SA/Ind-2011^d, and as A/AFRICA/G-IV and O/EA-3 both genetically linked to FMD cases in West Africa. In 2022, the re-emergence of O/EA-3 in Tunisia and Algeria became of concern for the EuFMD Member Nations, and in March 2023, a new introduction of O/EA-3 into Libya was reported.

The serotype SAT2 situation in Near East countries has been detailed further. Samples tested and shared within the network showed a close relationship with the Ethiopian sequences characterized in 2022. This is the first time SAT2 has been detected in Iraq, Jordan and Türkiye; toptype XIV was detected only one other previous occasion in 1991. He summarized the historical context for SAT2 circulation in Eastern Africa, the Arabic Peninsula and the Near East. Although the transmission pathway in the region is not yet fully understood, the likely scenario is that the virus was introduced through trade route from the Horn of Africa via the Gulf States and onwards into Iraq. Full genome sequence analysis showed that some information regarding the connectivity between countries is missing (unsampled cases) and the ancestral virus may have been circulating since May 2022, as estimated by Bayesian analyses. He provided vaccine matching data for representative viruses both from Ethiopia and from Jordan; *in vitro* data is encouraging and supports the use of SAT2 vaccines produced by Boehringer Ingelheim (BI). The World Reference Laboratory for Foot-and-Mouth Disease is now encouraging *in vivo* studies to provide further information that these vaccines are indeed protective ones. In addition to these vaccines, the evaluation of suitability of other vaccines from other manufacturers is ongoing.

Discussion

The Chief Veterinary Officer of Sweden spoke on behalf of the 27 Member Nations of the European Union and thanked the FAO/WHO Reference Laboratories, supported by the EuFMD, for the update on the epidemiological FMD situation and for identifying the risks to the animal status of the European Union. The European Union acknowledged the risks posed by FMDV SAT2 and is grateful for the efforts made by Türkiye

Veterinary Services to contain SAT2 progression and is willing to continue supporting Türkiye in this regard. Another risk recognized by the European Union is a consequence of the unprovoked Russian aggression against Ukraine jeopardizing the application of proper animal health measures in Ukraine, and therefore increasing the risk for animal diseases' outbreaks in the European Union. The European Union Member Nations are relying on the intensification of EuFMD actions to control such animal health risks.

Conclusions

To summarize the headline threat to Europe, Member Nations are well aware of the concept of East-West virus conveyers within Pool 3, with FMD virus moving from Pakistan to the Islamic Republic of Iran and Türkiye. The current threat posed by SAT2 is important, along with the risk posed by O/EA-3 in North Africa and O/ME-SA/Ind-2001e from Eastern Europe.

The regular support to the global FMD surveillance and regular reporting of new threats for Europe and other regions is key to maintaining a good level of awareness. Priority areas for improved FMD virological surveillance in endemic pools should be identified with the development of training and alternative mechanisms to improve storage and safe shipment of samples.

The possibility to build upon the know-how developed to assist the establishment of global surveillance and laboratory networks should be considered for other FAST diseases.

The assessment of the risk to mainland Europe is not simple, but the PRAGMATIST tool is available and brings together information about the relative prevalence of FMDV at the source, the likely source of outbreaks, and the pathway of entry to prioritize vaccine antigen. According to the latest update, serotype O is still the predominant risk, but the risk related to SAT2 is increasing.

Item 3b. Overview of activities conducted by the European Union Reference Laboratories for Foot-and-Mouth Disease

Presenter: Guillaume Girault, ANSES on behalf of the EURLs for FMD (consortium ANSES and SCIENSANO) (Appendix 2)

Key Messages

1. The EURLs provide technical assistance to Member Nations and works to improve and maintain diagnostic capacity through the organization of an annual proficiency test (PT) and sharing relevant information on FMD with the network during its annual workshop. The 2023 PT is ongoing (41 laboratories invited from 40 countries), with a face-to-face workshop currently planned for October 2023 (annual workshop).
2. The EURL contributes to the global monitoring and control of FMD through collaboration with WOA, FAO and EuFMD by providing diagnostic services, training and expertise missions.
3. The EuRL provides assistance to other countries for FMD characterization and diagnosis (Oman, Niger, Comoros).

Summary

Since 2019, the EURLs for FMD have been made up of a consortium between ANSES (France) and SCIENSANO (Belgium).

The EURLs have set up a [website](#) to share information with the network of 40 European laboratories. They organize an annual proficiency test (PT) based on outbreak scenarios to improve and maintain diagnostic capacity of the European laboratories. In 2022, 40 countries participated in the PT (including 31 countries supported by the EURLs, five countries supported by the EuFMD and three countries supported by the European Union). For 2023, 41 laboratories are invited, and the panels will be shipped to participants by the end of May 2023.

Each year, the EURLs organize an annual scientific workshop. In September 2022, 42 participants attended the meeting face-to-face for the first time since the COVID-19 pandemic. During this workshop, several topics were discussed including the EuFMD workplan and support to the EURL network, but also FMDV epidemiology (global events, situation in Türkiye, Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria). Other sessions were dedicated to FMDV diagnostics (PT results, development of detection and typing tests), control and biosecurity of FMDV diagnostics, and finally, some research topics. The next EURL workshop will be face-to-face in Belgium (Ghent) from 24–25 October 2023. The EURL contributes to the global monitoring and control of FMD through collaboration with WOA, FAO and EuFMD and by providing diagnostic services to countries in case of an outbreak. During the last year, FMD in Oman was characterized at EURLs; viruses isolated between 2018 and 2022 are as follows: A/Africa/G-I; O/ME-SA/Ind-2001^e; O/EA-3, O/ME-SA/PanAsia-2^{ANT10}, O/ME-SA/SA-2018 and SAT2/XIV. Foot-and-mouth disease in Niger was also studied, with isolates belonging to O/EA-3 and A/G-IV. The EURLs recently assisted the Comoros as an FMD outbreak was reported in December 2022 possibly related to importation of live animals from the Horn of Africa, and the samples had positive results in RT-PCR and non-structural protein (NSP) ELISA, leading to a SAT1/I isolate. The quality of samples received was not optimal, stressing the challenges in international sample shipment to reference laboratories.

The EURLs contribute to the improvement of diagnostic capacity by training. They organized and participated in EuFMD training sessions in 2022, and 2023 will also have several training sessions (on-line and face-to-face/residential trainings).

Finally, priorities have been identified for the future, including the sample collection, storage and shipment that need to be improved (training, procedures, quick access to dry ice and packaging at all times, encouraging countries to establish an agreement with a carrier in advance, and promoting the use of inactivated Lateral Flow Devices).

European Union Reference Laboratories also encourage national reference laboratories and official laboratories to maintain a minimum stock of reagents for emergency diagnostics. Finally, the evaluation of ELISA kits' performance used for post-vaccination monitoring should be an improvement for the future.

Conclusion

The collaboration of the EuFMD with EURL-FMD ensures the implementation of specific initiatives to improve global and regional surveillance and the diagnostic capacities of national laboratories with the possibility to scale-up diagnostics swiftly, ensure participation of Member Nations (including non-European Union countries) to Proficiency Testing (PTs) and improve contingency planning capacities.

Item 4a. FAST situation in the European neighbourhood and FAST risk for Europe

Authors: EuFMD Technical experts Shahin Baiomy, Tiziana Trogu, Etienne Chevanne.

Summary

Foot-and-mouth disease and similar transboundary animal disease situations in the European neighbourhood are regularly monitored through the risk reduction programme of Pillar II which has been implemented to reduce the risk of introduction into Member Nations, considering the socioeconomic consequences of even a single outbreak.

Between 2021 and 2023 in the Southeast European Neighbourhood (SEEN), over 1 800 outbreaks of FMD and many other outbreaks of PPR, SPGP and LSD have been recorded on the World Animal Health Information System (WAHIS) platform, PROMED and the EuFMD FAST reports. Foot-and-mouth disease and Peste des petits ruminants (PPR) are the diseases most recorded in the region. With reference to FMD, the incursion of SAT2 serotype in Türkiye and Iraq at the beginning of 2023 represents the main emergence in SEEN and is still ongoing. As for the other FAST diseases, in the Southeast European Neighbourhood, PPR has been reported with more than 1 500 outbreaks in the Islamic Republic of Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Türkiye between 2021 and 2023. In the Islamic Republic of Iran, wild goats were involved, raising the important issue of the wildlife-livestock interface in the disease spread. Lumpy skin disease has been reported in several SEEN countries since 2021. This region represents a risk for LSD introduction into Europe, connected with livestock trading, movements of competent vectors and limited global surveillance efforts. Finally, Sheep Pox virus was recently detected in Azerbaijan.

In the Middle East between 2021 and 2023, among the FAST diseases FMD still remains the prevalent concern, while the number of outbreaks recorded for other diseases appears to have been in decline between 2021 and 2022. With particular reference to FMD, among the most significant events are the incursion into Egypt of a topotype originating from South America in 2022, the emergence of SAT2 serotype in Jordan and the incursion of a new topotype O/EA-3 in Libya. The Middle East region represents an important crossroads between African and Eurasian countries, and this facilitates the emergence or spread of FAST diseases and poses a substantial risk for PPR and RVF introduction into Europe. These dynamics are also facilitated by the coexistence of traditional migratory or transhumance farming and semi-sedentary or sedentary forms of production that allow the spread of pathogens among different animal populations. This is particularly relevant for the spread of PPR, which has a great economic and social impact on countries in the Middle East.

The FAST disease situation in North Africa between 2021 and 2023 shows that Sheep Pox and Goat Pox recorded outbreaks outnumber other FAST outbreaks in that time frame. In 2023, no FAST outbreaks have been reported so far. Regarding FMD, outbreaks due to topotype O/EA-3 were reported in 2021 and 2022 in Tunisia and Algeria. In 2023, a new topotype O/EA-3 was detected in Libya with different origin and closely related to strains detected in Egypt. North African countries could represent a risk for the introduction of RVF and SPGP viruses into Europe. Rift Valley Fever has been recently reported in Mauritania and Libya. Its spread is related to climate change, offering new suitable environmental conditions for the expansion of competent vectors. The current lack of entomological surveillance has to be noted. Moreover, animal movement, legal or illegal, and the limited national capacities in preparedness and response could contribute to the disease spread. A high incidence of SPGP was registered over the past two years in North Africa. In 2022, the disease was reported in Spain, thus representing a potential threat for other EuFMD Member Nations.

Several countries in the European neighbourhood have endemic situations of FAST diseases, characterized by high incidence over the past years. Despite the increasing awareness of FAST, the sharing of risk information between countries, and even within a country, is often lacking or is irregular. The EuFMD leads several activities that aim to close this gap. Against the framework of GF-TADs in 2016, a Statement of Intentions agreement was signed by six countries to draw up a common vision for intensified collaboration in the prevention and control of FMD and other epizootics. Tripartite meetings have been organized for Jordan, Palestine and Israel, and regular FAST reports have been published on FAST diseases situation in the European neighbourhood.

Many challenges arise in FAST control. Occurrences of FAST diseases could be under-reported, or surveillance systems not developed enough. The EuFMD aims to improve diseases' surveillance and early detection in the European neighbourhood, supporting risk-based surveillance. FAST diseases are characterized by dynamic scenarios that need the improvement of laboratory capacities in the involved countries. The EuFMD assists them through agreements with different reference laboratories such as the Pirbright Institute, IZSLER, or ANSES, proposing laboratory trainings with consistent technical assistance and provision of kits.

FAST vaccine security remains a critical issue. Groups for Vaccination Advice, guidance and consultation (GVA) were created in the three subregions of the European neighbourhood to assist countries in the design and implementation of post-vaccination monitoring activities, and to act as a platform to exchange experience and expertise on vaccination against FAST diseases.

Conclusion

FAST threats from the European neighbourhood remained high in the past years showing both the relevance of the EuFMD risk reduction programme delivered in North Africa, the Middle East and the Southeast European Neighbourhood and the need to further improve early warning of FAST diseases through systems that facilitate the identification of risk areas and timely risk information sharing.

Item 4b. Current FAST situation in Türkiye, Israel, Georgia

Presenters: Abdunaci Bulut (SAP Institute, Türkiye), Tamir Goshen (CVO Israel), Vasili Baziladze (CVO Georgia) (Appendix 3)

Türkiye – Summary

Key Messages

1. Serotype SAT2 incursion has once again demonstrated the indispensability of the early warning system in the West Eurasia (WE).
2. Sample Submission Protocol through the West Eurasia Laboratory Network (WELNET) for FMD is crucial for early detection.
3. Vaccine availability for exotic viruses is one of the gaps, in particular for A/Asia/G-VII and SAT2 circulating viruses.
4. Strong political commitment, ownership and transparency are still key points in the region.

The Thrace region has been free from FMD with vaccination since 2010. Foot-and-Mouth disease Serotype O/ME-SA/PanAsia-2 (mainly QOM15 clade) outbreaks have been reported in the Anatolian region of Türkiye, and a new incursion of FMDV SAT2 virus has been reported since 8 March 2023. The presenter highlighted the gap in the early warning system as a gap in West Eurasia. To address this issue, the SAP institute, with the support of the

EuFMD, developed a concept note describing timely submission of samples, testing and communication of results. In January 2023, 20 samples were received from Iraq, and results were communicated in early February 2023.

To reduce the spread of SAT2, the National Control Plan (NCP) was activated in a very short time, border controls for illegal movements were strengthened, active and passive surveillance strengthened, and training and awareness activities on SAT2 conducted. The production of an SAT2 local vaccine at the SAP Institute was mentioned. A request for donation of vaccines was formulated to the European Commission, and in response to this request, the European Commission provided 500 000 doses of monovalent SAT2 vaccine for large ruminant vaccination in provinces bordering Iraq. Clinical surveillance has been newly implemented in Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia and animal movement is at a standstill in the entire country, including animal markets and movement to pastures, but once the vaccination is completed, movement restrictions will be lifted. The new vaccination policy for FMD, including SAT2 local vaccine, was described in detail.

Finally, PPR is not circulating in Türkiye, while SPGP is causing outbreaks in the Anatolian region.

Israel – Summary

Key Messages

1. FMD viruses evolved, and the *in vitro* production prediction is not seen in the field.
2. Emergency vaccine solutions are needed with rapid autogenous vaccine production capability.
3. Information sharing, including samples transfer between neighbouring countries, helps better preparedness and may facilitate new solutions.

Foot-and-mouth disease incursions in 2021–2023 were mentioned. In 2021, incursions of O/ME-SA/PanAsia-2^{QOM-15} lineage occurred, with a likely incursion from Lebanon and only affected dairy farms. In 2022 and 2023, the incursion of ^{ANT-10} sublineage raised concerns. It has spread rapidly within Israeli livestock with 94 outbreaks reported in dairy, beef, feedlots, sheep, goat and pig farms, despite routine vaccination using bivalent FMD vaccines (4 O-Antigens including O-PanAsia-2 & A). High case fatality rates were noted in infected unvaccinated pig and small ruminant populations. Results from virus neutralization test (VNT) studies showed that vaccines including ^{QOM-15} sublineage were not optimal to protect against infection with ^{ANT-10} sublineage.

In response to the SAT2 alerts in Jordan, frozen SAT2 antigens from Boehringer Ingelheim (BI) were mobilized and vaccination of dairy farms and bull stations within three kilometres from the border was implemented. A booster vaccination was implemented four weeks later. Later, 350 000 doses of quadrivalent vaccines (including SAT2) were purchased from BI to continue vaccination at the border areas. In the near future, it is foreseen that all Israeli livestock will be vaccinated against SAT2. An attempt to produce emergency autogenous FMD vaccine was reported.

The most recent outbreak of LSD was in May 2019, and it affected only young animals (< 3 years); mandatory LSD vaccination stopped in 2016 in Israel and vaccinated animals were protected. In February 2023, one LSD single case (confirmed at the Kimron Veterinary Institute), a heifer imported from Australia, was reported.

Georgia – Summary

Key Messages

1. No FMD cases reported since autumn 2002.
2. Free annual vaccination of all susceptible animals was conducted from 2012 until 2017.
3. The capacity of veterinary services has improved, and the quick response in case of an FMD outbreak is ensured.

The last FMD clinical outbreak in Georgia was registered in autumn 2002. The outbreak occurred in dairy cattle in the Samtskhe-Javakheti Region, and no confirmed cases have been reported since. Serosurveys in the last ten years have shown that FMD virus circulates in Georgia, although no clinical case or outbreaks have been reported. Foot-and-mouth disease control activities started in 2012. Free annual vaccination of all susceptible animals was conducted from 2012 until 2017. Since 2017, general vaccination of large and small ruminants has taken place only in risk areas (based on risk assessment considering seasonal migration, international borders, live animal markets, informal trade and contacts with border villages of the uncontrolled territories, informal animal movement, entry and transit of goods and fomites from across the border and wild animal cross-border movements). Vaccination is carried out according to an annual plan, which is based on the risk of introduction and spread of the FMD virus, includes supply of FMD vaccine to non-controlled border areas and is subject to monitoring by serosurvey that will assess coverage and success. With the support of the EuFMD, non-structural protein (NSP) and structural protein (SP) serosurveys have regularly been conducted in Georgia since 2006. Results of serosurveys are used to assess vaccination coverage, seroconversion and FMD virus circulation in Georgia. Seven risk hotspots in the country were identified, but based on 2017 NSP serosurvey results, risk hotspots were revised and results categorized as follows: high-risk area (Eastern Georgia), low-risk area (Western Georgia), migrated animals, and candidate area. The NSP results showed a decrease in the number of positive results between 2016 and 2021 in the high-risk areas. Since 2015, 5 000 samples have been tested for NSP and 1 000 samples for SP each year.

Among the activities carried out in Georgia to better control FMD, the CVO of Georgia stressed: annual prophylactic vaccination of large and small ruminants, SP and NSP serosurveillance, immunogenicity study in naïve animals, clinical investigation of large ruminants in the candidate region, an awareness campaign for farmers, training for veterinarians provided by EuFMD, simulation exercises with Transcaucasian countries (TCC) and Türkiye, and a risk-mapping training programme conducted by the EuFMD and CIRAD. He emphasized that the capacity of veterinary services has improved, and that the quick response in case of an FMD outbreak is ensured. All the above-mentioned activities and improvements allowed Georgia to progress in 2022 to PCP-FMD Stage 3 (for the whole country).

With particular reference to the SAT2 situation in the region, Georgia has implemented the following activities:

1. Regional divisions of NFA were officially informed to increase supervision of animal health.
2. A recommendation was formulated to the Revenue Service regarding veterinary sanitary processing of vehicles coming from high-risk countries.
3. Informative booklets were prepared and distributed among farmers to strengthen on-farm biosecurity measures.
4. The State Laboratory of Agriculture was informed regarding the creation of stocks of relevant diagnostic kits for FMD.
5. The Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia was informed regarding the situation.
6. A preliminary action plan has been elaborated for SAT2 vaccination.

The number of vaccines, needles, syringes and relevant specialists needed for the first stage was calculated. Vaccine tender has been announced for polyvalent vaccine procurement containing the following strains: Serotype A (A Genotype VII and Iran 05); Serotype O: (PanAsia 2; or Manisa and 3039 in combination); Serotype Asia 1 (Sindh-08 or Shamir); and Serotype SAT2 (Topotype XIV or Eritrea 98).

Discussion

Fabrizio Rosso acknowledged all the efforts made by Türkiye to contain FMDV SAT2. Türkiye is entering a season at risk for FMD spread (migration to pasture and the Kurban festival) and preventive measures shall be put in place to mitigate TAD's spread and protect Thrace official status. Mr Bulut stressed that an important awareness campaign was put in place, and vaccination is almost completed (85 percent of coverage with FMD bivalent vaccine at the time of the 45th General Session). A decision to lift animal movement standstill was taken because of the social consequences of such a measure (movement restrictions were in place for large ruminants mostly). Clinical surveillance is targeted in seven large livestock markets in the Istanbul metropolitan area before the Kurban festival. Mr Rosso indicated that FAO, with the technical support of the EuFMD, is conducting a rapid risk assessment of FMD in West Eurasia, one which also considers Greece and Bulgaria.

The CVO from the UK recognized communication to livestock keepers as one of the most effective measures within the control toolbox and asked the CVO Israel to further describe the communications put in place. The latter stressed that awareness on routine biosecurity to be implemented by livestock keepers is however lacking, and meetings were organized by the veterinary services in Israel to inform and train livestock keepers. However, there is a decline in their participation as livestock owners tend to rely on vaccine efficacy.

Conclusion

The collaboration of the EuFMD with the Veterinary Services of Georgia, Israel and Türkiye and the participation of the three Member Nations to the activities of the work programme of Pillars I and II are relevant to build on the know-how developed by Member Nations endemic for FMD and similar TADs and for improving the awareness of FAST diseases circulating in SEEN and Middle East.

Item 5. Passive surveillance

Presenter: Tom Brownlie, EuFMD technical expert

Key Messages

1. Evaluating surveillance programmes requires understanding the purpose of the evaluation and utilizing established frameworks. The RISKSUR framework is highlighted as a comprehensive tool.
2. Social issues, such as the fear of government intervention or reluctance to implicate clients, were identified as obstacles to improving passive surveillance sensitivity.
3. Emerging generative AI technology was shown to create early warning system that synthesize real-time data from various sources to provide timely information to veterinarians and farmers to increase awareness of changing patterns of animal health.

Summary

Passive surveillance is defined as the observer-initiated provision of animal health-related data or the use of existing data for surveillance (Hoinville *et al.*, 2013). This includes samples submitted to laboratories by farmers, notifications from veterinarians and frontline professionals, and reporting from labs processing submissions for other reasons. Evaluating surveillance programs requires understanding the purpose of the evaluation and utilizing established frameworks. The RISKSUR framework is highlighted as a comprehensive tool that allows for evaluation at different levels of complexity, focusing on effectiveness, functional, organizational, and value criteria (Peyre *et al.*, 2019).

Effectiveness, particularly sensitivity, is a key aspect of evaluating and improving passive surveillance systems. The definition of surveillance sensitivity differs depending on the surveillance goal, such as case detection, outbreak detection, or demonstrating freedom and early detection. The presentation emphasizes the importance of improving sensitivity in passive surveillance, especially for early disease detection.

Qualitative and semi-quantitative scenario trees are an established method to assess surveillance sensitivity and visually demonstrate influential components of a surveillance system. By identifying sequential events in a surveillance process, it becomes possible to target interventions. The presentation explores scenarios involving farmers and veterinarians, examining their decision-making processes and potential obstacles to reporting suspicious cases. Social issues, such as the fear of government intervention or reluctance to implicate clients, were identified as obstacles to improving passive surveillance sensitivity.

European research found heightened awareness of key clinical presentations amongst farmers and veterinarians, and previous good experience with laboratory submissions (including reliable and timely feedback) were associated with a greater probability of voluntary submission (McFarland *et al.*, 2020). New Zealand research explored using emerging technology to identify and alert veterinarians to changing patterns of clinical signs and to improving lines of engagement between veterinarians, labs, and government agencies (T.Brownlie, personal communication, 2023). Emerging generative AI technology was shown to create early warning systems that synthesize real-time data from various sources to provide timely information to veterinarians and farmers to increase awareness of changing patterns of animal health.

Passive surveillance remains a cost-effective approach to disease surveillance, and the RISKSUR framework offers a comprehensive assessment tool for member nations. Overcoming social obstacles and leveraging emerging technologies are key factors in improving the effectiveness of passive surveillance systems. The presentation

highlights the potential of using scenario trees and technology-driven solutions to enhance sensitivity and facilitate early disease detection.

Discussion

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) acknowledged challenges in evaluating the parameters for each step and evaluate test performances. The use of proxies or expert knowledge elicitations were mentioned.

Conclusion

Member Nations are encouraged to improve surveillance systems for targeted interventions aimed at ensuring early detection of FAST diseases in risk areas. Passive surveillance is a core component of FAST diseases surveillance and assessment of its sensitivity is necessary to ensure confidence on the surveillance system in place.

Item 6. Report of the Executive Committee on the actions since the 44th General Session

The EuFMD team gave a short presentation on the activities implemented in Europe, the European neighbourhood and sustaining the Global FMD Control Strategy (**Appendix 4**). Mr Rosso introduced the item indicating that short videos would be shown, with highlights provided live by the Pillar managers. Emmanuelle Soubeyran, CVO France, also shared her experience participating in an EuFMD real-time training.

Pillar I

The EuFMD continues to deliver high-quality trainings based on the needs of the Member Nations, and the real-time trainings (RTTs) are back with two courses delivered in Kenya in 2022–2023. The Get Prepared Wall is now functioning and opened for access on its [Trello board](#). The Thrace programme has proven to be a successful project that can be adapted for other risk areas for FAST diseases. The European foot-and-mouth disease spread model (EuFMDiS) is used to enable scenario-based discussion workshops for contingency planners and the PPP initiative, contributing to enhanced emergency preparedness and updates to contingency plans. A Southeastern Europe (SEE) Fund for Applied Research (FAR) call for small field studies with the aim to promote the creation of stakeholder networks between veterinary services, research institutions, industry, other stakeholders (e.g. veterinary practitioners, farmers) led to the selection and funding of four projects in SEE. Following a full evaluation, resources should continue to be invested in future iterations of the FAR programme in order to identify and fill programmatic evidence gaps, maintaining EuFMD's position as an evidence- and science-based organization within the global academic community. The SEE diagnostic bank ensured continuous availability of the essential diagnostic capability for FMD, contributed to increased and steady participation in the EURLs PTS for FMD, and facilitated the regional harmonization of the diagnostic testing for FMD. A risk monitoring tool for FAST diseases (RMT-FAST) has been developed to assist EuFMD Member Nations to regularly monitor the risk of incursion of FAST diseases. Positive feedback about the tool was received following pilots with Spain, Bulgaria and Austria, and during a workshop at the Open Session 2022. Foot-and-mouth disease surveillance information is readily available through the *Global Quarterly* report as well as a prototype surveillance dashboard. The EuFMD report on the animal health implications of the implementation of the Nagoya Protocol with respect to FMS was endorsed by an MSP meeting with recommendations to raise awareness of the issues for vaccine security and FMD control and take forward options for a solution with FAO and WOA. The application of the Nagoya Protocol to veterinary pathogens is having a negative impact on research and development for FMD including the development of new FMD vaccine strains to match emerging field variants. The PQv scheme for FMD vaccines () has now entered the operational phase at Stage 1. Six FMD manufacturers have formally expressed interest in

the scheme with the intention of submitting PQv applications in 2023. The formal structures for governance, oversight and operation of the PQv scheme have been established, and three PQv applications are expected by May 2023.

Pillar II

The EuFMD successfully assisted the neighbouring countries facing emergencies, and the regular sharing of risk information in the neighbouring countries leads to a reduced risk for Member Nations. The private sector is engaged in the development of PPP for FAST diseases control. Early warning is enhanced through laboratory capacities and risk mapping improved and tools developed. The GVA groups support and enhance vaccine knowledge. The post vaccination monitoring (PVM) field studies linked with laboratory diagnostic capacity benefit from collaborations with reference laboratories. Training schemes are developed and quality training assessment is in progress.

Pillar III

The Progressive Control Pathway Support Officer (PSO) system should be further developed with sustainable ways to support Junior PSOs and expand the roster. To improve global virological surveillance, further investigation is required to better characterize the types of technical, logistical and capacity hurdles currently limiting the surveillance and diagnostics capacities in endemic pools. A suite of FMD dashboards is being developed and should be made available to the wider FMD community through an “Open FMD Portal”. Adaptation of face-to-face training to remote delivery have brought benefits such as increasing the number of participants enrolled in activities. Remote delivery, preferentially through the virtual learning centres, should be further encouraged. The VADEMOS model should be made available for all interested countries and expanded to other FAST diseases.

Capacity development programme

The EuFMD presented the outcome of the capacity development programme of Phase V of the work programme and underlined that over 60 tutored virtual learning courses within the phase have been delivered, and ten new ones developed, reaching over 25 000 learners. The support of the programme was enhanced by the adoption of a Training Quality Management System (TQMS), which was reviewed by external evaluations in 2021 and 2023. The Commission is piloting the TOM Training Management System, a capacity development support tool, in selected countries and plans to make it available for all Member Nations during the next phase. The impact of the capacity development programmes of the Commission was evaluated and indicators for the identification of the improvement of skills and cascading were developed. Over 20 000 people were estimated to have been reached by cascading actions following EuFMD trainings.

Real-time training: trainees’ perspective

Emmanuelle Soubeyran, CVO France, participated in a real-time training course in February 2023 in Kenya. She congratulated the expertise of EuFMD trainers and noted the quality of the logistics and the quality of the preparatory exercises and following field visits for outbreak investigations, using high biosecurity standards. She concluded that such training is a unique opportunity to see FMD, meet with Member Nations’ colleagues, and colleagues from FMD endemic countries and discuss challenges related to FMD preparedness, prevention and control. At the end of this training, a follow-up training will be organized in France in June 2023, with the participation of 25 official veterinarians.

Discussion

Pascal Hudelet (Boehringer Ingelheim) acknowledged EuFMD initiatives on challenging topics of critical importance to improve global vaccine security issues such as consultations on the impact of the Nagoya protocol on research and vaccine development or the pre-qualification system for vaccines. Fabrizio Rosso stated that the EuFMD is committed to improve the emergency responses of Member Nations. The EuFMD's work, in some instances, should be seen as proof-of-concept that can be taken forward by bigger organizations and have a wider impact.

Jean Luc Angot (France) mentioned the PREZODE research programme (Preventing ZOonotic Disease Emergence) launched by France and involving to date 24 countries. PREZODE brings FAO, WOA and the World Health Organization (WHO) together to reduce the risk of future zoonotic pandemic. He stressed that synergies with the EuFMD work programme could be explored in the future, on training, network building, modelling and early warning of animal diseases, in the One Health Approach. Fabrizio Rosso responded that partnering will be a critical component of the next Strategy and the EuFMD is prepared to seek synergies with other initiatives.

Abdulnaci Bulut (Türkiye) acknowledged the importance of the THRACE programme, as early warning systems for Europe. He reminded attendees that West Eurasian countries, since the establishment of PCP-FMD roadmap meeting platforms, have agreed on the adoption of early warning systems for FMD, but these have not been set up yet. He asked for EuFMD support in this regard, stressing the value of retail price surveys at livestock markets. He also called, as leader of the WelNet, for more sample submissions to the reference laboratories. Mr Rosso said the next EuFMD strategy is considering expanding the methodology and procedures used in Thrace in other risk areas such as Eastern Anatolia.

Conclusion

The results and achievements of Phase V should constitute the basis for further developing actions in the next phase aimed at improving the preparedness of Member Nations and reducing the risk of FAST diseases, strengthening the position of the Commission as provider of capacity development solutions (microlearning, innovative learning tools and cascading practices), and improving early detection (i.e. Thrace programme) and risk assessment capacities.

Item 7. Progress of the Global Foot-and-Mouth Disease Control Strategy

Presenters: The GF-TADs FMD Working Group. FAO: Melissa McLaws (co-chair), *Madhur Dhingra and Muhammad Arshed*; WOA: Neo Mapitse (co-chair), *Bolortuya Purevsuren and Mohamed Sirdar*; EuFMD: *Fabrizio Rosso*

Key Messages

1. The need for support from development and technical partners is increasing as countries engage and advance in FMD control and the Global Strategy enters its final phase of implementation.
2. Despite progress, FMD is continuing to spread, reflecting our connected world. Recently, there have been incursions into free countries and zones as well as significant movements of serotypes and strains between endemic areas.
3. Enhanced collaboration, coordination and synergy with regional organizations and programmes are essential for successful global control of FMD and other priority TADs.

Summary

The Global FMD Control Strategy was launched in 2012 to contribute to poverty alleviation, improve livelihoods in developing countries and protect the global and regional trade in animals and animal products. Its goal is also to ease the impacts of the FMD worldwide and maintain the status of free countries. The strategy consists of three components: 1. improving global FMD control, 2. strengthening veterinary services, and 3. preventing and controlling other major diseases of livestock.

The GF-TADs FMD Working Group (FMD WG) supports the implementation of the Global Strategy through coordination and collaboration. As the strategy, which was launched in 2012, is entering its final phase of implementation, an external evaluation is currently underway.

In the last two years, regional roadmap meetings on the FMD Progressive Control Pathway (PCP-FMD) were held in Central Africa, Eastern Africa, the Near East, and West Eurasia. Information on FMD was shared, progress assessed, and guidance provided to countries to progress along the PCP-FMD. Further meetings were held with the Regional Advisory Groups (RAGs). Due to COVID-19, some of the meetings were held virtually with the technical support of FAO's virtual learning centres and the EuFMD. Sixty-five countries are at PCP-FMD stages 0–3.

The FMD WG reviews and provides feedback to countries on their national control plans and risk-based strategic plans to move along the PCP for FMD; thirteen countries have submitted their plans and received feedback in the last 24 months. The feedback was reviewed by the RAGs and five countries progressed from PCP-FMD Stage 0 to Stage 1 (Gambia, Guinea Bissau, Mali, Niger and Nigeria); three countries progressed from Stage 1 to Stage 2 (Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Tanzania) and one country, Georgia, progressed to PCP-FMD Stage 3. Within the past two years, the WOA *ad hoc* Group on FMD reviewed the applications for FMD-free status and endorsement of control programmes, and the Scientific Commission presented its conclusions to the Assembly for its endorsement. One country and three zones applications for free status with vaccination, one zone free without vaccination, and one country official control programme were reviewed.

There has been continued application, improvement and development of tools to support the PCP-FMD, including the recent update of the PCP-FMD self-assessment tool (SAT). The PSO programme, implemented in collaboration with the EuFMD, provided technical support to apply these and other tools, and supported countries to keep momentum and progress in between Roadmap meetings. There are currently 13 PSOs working with approximately 30 countries. Furthermore, a Global Coordination Committee for FMD control (GCC-FMD) has been convened and has met three times to enhance regional cooperation and facilitate alignment of regional programmes with the global strategy. The input of the GCC-FMD, together with the results of the Global Strategy evaluation, will be used to develop a harmonized five-year action plan for the final phase of the Global strategy.

Despite this progress, FMD continues to spread. There have been incursions in free countries and zones (Botswana, Indonesia, Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation), as well as significant movements of serotypes and strains between endemic areas (serotype SAT2 in West Eurasia, serotype O in Southern Africa). Globally, control is hampered by lack of financial resources and competing priorities, gaps in surveillance needed to understand epidemiology and how to break transmission chains and challenges to procure effective and affordable vaccines, appropriate for the circulating strains.

To address these challenges, the FMD-WG sees a need to strengthen the capacity of stakeholders to advocate for increased resources dedicated to FMD control. Expanded evidence regarding the socioeconomic impact and

cost/benefits of control programmes are essential to support this. Additionally, the FMD-WG has started to engage with the GF-TADs Partnership and Financing panel for guidance and support and will continue to seek synergies with activities for other TADs (PPR, ASF, LSD...).

The changing epidemiological situation underpins the importance of surveillance. There is an ongoing need to facilitate shipment and testing of samples, which has been identified as a key area by the FAO/WOAH Network of FMD Reference Laboratories, and to facilitate sharing and interpretation of results to allow for an accurate assessment of the changing risk situation. In many countries, the capacity in both laboratory and epidemiological methods needs to be strengthened to support surveillance.

Although vaccination is an important and effective control measure, many countries do not use it either optimally or at all. As well as financial constraints, improved technical capacity is also required. This is being addressed through FAO/WOAH Reference Centres and expertise support, as well as regional GVA. Furthermore, a multistakeholder platform on vaccine security has been established to find solutions to this challenging and multifaceted issue.

Discussion

The CVO of the Netherlands, Hendrik Jan Roest, asked whether in-person regional roadmap meetings will be continued in next phase, and Melissa McLaws said that the FMD WG resumed in-person roadmap meetings in West Eurasia and South Asia, with hybrid attendance allowed, when required. The FMD-WG is currently reflecting on the best use of resources to allow technical discussions among countries in-person (using perhaps other forums/opportunities) whereas some aspects of the roadmap meetings can be covered virtually.

The WOA Deputy Director General congratulated the EuFMD for its support to the FMD-WG in particular for the planning and delivery of the roadmap meeting and the PSO system.

Conclusions

The contribution of the EuFMD programme to sustain the global FMD surveillance and regular reporting of new threats for Europe and other regions is relevant. The participation of the EUFMD to the GF-TADs FMD Working Group made technical skills, resources and tools available to support countries in their PCP-FMD progression.

Item 8. Enhancing vaccine security for FAST diseases

Presenter: David Mackay, EuFMD Technical Expert and Jeremy Salt, CEO Vaccine Group

Key messages

1. Vaccine security is essential for control of FAST diseases and relates to ensuring that there is a sufficient supply of appropriate vaccine when required.
2. Vaccines against FAST diseases represent a high risk to commercial companies due to the specialized nature of the vaccines together with the small size and the unpredictable nature of the market. Foot-and-mouth disease and other FAST diseases may be considered a “market failure” requiring intervention to make the market attractive for private investment.
3. Ensuring vaccine security is important both for FMD-free countries to assure access to vaccines as part of contingency planning and for FMD-endemic countries to ensure an adequate supply of vaccine to implement effective vaccination campaigns. The factors affecting vaccine security differ between the two situations, requiring a comprehensive approach that encompasses all potential uses of vaccine.
4. Addressing vaccine security requires close cooperation between public and private sectors across the range of activities that are necessary to reduce risk and increase predictability to stimulate private sector investment in FAST disease control.
5. EuFMD has established a multistakeholder platform that brings together the wide range of stakeholders required to develop and implement solutions including national and international government disease control authorities, vaccine manufacturers, reference laboratories, regulatory authorities, and FAST disease experts ensuring global coverage in view of the transboundary nature of FAST diseases.

Summary

Recent experience in human and animal health demonstrates the importance of vaccine security in terms of assuring the supply of effective vaccines when required. Vaccine security is a multifactorial issue that requires cooperation between a wide range of stakeholders in both the public and private sector. In the Phase V work programme, the EuFMD developed practical solutions to improve access and use of FAST vaccines in both disease-free and endemic settings. The EuFMD proposes to continue work on vaccine security in the next work programme. This work aims to ensure that FAST vaccines remain available when needed by Member Nations in emergency situations, and as part of the toolbox required by low- to middle-income countries to progress along the Progressive Control Pathway to freedom from FMD.

Discussion

The Chief Veterinary Officer of France asked why there seem to be issues for FMD vaccine research and development with the Nagoya protocol. David Mackay stressed that the Nagoya protocol applies to other pathogens, and there are significant issues for Avian Influenza too. FMD vaccine security is particularly threatened by the Nagoya protocol, and six months of consultations were needed to identify challenges due to the Nagoya protocol, particularly in relation to exchange of FMD viruses, and the impact of these problems. The EuFMD is in position to develop practical solutions addressing FMD related issues; some of these could be applied for other pathogens.

The Chief Veterinary Officer of France also asked if the EuFMD is developing tools for economic analysis when it comes to planning emergency vaccination. The deputy executive secretary stated that the EuFMD has supported the development of tools to assess the economic impact of ruminant diseases (including FMD); also for Member Nations, the EuFMDiS is available to assess the resources (human, vaccines, diagnostics and so forth) needed to implement emergency programmes, through the simulation of different scenarios. He stressed that in the European Union neighbourhood in particular, the capacity of countries to invest in FMD control and capacity to highlight the benefits of investing in FMD control is lacking, and this will be addressed in the next strategy.

Conclusions

The programme to sustain vaccine security and more specifically to develop a Prequalification system for FMD vaccines aimed at improving the quality, safety and efficacy of FAST disease vaccines is relevant for the emergency preparedness of Member Nations as well as for endemic countries.

The actions implemented to understand and address issues connected to the application of the Nagoya protocol are relevant to overcome difficulties for the control of other TADs.

Item 9. Prioritization of FAST diseases

Presenter: Melissa McLaws, EuFMD Technical expert (**Appendix 5**)

Key Messages

1. A multicriteria decision analysis exercise was conducted to prioritize FAST diseases based on current risks, as required by the 2022 amendment of the EuFMD Constitution. The threat posed by different geographic regions as the potential source of FAST disease incursion to EuFMD Member Nations was assessed using an adapted version of the risk monitoring tool (RMT-FAST).
2. The EuFMD should focus on activities that address the main gaps that are present in, or pose a threat to, Member Nations. These results demonstrate that all FAST diseases are important. FMD will remain the focus of the Commission. Several other funded initiatives already exist regarding PPR and LSD, including in Europe. However, there are gaps not covered by other institutions regarding SGP and RVF.
3. While history shows us that FAST diseases can travel long distances, the European neighbourhood, including the Middle East, SEEN and North Africa, appears to pose a particular threat for FAST incursions.

Discussion

The Standing Technical Committee (STC) and Special Committee for Surveillance and Applied Research (SCSAR) found these results useful to inform the prioritization of EuFMD activities in the future. There are, however, important limitations to the methodology used. As EuFMD Member Nations are diverse and cover a wide geographic area, the weights and scores attributed are an average and do not capture the distinct risk profile of the different Member Nations. Further, there are knowledge gaps that may affect several parameters (e.g. potential impact of incursion of each FAST disease, strength of connection between source areas and EuFMD Member Nations, disease burden and distribution in source areas). Assumptions and estimates were used to fill these gaps.

The EuFMD should focus on activities that address the main gaps that are present in or pose a threat to Member Nations, and these results demonstrate that all FAST diseases are important. Foot-and-mouth disease will remain the focus of the Commission. Several other funded initiatives already exist regarding PPR and LSD, including in Europe. However, there are gaps not covered by other institutions for SGP and RVF. While history shows us that FAST diseases can travel long distances, the European neighbourhood, including the Middle East, SEEN and North Africa, appear to pose a particular threat for FAST incursions.

The Chief Veterinary Officer of Israel said that, in line with the prioritization exercise, RVF should be the first priority, over SPGP, considering its impact on human health and the limited availability of vaccines.

Conclusions

Member Nations agreed on the methodology adopted for the prioritization of FAST diseases (FMD remaining the core priority of the Commission) in the EuFMD work programme and the proposal to focus on – in this order – RVF and SPGP in the next biennium considering their impact on human and animal health, the level of preparedness of Member Nations and the reduced number of international initiatives.

The methodology adopted for the prioritization of regions within the EuFMD work programme was also endorsed, with the identification of the Southeast European Neighbourhood (SEEN), the Middle East and North Africa regions considered at highest risk for Europe with regards FMD and similar TADs.

Item 10. Proposed new EuFMD strategy and new training credits proposal

Presenter: Fabrizio Rosso, EuFMD Deputy Executive Secretary (**Appendix 6**)

Key Messages

1. A new strategy has been presented for the decision of the Member Nations at the 45th General Session (2023).
2. After the endorsement of the strategy, a detailed workplan will be defined taking into consideration the priorities and objectives identified and the availability of resources.
3. The new strategy should build on outcomes of the current phase and focus on: a) protecting the livestock sector in EuFMD Member Nations from introduction and spread of FAST diseases, b) ensuring adequate capacities to respond to crises and improve resilience of the livestock sector to FAST diseases, and c) sustaining control of FAST diseases to reduce the spread and impact on the livestock sector.
4. A new training credit system (2023–2027) was proposed to the Member Nations, with inclusion of cascading activities and virtual-training opportunities.

Summary

Fabrizio Rosso presented the proposed vision and mission of the EuFMD in the next strategy (2023–2027). The document – shared with Member Nations ahead of the 45th General Session and proposed for the decision of the Member Nations at the end of this session – builds upon the EuFMD’s internationally recognized expertise in capacity development, the EuFMD’s contribution to preparedness and risk reduction for Member Nations, and the newly amended constitution with a mandate extended to FAST diseases, and it considers the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Sustainable Livestock Initiative, as well as GF-TADs priorities. He detailed the proposed principles that should drive the work of the Secretariat in the years to come, and stressed:

- coordination, collaboration and communication: ensuring alignment of objectives and efforts with global and regional GF-TADs strategies, and countries, with optimization of the use of resources across the organizations;
- resource mobilization: seeking other funding opportunities – provided that the objectives of new funders align with EuFMD priorities – to cover activities that would not be prioritized by the European Commission;
- partnering: promoting public-private platforms to facilitate collaboration and cooperation towards common goals (prevention, preparedness, control) in the priority risk areas and diseases identified;
- digitalization: ensuring that digitalization drives the development and improvement of tools and activities keeping the focus on end-user needs;
- science and innovation: enhancing and fostering the link between science and policy through knowledge translation (i.e. bringing relevant research outcomes to risk managers and policy makers); and
- efficiency: ensuring the best use of expertise and resources within the team and working in partnership with centres of expertise.

The new strategy identifies **seven key areas**, distributed in **three focus objectives**, to secure Europe from the daily threat of FAST diseases.

Focus objectives	Key areas
Protect livestock sector in EuFMD Member Nations from introduction and spread of FAST diseases.	<p>1. Risk monitoring to ensure risk information is regularly collected, analysed and available for risk managers in Member Nations and other countries. This will be done through the facilitation of FAST global surveillance and virus intelligence, and through enabling risk monitoring and enhancement of early warning.</p> <p>2. Risk Mitigation to enhance livestock biosecurity levels to increase protection against FAST diseases. This will be done through the improvement of livestock on-farm biosecurity, through the provision of evidence of FAST freedom and through the implementation of FMDV laboratory biorisk management standards.</p>
Ensure adequate capacities to respond to sanitary crises and improve resilience of the livestock sector to FAST diseases.	<p>3. Capacity development to improve skills for effective and efficient response to FAST incursion. This will be done through upgrading the capacity development opportunities for Member Nations, the enhancement of skills and competencies of veterinary services and laboratories, and the improvement and sharing of emergency management practices.</p> <p>4. Tools and resources to support capacity to assess impact of FAST incursion, assist proper response to crises and timely scaling up of resources. This will be done through further development and upgrading of response tools available to Member Nations, regular assessment of contingency planning capacities, and maintenance and improvement of diagnostic capacities in Member Nation laboratories.</p>
Sustain control of FAST diseases to reduce the spread and impact on livestock sector.	5. Global FMD control to support global FMD control strategy. This will be done through effective implementation of the PCP-FMD, and provision of tailored support for country progression along the PCP-FMD (including the PSO system).

6. **FAST control** to support FAST control in risk areas to reduce risk for Member Nations. This will be done through the support of capacity development programmes for FAST outside of Europe, and the improvement of disease prioritization and resource mobilization in region and in country.

7. **Vaccine security** to improve availability of quality FAST vaccines. This will be done through ensuring sustainability of a fully operational PQv and the operationalization of the multistakeholder platform.

Fabrizio Rosso concluded by highlighting new elements to the proposed Strategy: improved passive surveillance, a diagnostic reserve system for Member Nation laboratories, support to the diagnostic capacity, implementation of biorisk managements standards now included in mandatory standards for Member Nations, and facilitation of FAST control and investment plans.

Marcello Nardi presented the new training credit (TC) system for Member Nations. He outlined the current mechanism and stated that at the 100th meeting of the Executive Committee of the EuFMD, the review of the TC allocation system as well as the inclusion of training cascade options in the EuFMD menu for the new strategy were proposed. The new training credit system will distribute Member Nations into four tiers, according to their livestock units. The total number of TCs will vary according to the tier a Member Nations belongs to. It is proposed that Member Nations allocate 30 percent of their TCs on cascading and 20 percent on virtual-training activities. A survey among the Member Nations on training needs was carried out before the 45th General Session, and five priority areas for capacity development were identified by Member Nations (in this order): 1. biosecurity, 2. emergency preparedness, 3. outbreak investigation, 4. contingency planning (operational procedures), and 5. identification of risk hotspots and conduct integrated risk-based surveillance.

Discussion

The Chief Veterinary Officer of Sweden, on behalf of the 27 Member states of the European Union, congratulated the Secretariat for having implemented the previous workplan and having prepared the Strategy for Phase VI. The European Union underlined some priorities to be considered by the Secretariat, based on lessons learnt from the past: FMD prevention and control training activities for European Union veterinarians; providing a good balance between practical experience, theoretical knowledge and familiarity with the needed laboratory techniques; and maintaining and reinforcing surveillance in the Thrace region; also, resources shall be ready in case new well-defined hotspots were to be identified. For the latter, the European Union thanks Bulgaria, Greece and Türkiye for their efforts over the years to maintain Thrace free of FMD. Finally, the CVO acknowledged the good cooperation between the EuFMD and WOAHA and stressed the necessary collaboration between these two organizations to enable synergies and avoid duplication of actions. Fabrizio Rosso responded that all priorities raised by the European Union Member Nations will be taken into account for the next strategy. He thanked the Regional FAO offices in the facilitation of RTTs. With regard to active collaboration with WOAHA, he stressed that over the past biennium, regular coordination meetings are held with WOAHA and FAO regional representations in North Africa, the Near East and Southeastern and Central Europe. In addition, in the framework of the GF-TADS FMD Working Group, regular meeting and good collaborations with WOAHA are to be mentioned. Francesco Berlingieri, DG-SANTE, requested the Secretariat review the section “Core elements” and remove the reference of priorities supported by DG-SANTE, as the European Commission’s financial commitment is still to be confirmed.

Conclusions

The Move FAST- GET prepared strategy was endorsed with actions to be particularly focused on capacity building for veterinary services and laboratories aimed at enhancing capacity to respond to the incursion of FMD and similar TADs; on the Thrace programme for FAST freedom confidence and the possibility to adapt it to other risk areas of Europe and its neighbourhood; and on the further development and adaptation of tools, field studies, technical networks and simulation exercises to assist the improvement of emergency preparedness and risk monitoring. The new Training Credit system proposed with a new allocation of TCs and associated courses was endorsed by Member Nations. Collaboration with FAO headquarters and Regional Offices and with WOAHA needs to be maintained to ensure coordination of actions and avoid duplications.

The Chair of the Session ensured there was a quorum (31 Member Nations). All Member Nations were in favour of the New Strategy.

Item 11. Report on the status of foot-and-mouth disease antigen and vaccine banks in Europe

Presenter: Kiril Krstevski, EuFMD Laboratory technical expert (**Appendix 7**)

Key Messages

1. The PRAGMATIST tool provides evidence base to inform the choice of FMDV vaccine selection and helps vaccine bank managers decide which strains are the most important to maintain in the vaccine banks. When using the tool, it is important not only to select the vaccines with high scores but also to consider the portion of risk covered by different vaccines (breadth of protection).
2. Approximately 29 861 000 vaccine doses across five serotypes and fifteen antigen strains are held (excluding the central European Union bank). Most of the vaccine strains with high-coverage scores in the latest PRAGMATIST output (chart below) are represented across the national banks.
3. Multiple vaccine strains are needed to cover estimated risk for serotype A. Vaccine strains A-22 and A-Iran-05 provide redundant protection, and keeping only one would be sufficient, with inclusion of vaccine strains that cover other parts of the risk (A-Malaysia-97 and A-G-VII).
4. Decision-making on emergency vaccination, operational planning and implementation of emergency vaccination during an outbreak are considered as the most important topics for training and discussion in the FMD emergency preparedness network.

Summary

Summary of responses to the Vaccine Bank Questionnaire

The survey was sent to all 39 EuFMD Member Nations; 33 responses were received in total for an overall response rate of 85 percent (slightly lower than 2021, when the response rate was 90 percent).

Among respondent countries, six (three European Union Member Nations and three non-European Union Member Nations) indicated they have a national antigen bank or other arrangement (e.g. commercial contract with a third party) for the supply of FMD antigen for emergency use. This is two countries fewer than the previous report from 2021; one country that held antigens in 2021 responded that it no longer has a vaccine bank, and the second one did not respond in 2023.

Antigens held: The Antigen Priority tool (PRAGMATIST) provides an evidence base to inform the choice of FMDV vaccine selection. Its output (chart below) identifies vaccine strains that best address threats and helps vaccine bank managers in FMDV-free areas to decide which strains are the most important to be included in the vaccine banks. However, when using PRAGMATIST it is important not only to choose the vaccines with high scores but also to consider the portion of the risk covered by different vaccines (breadth of protection).

Most of the antigen strains with high scores for risk coverage are well represented across the national antigen banks. One exception is A-Malaysia 97, which covers a specific part of the estimated risk from serotype-A and is represented in only two national banks. Additionally, two vaccine strains covering the same part of the serotype-A risk (A-22 and A-Iran-05) are kept together in three national banks. These vaccine strains provide redundant protection, and keeping them together would not provide additional protection against the risk from serotype-A.

Quantity held: Respondent countries hold approximately 29 861 000 doses across five serotypes and 15 antigens (this number excludes the central European Union antigen bank). This quantity is slightly lower compared to the number of doses reported in the 2021 survey. Most reported doses (82 percent) are held in two national vaccine banks (two European Union Member Nations).

Vaccine reserves for FAST diseases other than FMD

Two responding countries (both non-European Union Member Nations) indicated that they have national vaccine banks for emergency use for other FAST diseases. Both countries reported holding vaccines for lumpy skin disease (950 000 doses in total), and one country reported holding vaccines for Peste des petits ruminants.

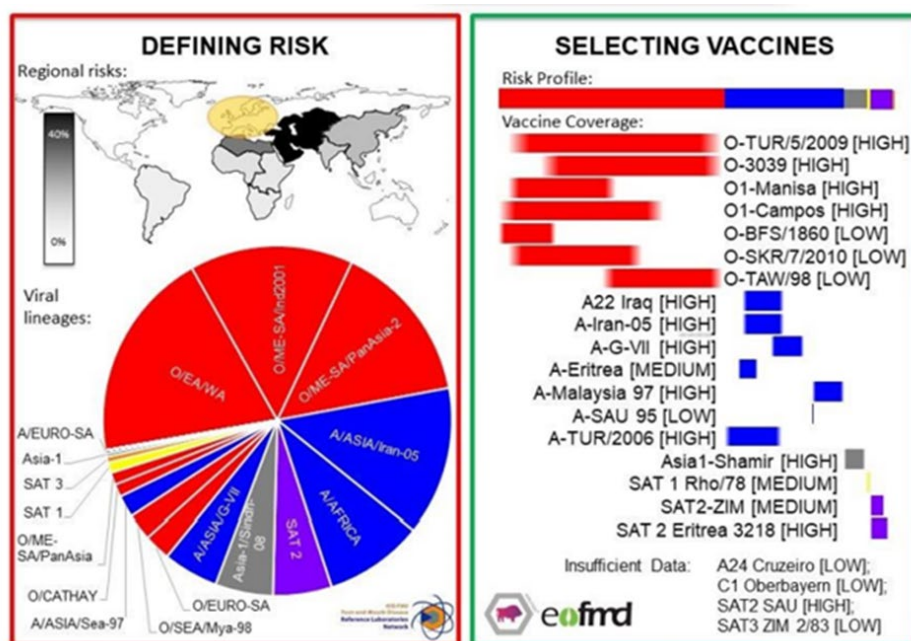
Contingency plans and use of emergency vaccination

Emergency vaccination remains included as a potential control option in the contingency plans of the majority of responding countries (90 percent). For most of these countries (83 percent), subject matter expert committees will support the decision-making in relation to eventual use of vaccination and the vaccination strategy employed. Almost one third of the respondent countries (31 percent) reported that models are used to inform contingency planning, and 45 percent indicated that models may be used to support decision-making during an actual FMD emergency response.

Managing vaccinated animals (including post-vaccination monitoring and surveillance) and sourcing a suitable human resource pool to conduct the vaccination represent the most important constraints to rapidly implementing an emergency vaccination plan for most of the responding countries (indicated by 66 percent and 53 percent of respondent countries, respectively). On the contrary, vaccine cold chain management, and record keeping (including vaccine reconciliation and permanent identification of vaccinated animals), were indicated as important constraints only by 13 percent and 19 percent of responding countries, respectively.

Survey results indicated that deciding if, when and how to implement emergency vaccination during an outbreak remains the most important topic for training and for discussion in the FMD emergency preparedness network (ranking score = 140) followed by operational planning for FMD emergency vaccination programmes (ranking score = 118) and vaccinated animal management policies (ranking score = 115).

Results from the European Commission for the control of foot-and-mouth disease and the World Reference Laboratory Pragmatist tool for risk-based decisions (March 2023)



Notes: FAST diseases other than FMD: Peste des petits ruminants (PPR), Lumpy skin disease (LSD), Sheep-pox (SPP), Goat-pox (GTP) and Rift Valley Fever (RVF)

Sources: FAO. 2023. *Foot-and-mouth disease: Quarterly Report – January– March 2023*. Rome. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cc6065en>

Discussion

Fabrizio Rosso stressed that in the Constitution, Member Nations should implement mutual support in case of emergencies, and this also relates to support in vaccine procurement. The Commission should facilitate the implementation of mechanisms to facilitate such an agreement. He commended the responses to Member Nations requests provided by the European Commission in the face of the SAT2 crisis.

The Chief Veterinary Officer of North Macedonia highlighted issues of countries hosting small livestock populations in procurement of vaccines, as they seem to be too small a market, and despite several tenders, no one supplies the offer.

Conclusion

The rapid availability of vaccines is considered key in case of incursion of FMD and similar TADs. Continued support through the EuFMD workplan should be ensured to improve capacities on decision-making on emergency vaccination, operational planning and implementation of emergency vaccination during an outbreak. Coordination mechanisms to share resources (i.e. vaccines) in case of need should also be considered to improve contingency capacity.

Item 12a. Report of Standing Technical Committee on committee activities and priorities

Presenter: Stephan Zientara, Chairperson of the EuFMD Standing Technical Committee (STC) (**Appendix 8**)

Key messages

The Standing Technical Committee:

1. acted as Grant Review Board on the proposals received in the 9 and 10 Fund for Applied Research call;
2. discussed and offered direction on a semi-quantitative framework for EuFMD Member Nations to monitor the likelihood of entry of FAST diseases from Pillar II countries;
3. discussed opportunities and risks of extending tools and trainings developed for FMD (particularly EuFMDis) to FAST and beyond;
4. endorsed the training management system (TOM) steering committee;
5. delivered joint opinion STC-SCBRM on shipment of LFD;
6. decided theme, sessions, teams, speakers and technical organization of the Open Session 2022; and
7. assisted in the development of the Move FAST – GET prepared strategy.

Summary

The Chair of the Standing Technical Committee summarized the 2022 Open Session on Digitalization and innovation applied to the prevention and control of foot-and-mouth and similar transboundary animal diseases (FAST), which was held in Marseille (France). There were 53 presenters, twelve keynote speakers, and the session was livestreamed to a very wide audience. He commented on the Move-FAST – Get Prepared strategy for 2023–2027 and noted the relevance of the applied research programme that provides tangible results and outcomes used by risk managers and policy makers, and that of keeping the focus on Europe and its neighbourhood (with particular reference to risk areas: Balkans, Thrace and East Europe). He further underlined the importance of the global surveillance of FMD and FMD virus intelligence (to inform risk monitoring and preparedness) and the PQv initiative with benefits for emergency preparedness and risk reduction (contributing to address vaccine security issues).

Concerning the new strategy, he brought forward the relevance of assessing and assisting the level of implementation of FMD biorisk management standards (for better risk management within laboratories), and the importance of continuing investigating needs and opportunities to establish a diagnostic bank for FMD (to improve readiness to respond to emergency situation). He outlined the core focus on trainings, real-time trainings, digital-learning and the training management system (for improving skills of vets and paravets, building on training capacities developed with the EuFMD) and asked to continue the implementation of the EuFMD digitalization strategy. Mr Zientara mentioned the work of the Special Committee for Surveillance and Applied Research (SCSAR) which had focused on the assessment of surveillance outcomes and availability of risk information, improving laboratory capacities in neighbouring countries, improving integrated surveillance and control in risk hotspots, and assessing laboratory capacity to respond to crises. For the applied research programme he summarized the project proposals which are selected according to the following criteria: relevance to strategic objectives or specific components of the EuFMD Strategy, how they address common problems to many Member Nation veterinary services, the likelihood of tangible results or outputs, the urgency of need for results/outputs and lack of alternative funding, synergy or complementarity with field-based activities relating to FMD, and value for money.

Discussion

The Secretariat thanks the STC members for technical inputs to the work programme and their commitment over the past years.

Donald King (WRL-FMD) asked if further funds are available under the FAR programme to address knowledge gaps for SAT2, such as the assessment of performance of SAT2 vaccines (potency tests), and Fabrizio Rosso welcomed this suggestion.

Item 12b. Report of the Standing Committee on Prequalification for vaccines against FAST diseases

Presenter: Gabor Kulcsár, Chairperson of Standing Committee on Prequalification of Vaccines against FAST diseases (SCPQv) (**Appendix 14**)

Key messages

1. The Prequalification (PQv) scheme for FAST vaccines aims to improve vaccine security by promoting the use of quality vaccines.
2. The SCPQv has been formally established and acts as the oversight, governance and final decision-making the committee to provide independent assurance of the characteristics and properties of publicly-listed vaccines under the Prequalification scheme.
3. The Prequalification Policy, administrative procedure, and technical guidance for FMD vaccines have been published following consultation with relevant stakeholders.
4. The PQv scheme is now operational with expressions of interest received from FMD manufacturers based in Europe, Africa, Asia, South America and the United States of America.
5. The SCPQv should review the first FMD vaccines for prequalification listing by the end of 2023.

Summary

The Prequalification of FAST vaccines aims to improve vaccine security for FAST diseases by promoting the use of quality vaccines shown to comply with internationally agreed minimum standards. The 44th General Session of the European Commission for the Control of Foot-and-Mouth Disease in April 2021 endorsed the establishment of a Prequalification system for vaccines against FAST diseases following consultation with stakeholders. The EuFMD has established the necessary structures for governance and operation of the PQv scheme with the creation of the Standing Committee on Prequalification for vaccines against FAST diseases (SCPQV), a multistakeholder expert advisory Technical Advisory Group (PQvTAG) and a dedicated team within the EuFMD.

The SCPQv is made up of members nominated by EuFMD Member Nations and permanent observers with expertise in FAST vaccine production and use, quality control testing and regulatory evaluations. The Executive Committee endorsed the composition of the ad interim SCPQv in October 2021, which was formally adopted at the Special Session in April 2022.

The Prequalification Policy, Administrative Procedure and Technical Guidance for FMD vaccines are published following consultation with stakeholders and endorsement by the SCPQv. A staged approach will be followed to develop and implement the scheme with close collaboration with all partners and stakeholders. Stage 1 is a proof-of-concept stage developed for FMD vaccines based on documentary evidence. At Stage 2, there is the

aim to extend the level of assurance with independent testing and formally linking the PQv scheme with long-term supply arrangements through FAO procurements.

The PQv scheme is now operational with formal expressions of interest received from manufacturers based in Europe, Africa, Asia, South America and the United States of America. The first formal applications were received in April 2023, and the SCPQv may be in a position to consider these FMD vaccines for listing by Q4 2023.

Conclusion

The prequalification scheme (PQv) for FMD vaccines aims at enhancing vaccine security by promoting the use of quality FMD vaccines shown to comply with internationally agreed upon standards. Prequalification, by stimulating investment in the manufacture and supply of quality vaccines, should contribute to the capacity to respond to a possible incursion of FMD in Member Nations as well as to control programmes implemented in endemic countries. Mechanisms for ensuring the financial sustainability of the prequalification should be identified to progress into Stage 2 of the system implementation.

Item 12c. Report of the Special Committee on Biorisk Management

Presenter: Kirsten Tjørnehøj, Chairperson of Special Committee on Biorisk Management (SCBRM) (**Appendix 9**)

Key messages

1. The SCBRM proposes that the committee continues as it did in the previous period with the addition of two more members representing the new European Reference Laboratories for FMDV: Biorisk Officer An Schoonjans, Belgium; Biorisk Officer Laurie Grandont, France, and with one replacement: Biorisk Officer Ruth Knorr replaces Barbara Wieland, both IVI, Switzerland.
2. The MBRMS has been reviewed in depth.
3. A new open-access online course “Introduction to the FMD Minimum Biorisk Management Standards” was launched.

Summary

The Chair of the SCBRM summarized the activities undertaken, which included a number of meetings in which the Minimum Biorisk Management Standards (MBRMS) were reviewed in depth. The new tasks were outlined, and these include the extension of the SCBRM and STC joint opinion on transportation of LFD to similar products and a scheme for mutual biorisk evaluation and advice for laboratories and facilities.

The committee will also look into the scheme for mutual biorisk evaluation and advice, Flinders Technology Associates (FTA) cards and other advisory tasks including other FAST.

Discussion

Keith Sumption thanked the SCBRM for the expertise provided and mentioned that outside of Europe, there are laboratories showing interest and raising questions on the application of minimum biorisk management standards. Within the GF-TADs Management Committee, there might be concerns about Rinderpest facilities and their inspections. He wondered whether the Commission and the SCBRM are interested in extending their

advisory tasks to the laboratory containment of similar TADs' pathogens. The chairperson welcomed the suggestions, reporting past exchange within the special committee and confirmed the SCBRM will be ready to help, considering the limited time available of the members. Fabrizio Rosso reminded the Member Nations that Rinderpest is indicated in the Constitution for preparedness and risk reduction activities. He agreed that the SCBRM could be considered for Rinderpest activities, but the focus shall remain on FMD inactivation methods and training on the application of FMD minimum biorisk management standards.

Conclusion

The support of the SCBRM and expertise of its members are relevant to implement actions within the EuFMD work programme aimed at ensuring a good level of biosecurity and biosafety in the FMD laboratories of Member Nations. The possibility to build on such know-how should be considered for other TADs included in the mandate of EUFMD.

Item 13. Minimum standards for laboratory containment of foot-and-mouth disease virus

Presenter: Kirsten Tjørnehøj, Chairperson of Special Committee on Biorisk Management (SCBRM) (**Appendix 10**)

Key messages

1. The revision process of the MBRMS has continued during 2021–2023, and queries from the 2019–2021 revisions have been resolved, implemented or rejected.
2. The SCBRM has introduced some changes: For Tiers A and B, to evaluate the content and form, a questionnaire has been distributed to laboratories and facilities in endemic countries.
3. The revision of the MBRMS will occur during the next two years.

Summary

The improvements to the Minimum Biorisk Management Standards were presented, addressing issues raised by Member Nations and identifying possible further updates to be discussed within the Commission in the next phase of the work programme.

Conclusion

The proposed updates were accepted by the Member Nations. The SCBRM will continue the revision of the MBRMS in 2023–2025 including the development of tiers A and B, the supplementation for recommended disinfection methods, and advising on the establishment of a community of practice among biorisk officers and systems to promote and ensure application of the MBRMS.

Item 14. Proposal for technical committees and their functions in the upcoming biennium

Presenter: Fabrizio Rosso, EuFMD Deputy Executive Secretary

Key messages

1. The Constitution of the European Commission for the Control of Foot-and-Mouth Disease (Art. VII) establishes that the Commission may establish temporary, **Special or Standing Committees** to study and report on matters pertaining to the purpose of the Commission, subject to the availability of the necessary funds in the approved budget of the Commission.
2. Considering the core elements of the EuFMD **Move FAST – GET Prepared strategy** and action areas identified, it is appropriate to ensure that proper scientific support and guidance is provided to the Commission through the continuation of service of the committees endorsed at the 44th General Session.

Summary

Fabrizio Rosso thanked all current committees for the work conducted over the past biennium. He noted that the Constitution provides the possibility to establish special or standing committees to study and report on matters pertaining to the purpose of the Commission. Considering the core elements of the new strategy, it is of utmost importance to ensure proper scientific support and guidance to the Commission through technical committees. It was proposed to maintain the STC, the SCBRM and SCPQv and reshape the current SCSAR to a Special Committee on Risk Monitoring, Surveillance and Applied Research (SCRISAR).

It was proposed to keep the composition (six current members) and tasks of the STC.

It was proposed to keep the 11 current members, and tasks of the SCBRM. It was proposed to add two new members to this committee: from ANSES (France) and SCIENSANO (Belgium).

A new Special Committee on Risk Monitoring, Integrated Surveillance and Applied Research (SCRISAR) is proposed to assist the Commission on work on regular risk assessment of FAST threats, guide the Commission on actions aimed at improving implementation and effectiveness of FAST surveillance, provide support in identifying gaps in knowledge and tools and assess the technical projects and field studies submitted to the EuFMD. Fifteen experts from the European Union and FAO/WHO Reference Laboratories on FAST, from FAST-endemic countries and the WHO collaborating center for risk analysis and modelling (RVC) and epidemiology (FLI) are proposed.

It was proposed to keep the composition (including members nominated by Member Nations with expertise in FAST vaccine production, control and use; members nominated by Member Nations on the basis of specific expertise, and two experts from national medicine regulatory authorities) and tasks of the SCPQv. The opportunity to have permanent observers from FAO NSAH and FAO Procurement services (CSLP), the European Union, the European Commission and the European Medicine Agency, WHO, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Pan African Veterinary Center of the African Union (AU-PANVAC) was outlined.

Discussions

The Chief Veterinary Officer of Armenia informed the audience that the Government of Armenia launched the process of becoming a Member Nation of the EuFMD, and the process should be completed by the end of 2023. The Executive Committee fully supports this candidacy.

Conclusion

The relevant contribution of the technical assistance provided by Standing and Special committees was acknowledged. The proposed composition and tasks of the four committees was accepted by the Member Nations.

The technical committees' composition is shown in **Appendix 11**.

Item 15. Financial report

Presenters: Fabrizio Rosso, Cécile Carraz, EuFMD

Key messages

1. The financial report refers to administrative funds – contributions from the EuFMD Member Nations – (MTF/INT/011/MUL); European Union funded activities (Phase V 2019–2023) by the EuFMD – (GCP /GLO/026/EC); four emergency and training funds for provision of virtual and real-time trainings (Foot-and-mouth disease – Emergency Aid Programme – [MTF/INT/004/MUL]; EuFMD Real-Time Training Course – [MTF /GLO/016/TEX-F]; veterinary and veterinary paraprofessional capacity skills training – [MTF /INT/610/BMG]; and Virtual Real-Time Training for FMD and Similar Transboundary Animal Disease [GCP/GLO/1070/AUL-F]).
2. The extension of the final date of the Emergency and Training Fund up 31 December 2025 is proposed in line with the administrative fund to allow the opening of a new multidonor trust fund, aligned with the new FAO policies, for use in activities in line with the EuFMD Strategic Plan, including response to FMD emergency situations or to support capacity-building programmes.
3. An FAO evaluation of the European Union funded project will be held over summer 2023, in agreement with the donor, along with the preparation work of a budget proposal and strategic plan for Phase VI.
4. The final financial and narrative report of the European Union funded project will be submitted to the donor before the end of the year.

Summary

Cécile Carraz presented the EuFMD Secretariat's administrative summary and financial position of the Trust Funds (**Appendix 12**).

The EuFMD Member Nations contribution report showed no outstanding contribution for the year 2022 and a position at 31 March 2023 of USD 459 607 received on a total contribution in 2023 of USD 656 601.

The financial report on the EuFMD Emergencies and Training Funds (MTF /INT/004/MUL Foot and Mouth Disease - Emergency Aid Programme) for provision of virtual and real-time trainings to non-EuFMD members and support to FAO Regional Offices was presented, indicating project closure by 31 December 2023 as per FAO Financial Regulations. The EuFMD needs to work on the opening of a new multidonor trust fund aligned with

the new FAO policies, for use in activities in line with the EuFMD Strategic Plan, including response to FMD emergency situations or to support capacity-building programmes. It has been proposed to extend the project in alignment with the Administrative Fund MTF /INT/011/MUL- European Commission for Control of Foot-and-Mouth Disease (not to exceed date [NTE] 31 December 2025) to facilitate the transition phase before the opening of a new Multi Donor Trust Fund (MTF).

The financial statement at 31 March 2023 of the project “EuFMD Real-Time Training Course for Texas A&M University” was presented, highlighting the available balance for activities for the 4th virtual Real-Time Training (vRTT) in 2023. The project was extended up to February 2024, and there is an ongoing discussion with the donor for an amendment to the agreement for additional funds to implement and delivery of real-time training activities.

The financial statement 31 March 2023 of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation project “Veterinary and veterinary paraprofessional capacity skills training” (November 2020–December 2023) was presented. An amendment to the agreement for increased budget for Phase I is finalized. The project was moved under the Joint Centre for Zoonoses and Antimicrobial Resistance (CJWZ) in April 2023.

The financial position of European Union Funded Activities (Phase V 2019–2023) was reported showing the level of expenditures by Pillar at 31 March 2023 after 42 months of activities representing 83 percent of programme implementation, highlighting no over expenditures by budget line according to the endorsed budget revision.

Breakdown of expenditures (percent of total):

- Pillar I 4 127 496 (81 percent)
- Pillar II 2 233 905 (82 percent)
- Pillar III 2 334 321 (88 percent)
- Total 8 695 722 (83 percent)

Monitoring, tracking and mapping of expenditures by Pillar was carried out as well as budget line for planning of activities up to end of Phase V 30 September 2023. The FAO evaluation of the project will be held over the summer months of 2023, between June and September.

The EuFMD will prepare and present the financial report to the donor before the end of 2023, to allow for the European Union final instalment (the final financial and narrative report as per contribution agreement shall be submitted at the latest six months after project operational closure 30 September 2023).

The Phase VI budget proposal and strategic plan for outlining of the contribution agreement will be discussed with the donor in the upcoming months.

Discussion

Fabrizio Rosso explained that the FAO evaluation will not be a financial evaluation but rather an evaluation exercise, agreed with the European Commission, to assess the impact and sustainability of the current programme, and inform the next programme.

Conclusions

The ongoing tracking and mapping of expenditures by Pillar and by budget lines for planning activities up to the end of Phase V ensures the proper monitoring of expenses according to the three pillars work programme.

The drafting of the work programme with budget allocations according to the priorities identified for Phase VI needs to be completed in order to provide all the necessary documentation for the grant agreement with the European Commission.

The proposed extension of the final date of the MTF /INT/004/MUL Foot and Mouth Disease - Emergency Aid Programme in alignment with the Administrative Fund MTF /INT/011/MUL- European Commission for Control of Foot-And-Mouth Disease not to exceed date (NTE) 31 December 2025 has been endorsed by the Member Nations.

Budget for biennium 2024–2025 and membership contributions of Member Nations were adopted at the 45th General Session.

Item 16. Membership contributions and proposed budget 2024–2025

Presenter: Fabrizio Rosso, EuFMD (**Appendix 13**)

Key messages:

1. A proposal to the Member Nations on the budget and contributions 2024–2025 (in USD) of the administrative activities of the EuFMD Secretariat MTF /INT/011/MUL – European Commission for Control of Foot-And-Mouth Disease has been put forth for decision by the 45th General Session.
2. A proposal of review of the threshold of categorization scale in which EuFMD Member Nations are placed for contributions has been presented for endorsement by the 45th General Session.
3. The categorization was adopted at the 41st General Session in 2015, with five categories, based on a formula for classification agreed upon by the Commission in 1997, which used two equal criteria: a) the United Nations' contribution, and b) livestock population (formula – 1 for cattle, 0.5 for pigs, 0.2 for sheep and goats).
4. Considering the increase of the livestock unit in Europe by 3.3 percent from 2015 to 2023, and the decrease of the EuFMD Member Nations' Index in the European area by 8.37 percent from 2015 to 2023, the thresholds for entry into a category have been lowered by 10 percent from the value adopted in 2015.
5. The 43rd General Session (GS43) endorsed the proposal to index the biennial budget contributions of member nations, for each category level of contributions to a standard measure of inflation (the consumer price index [CPI] as recorded by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development [OECD]). As the CPI differs between the Eurozone and European Union countries, and expenses of the Commission are in every European Union country and others in the region, the index to be applied was proposed at the GS43 to be the mid-point between the CPI for the eurozone countries and that of the European countries. The index should use the OECD data for the CPI change in the two-year period of the previous two full calendar years before each session (thus 2019–2020 for the 44th Session in April 2021, and 2021–2022 for the 45th Session in 2023). The index calculation for the 2024–2025 Biennium was presented at the 45th General Session.
6. A contribution's proposal for biennium 2024–2025 for each EuFMD Member Nation for a total annual contribution of **USD 731 393**, based on the 2023 five categories revised threshold and 9.57 percent CPI rise over the two past years, is to be endorsed by the 45th General Session.

Fabrizio Rosso presented the revision of Member Nations yearly contributions to be presented for endorsement by the 45th General Session (**Appendix 13**). The proposal is to maintain the five categories and revise the threshold for contribution endorsed at the 41st General Session based on a formula for classification agreed by the Commission in 1997, which used two equal criteria, the United Nation's contribution and livestock population.

The comparison included the updated data of livestock populations available in FAOSTAT and most recent figures on contribution to the United Nations and FAO from FAO Council Reports, and all countries, including non-Member Nations in Eastern Europe.

Considering the increase of the livestock unit in Europe by 3.3 percent, the increase in the United Nations' contribution (in particular for non-EuFMD Member Nations), and the decrease of the EuFMD Member Nations' index in the European area by 8.37 percent from 2015 to 2023, the thresholds for entry into a category has been lowered by 10 percent from the value adopted in 2015. Applying the 2023 index, the five categories' thresholds were defined, **highlighting changes of categories for six Member Nations**:

- Spain from category 2 to 1
- Ireland from category 3 to 2
- Sweden from category 2 to 3
- Romania and Greece from category 3 to 4
- Slovakia from category 4 to 5

The contribution's proposal for biennium 2024–2025 for each EuFMD Member Nation for a total annual contribution of **USD 731 393** is based on the 2023 five-category threshold and on a midway point between Eurozone 19, EU27 2020–2022, with an index of 115.73, representing a 9.57 percent rise over the past two years, as per the policy endorsed at the 43rd General Session to index the biennial budget contribution of Member Nations to a standard measure of inflation.

The budget allocation was presented for endorsement by the 45th General Session to cover professional personnel positions and temporary positions to support administration and programme delivery (consultant on an 11-month basis as per FAO non-Staff rules). With a recommendation to maintain a reserve in the year that the European Commission Contract is up for renewal, as Member Nations expect the programme to continue even during the negotiation phase and before the first payment is provided by the donor (after the grant agreement is finalized). The administrative fund MTF /INT/011/MUL- European Commission for Control of Foot-and-Mouth Disease thus acts as a buffer in this situation to enable continuity and to be back charged when Phase VI of the European Commission project is operationally active.

Discussion

No objection on the proposed item.

Conclusions

The administrative budget for biennium 2024–2025 and membership contributions of Member Nations were adopted at the 45th General Session for a total annual contribution of USD 731 393 per year for 39 Member Nations.

The budget allocation for biennium 2024–2025 Member Nations' contributions was endorsed at the 45th General Session to cover personnel essential to the work of the Secretariat (P2, P3, P4 and P5 positions, programme operation and programme learning leads).

Item 17. Election of the Executive Committee and committee members

For this Item, Keith Sumption, CVO-FAO, took the Chair, assisted by the Deputy Executive Secretary. Keith Sumption first called for nominations for the Officers of the Commission, these being the Chair and two Vice Chairpersons.

For the Position of Chairman:

Dr Lajos Bogнар (Hungary) was proposed by Austria and seconded by Croatia and Türkiye.

For the first Vice Chairperson:

Dr Emmanuelle Soubeyran (France) was proposed by Slovakia and seconded by Spain.

For the second Vice Chairperson:

Dr Hendrik-Jan Roest (the Kingdom of the Netherlands) was proposed by Belgium and seconded by Germany.

There being no other candidates proposed, the candidates were endorsed unanimously, and each indicated their willingness to serve as Officers of the Commission.

Election of members of the Executive Committee

Keith Sumption called for nominations for the six positions, each of which had to have a proposer and be seconded by at least one other. For the six members of the Committee, the following were nominated:

Members of the Executive Committee	From	Proposed by	Seconded by
Taina Aaltonen	Finland	Ireland	Sweden
Christodoulos Pipis	Cyprus	Bulgaria	Greece
Durali Kocak	Türkiye	Hungary	Sweden
Matjaž Guček	Slovenia	Austria	Croatia, Bosnia Herzegovina
Christine Middlemiss	United Kingdom	Sweden	Austria
Hele-Mai Sammel	Estonia	Hungary	Poland

There were no other candidates proposed, the candidates were endorsed unanimously, and each indicated their willingness to serve as members of the Executive Committee.

Proposal for observers

Observers of the Executive Committee	From	Supported by
Sasa Boskovic	Bosnia Herzegovina	Serbia, North Macedonia, Montenegro
Spiridon Doudounakis	Greece	Sweden, Switzerland
Cristina Bungardean-Armas	Romania	Sweden, Switzerland

There was no objection to the presence of observers of the Executive Committee.

Closure of the meeting

Fabrizio Rosso took the floor to thank all the Member Nations and observers. He thanked the entire EuFMD technical team and the operational team which had worked on the preparation and delivery of the session. He noted the tireless work of Silvia Epps who ensured all the “i”s were dotted and “t”s crossed for all aspects of the session; he thanked the communications team and those ensuring the live stream of the event. Etienne Chevanne, rapporteur and support for the 45th General Session was thanked. He particularly acknowledged the work done and support received by Nadia Rumich in the past years. Lajos Bognar added his congratulations to the deputy executive secretary and the programme implementation manager for their work. Keith Sumption, CVO FAO, also took the time to thank the Mr Rosso for having deputized the EuFMD for the past three years and congratulated him on a job very well done. The entire plenary session joined, and the deputy was given a standing ovation.

The meeting was declared closed.

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FAST, Foot-mouth
And Similar Transboundary
animal diseases.

EuFMD Committees

Executive Committee, Standing Technical
Committee (STC), Special Committee for
Surveillance and Applied Research (SCSAR),
Special Committee on Biorisk Management
(SCBRM), Tripartite Groups.

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