Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

eufmd
european commission for the control of foot-and-mouth disease

BUDAPEST 6-7 MARCH 2018


Report

95TH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE EUFMD COMMISSION

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FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
European Commission for the control of Foot-and-Mouth disease (EuFMD)
Rome, 2018

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Please note the Appendices are available online and as a separate document on the EuFMD website.

Conclusions

Item 2: Follow-up to the 94th Executive Committee

1. The Committee noted the report and expressed appreciation for the continued level of delivery on almost all of the components.

Item 3: FMD surveillance

2. The significance of the previously undetected pool of FMDV circulation in Central Asia needs to be better understood. The efforts of WRL to co-operate with FGI-ARRIAH, with SAP Institute and laboratories in West Eurasia to better characterise the West Eurasian virus pools is encouraged.
3. The lack of information on virus circulation in Egypt, North Africa and western Middle-east is a concern.
4. While noting the important component of sequence exchange, the lack of submission of samples from the European neighbourhood is a concern, given the complex epidemic situation in 2017 with multiple strains of serotypes A and O. The problem that this causes for vaccine selection needs more attention.
5. The WRL is encouraged to report against the standard template in the WRL agreement, which would ensure the progress to achieve sufficient samples from the neighbourhood is recognised and addressed in the Sessions.
6. The use of the new tool (PRAGMATIST) for vaccine prioritization for Europe was noted with appreciation. The communication of the approach to risk managers across Europe is encouraged.
7. The communication of gaps in coverage (vulnerabilities) is also important and should be given more attention in reports.
8. The Secretariat should continue to invite the new EU-RL as well as the WRL to future Sessions of the Executive Committee since their participation in such Sessions could be a benefit for co-ordination.

Item 4: Evaluation

9. OED would be asked to manage the evaluation, and to work in agreement with DG-SANTE at every stage of the process.
10. DG-SANTE would be asked to identify a focal point, for the liaison with OED.

Item 5: Training

11. The expression of interest of some countries for regional courses was noted. The workshops relating to intra-EU disease spread modelling might attract some of the countries currently interested in regional workshops, and should be suggested.
12. Some countries should be prioritised on basis of risk for attention to achieve utilisation of the training credits.
13. A meeting should be proposed with the CVO-Kenya to reach agreement on the continuation of the Real-Time courses, or an alternative location, within a similar flight time, be found.

Item 6: Emergency disease spread modelling

14. Effort should be made to interest additional MS, especially those with the biggest role in intra-EU movements of animals, in the modelling progress and uptake of the opportunity. They could be invited for a special session at the July workshop, as observers and at their own cost.
15. The adaptation of the model to include wildlife was supported. The call for proposals for this adaptation could follow the FAR Fund procedures, and this was referred to the STC.

16. While very promising, there is a need to ensure the model is well understood, is robust and the system for future support/maintenance is costed before commitment is given post July 2018 on its maintenance and support. The next ExCom should receive a report of the July workshop and take an active role in steering and guiding future support and development.

Item 7. Regional FMD programmes

17. The extent of the 2017 epidemic in North Africa has been previously underestimated. The willingness of Morocco and Algeria to participate in development of risk based surveillance for FMD is a positive signal from the region.
18. Attention and effort is needed to ensure the risk of recurrence of incursions from or through Tunisia and Libya are understood.
19. There is a need for the EU member states in REMESA to bring attention and promote cooperative activities to engage Tunisia in the risk based surveillance; the efforts of Italy in this regard are applauded.
20. Greater effort is merited under the Pillar II programme to engage with Iran, particularly on data sharing, on laboratory co-operation and on the study on livestock price differentials. The interests of Iran in this need to be understood and the Secretariat should propose to the parties a meeting to be held at the OIE in late May.
21. *Regarding FMD management in Central Asia and on the borders with Mongolia and China:* The Committee welcomed the developments from FAO with the support of the Russian Federation, and asked to be briefed on progress at subsequent Sessions.

Item 8: Support to the Global Programme (Pillar III)

22. The Committee supports the proposal to provide PCP-support officer (PSO) expertise to provide guidance to national follow-up to GF-TADS Roadmap recommendations.
23. The development of further PSO expertise by training or accreditation is needed, to address the needs of regions such as West Africa. These experts might come from partners already active in the regions, from FAO, OIE and technical institutions.
24. EuFMD should continue to develop a training approach for these experts as well as for staff at national level.

Item 9: Standing Technical Committee

25. The progress of the projects supported under the 4th Call is encouraging. The projects under the 5th and 6th call should be reported at subsequent Sessions as they have an importance for surveillance and risk to North Africa and Europe.
26. The proposed Themes for the 7th Call were endorsed.
27. The title and theme for the Open Session were supported.

Item 10. Administrative and Financial

28. The sound financial position of the Administrative and Emergency Funds was noted. The Committee recognised that in large part this is due to the work of the Programme Co-ordinator, and re-iterated their support to ensure that the position and incumbent of the current programme co-ordinator is retained for at least the duration of the main programme (EC project), to September 2019.
29. The dates of the 96th Session are proposed as 27-28th September.

Report of the 95th Session of the Executive Committee

Opening

The Session was opened by Dr Lajos Bognar, CVO Hungary, who thanked all the participants for their willingness to give time to the work of the Session and welcomed all to Budapest.

The Session was Chaired by Dr Jean-Luc Angot, President of the Commission, and attended by two of the three elected officers and five of the six members.

Officers of the Commission present were: Dr Jean-Luc Angot (JLA, France, President), and Martin Blake (MB, Ireland, Vice-President). Apologies were received from Dr Christianne Bruschke (CB, The Netherlands, and Vice President).

Members of the **Executive Committee** present were Lajos Bognar (LB, Hungary), Silvio Borrello (SB, Italy), Krzysztof Jazdzewski (KJ, Poland). Dr Pakdil (Turkey) was represented by Dr Naci Bulut. Apologies were received from Drs Zoran Atanasov (ZA, FYR of Macedonia) and Dr Damien Iliev (Bulgaria). Dr Lasha Avaliani, Georgia, attended as Special Observer, as agreed at the General Session.

Observers from the **international organization**s were Dr Alf-Eckbert Füssel (AEF, Head of Sector, DG-SANTE), Dr Laure Weber-Vintzel, OIE (attended online by Adobe Connect) and Dr Eran Raizman from AGAH, FAO. Dr Don King represented the WRL-FMD at The Pirbright Institute (TPI). Dr Nikita Lebedev (NL), Special Advisor to Mr S Dankvert, Russian Federation, attended by invitation of the President of the Committee for discussion on items relating to FMD control in TransCaucasia.

Standing Technical Committee (STC) present: Eoin Ryan (ER, Ireland), President of the STC.

The **Secretariat** for the 94th Executive Committee Session comprised Dr Keith Sumption (KS, EuFMD Executive Secretary), Dr Fabrizio Rosso (FR, Deputy Officer to the Executive Secretary),Dr Mark Hovari (MH, Contingency Planning Officer), and Nadia Rumich (NR, Communication and Networks Officer).

Item 1. Adoption of the Agenda

The Agenda was adopted without change **(Appendix 1).** For reasons of his availability, Dr Rozstalnyy gave an update on the project to support FMD control in Armenia and Central Asian countries following the opening. This is reported under Item 7.

Item 2. Report on the activities since the 94th Session

Summary of actions since October 2017

The Report (**Appendix 2)** was provided by Keith Sumption, who summarized the outcome of the 94th Executive Committee Session, and its follow-up over the past six months. He highlighted that this period had been an intense one for the Secretariat, involving implementation of the 16 agreed work plans (2015-2017), in a period of major difficulty for retention and recruitment of the needed technical and operational expertise (as a result of changed FAO procedures). This work has been assisted by

exceptional effort from the operational team, led by Cecile Carraz, and through having three very active and able Pillar Supervisors (Mark Hovari, Fabrizio Rosso and Nick Lyons).

These have ensured that delivery has to member countries and other has remained on track. Reporting and communication (managed by Nadia Rumich) of the last six months was provided as both detailed, full reports and one –page summaries, in line the the EC project delivery timetable. These were provided for the Executive:

- Report of the progress under Phase IV (six months to September 2017), Full Report (**Appendix 3**);
- Summary Report (One page per Component) (**Appendix 4**).

He summarized the follow-up to the 94th Executive Committee Session. Of the 17 action points, almost all had been implemented/achieved, except for the action point working group on public-private partnerships. He proposed that the administrative and financial report be provided later under Agenda Item 12, with exception of the Financial Evaluation and Consultants Contracting issues (Item 2 ii).

The most significant problem points for delivery had been:

- The lack of agreement with the Veterinary Services of Kenya, on hosting the Real-time Training programmes, necessitating a switch to Nepal for the courses, as an interim measure;
- The delivery issues relating to the Balkan component (1.4);
- The operational issues to retain/rehire consultants, which drew time and attention away from delivery issues.

Of note for progress:

- The submission by Montenegro of its Instrument of Acceptance of the EuFMD Constitution;
- The development of partnerships with CIRAD, IZSLT and VSF-Suisse, and high interest of US and Canada for receiving “nationalized” versions of the online FMD training (FEPc).

Conclusions

1. The Committee noted the report and expressed appreciation for the continued level of delivery on almost all of the components.

Item 3 FMD situation – global and regional

Two reports were presented, the first (Report of the WRL) (**Appendix 5**) by Dr Don King, and the second by Dr Labib Bakkali, FMD Reference Centre at ANSES Paris[1] (**Appendix 6)**.

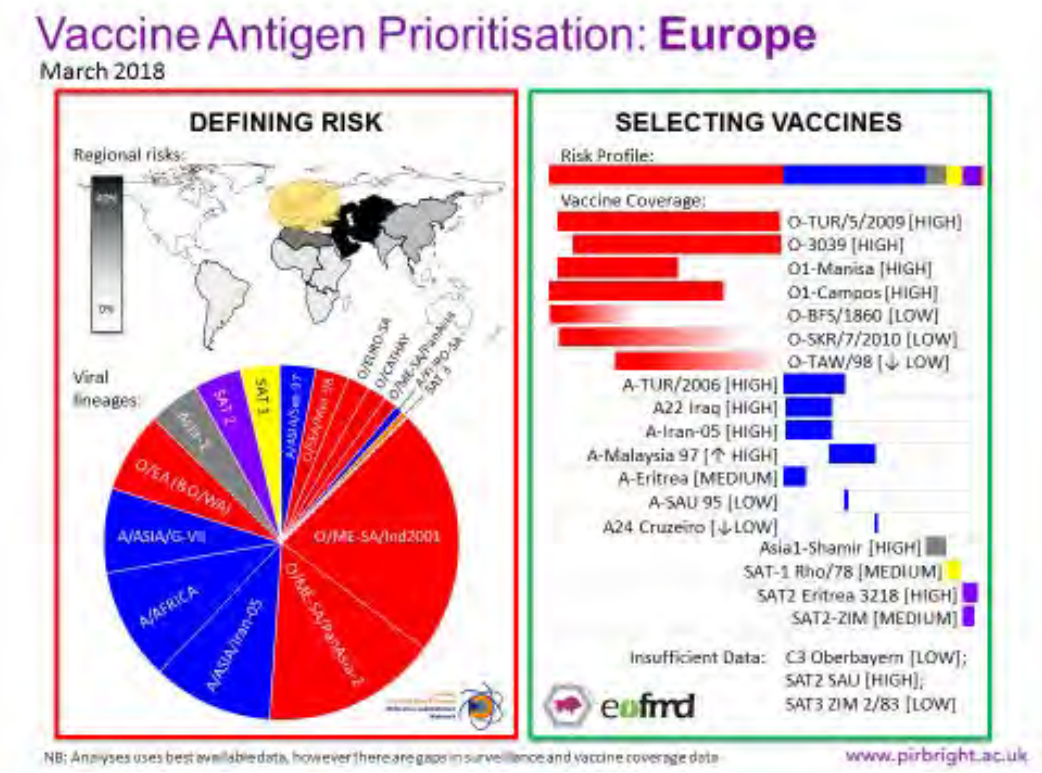
The key points from the WRL Report:

- Since 2014, the OIE/FAO Network of Reference Centres conducts analyses on circa 2000 samples per year, across the 7 virus pools;

[1] At the 94th Session, it was agreed that ANSES would be invited to each of the ExCom Sessions in 2018, as designated EU-RL from 2019.

- Since 1st October 2017, no typing reports have been issued from WRL for samples from virus pool 3 (West Eurasia), from the European neighbourhood, Middle-east or North Africa, despite virus circulation in most of the countries in 2017;
- Much valuable information has come from exchange of sequences from NRLs or OIE/FAO Reference Centres (FGI-ARRIAH, SAP Institute, India, China and Egypt)
- A previously undetected type O topotype (probably circulating without reporting in "central Asia") was detected in Russian Federation in October – a separate lineage to either O PanAsia or O Panasia-2, suggesting historic and recent poor surveillance or reporting
- Early warning of potential problems to control FMDV type O strains in Pakistan (new genetic clade within O/ME-SA/PanAsia-2$^{ANT-10)}$.

Vaccine priorities: the **PRAGMATIST** tool (EuFMD/WRL) was used for the first time to provide an assessment of which vaccines provide the best coverage against the virus lineages providing current risks to Europe. The system has been developed over three years and combines the data on risk with data on coverage against the risk lineages. The resultant chart of coverages provided is shown below:



Courtesy of The Pirbright Institute

Proficiency test service (PTS):

This is funded by EC via the EuFMD to ensure participation by 1) reference network laboratories and 2) the NRLs in countries that are neighbours to EU, both EuFMD member states and those which neighbour to them.

The 2017 PT panel(s) have been sent to 24 countries: Albania, Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Botswana (shipping 2nd March), Brazil, Ethiopia, Georgia, Israel, Kenya, Kosovo, Lebanon, Macedonia, Moldova,

Morocco, Nigeria, Norway, Russia, Senegal, Serbia, South Africa, Switzerland, Thailand (shipping 2nd March), Turkey. They are awaiting export licences for: Argentina, Egypt, Iraq and Tunisia.

The following labs have been contacted but without response: Belarus, Bosnia & Herzegovina, India, Iran, Libya, Syria.

Upcoming events:

- May 8-9: EU-RL Workshop – Horsley, UK;
- May 14-25: FMD Diagnostics training course – Pirbright;
- November 5-6: Symposium to celebrate 60th Anniversary of EuFMD/FAO designation of the WRLFMD.

The Chairman thanked Dr King for the report. The new format of the vaccine recommendations was applauded and considered to be a major advance, and this was supported by Committee members.
The Chairman concluded that EuFMD member states, particularly Turkey, Israel and Georgia, faced a complex and changing risk that required high annual expenditure in vaccination programmes to counter. The information these countries provide to the EuFMD MS is highly appreciated and the work of the Turkish and Israeli reference laboratories is an important part of the regional surveillance network.
In discussion, Dr Lebedev brought up the situation in central Asia, and the circulation of virus strains that might be occurring since the strain isolated in Russian Federation appeared to have no close ancestors suggesting that it comes from a pool of undirected circulation in the region. He suggested where this might be, without adding country names.

Report from ANSES (OIE Reference Centre and designed EU-RL, with CODA-CERVA)

Dr Bakkali-Kassimi summarized the work to develop safer, easier and more cost-effective sample transport from the field to the RLs, using penside tests (LFD) which have the advantage of providing the operator a visual positive result in the field. A protocol was validated for inactivation of infectious virus but which enabled efficient recovery of viral RNA for genotyping and rescue (recovery of infectivity) using the priority of FMDV RNA to be infective when specialized techniques are applied to enable RNA entry into cells. This protocol allows transport at ambient temperatures and he provided evidence that even one year after inactivation (in Tunisia), FMDV can be typed on samples, suggesting the method is robust enough for field use where delays in shipment are expected. Since the 94th Executive Session, an additional project with partners in Boehringer Ingelheim and VSF (Veterinaires sans Frontiers) has been awarded after competition. It should establish if para-veterinarians working in remote and challenging situations in the field can collect useful samples for typing FMDV by this method. The private sector partner will provide both the penside tests and ship the samples to ANSES, and, if this proves successful, may provide a low cost and efficient means to improve sample collection in the field, and improve safety and ease of shipment. Results are expected by the Open Session in October 2018.

The Chairman thanked the speakers for their presentations and opened the discussion.

Dr Füssel applauded the work, since reducing the costs and increasing the safety and efficiency of sample shipment is important for all countries and needed in Europe, as elsewhere. He raised the

problem of carcass transport by road and need for observances of the same conditions (UN3373) for transport as for other infectious goods, under the ADR (Dangerous Goods by Road) Regulation which itself refers to the UN standards for containment of infections. This will be a challenge for MS compliance, since triple packaging of samples is already difficult and thus triple packaging of wagons containing animal carcasses, to be taken to rendering or other disposal sites, will add major problems for compliance. He suggested the EuFMD Biorisk Management Committee (SCBRM) looks into this area.
The Secretary agreed and to bring to attention of the SCBRM at their meeting in Palermo, 15-16th March 2018.

Conclusions:

2. The significance of the previously undetected pool of FMDV circulation in Central Asia needs to be better understood. The efforts of WRL to co-operate with FGI-ARRIAH, with SAP Institute and laboratories in West Eurasia to better characterize the West Eurasian virus pools is encouraged.
3. The lack of information on virus circulation in Egypt, North Africa and western Middle-east is a concern.
4. While noting the important component of sequence exchange, the lack of submission of samples from the European neighbourhood is worrying, given the complex epidemic situation in 2017 with multiple strains of serotypes A and O. The problem that this causes for vaccine selection needs more attention.
5. The WRL is encouraged to report against the standard template in the WRL agreement which would ensure the progress to achieve sufficient samples from the neighbourhood is recognized and addressed in the Sessions.
6. The use of the new tool (PRAGMATIST) for vaccine prioritization for Europe was noted with appreciation. The communication of the approach to risk managers across Europe is encouraged.
7. The communication of gaps in coverage (vulnerabilities) is also important and should be given more attention in reports.
8. The Secretariat should continue to invite the new EU-RL as well as the WRL to future Sessions of the Executive Committee since their participation in such Sessions could be a benefit for co-ordination.

Item 3. Evaluation of the progress of the Phase IV Contract, EC support to the EuFMD

The Secretary introduced the item (**Appendix 7**) and Luisa Belli and Marta Bruno from the FAO Office for Evaluation (OED) joined (via AdobeConnect©). The OED reports to the Auditor General rather than the Director General. Evaluation of the EC funded action had been agreed with the Financial Unit of DG-SANTE and Dr Sumption explained the main options available to undertake this. The key decision needed was upon who should manage the evaluation: the donor (EC), the Executive, or the Office for Evaluation (OED). After a brief discussion, it was unanimously agreed that OED should be asked to manage the process with the understanding that they would liaise with a focal point in DG-SANTE in drawing up the Terms of Reference, and in managing the processes and recruitment of evaluators.

The timetable expected would be reporting to the Executive Committee by January 2019. It was also agreed that this would be undertaken in parallel to any discussions on the future role and support to the EuFMD, since an evaluation report in early 2019 may be late for decisions to be taken as needed in 2018.

Conclusions

9. OED would be asked to manage the evaluation, and to work in agreement with DG-SANTE at every stage of the process;
10. DG-SANTE would be asked to identify a focal point, for the liaison with OED.

Item 4. Training Programme – progress updates and plans

Mark Hovari (EuFMD) reported upon the progress of the training programme (**Appendix 8**). He indicated that more than eighty percent of the available Training Credits have been allocated by Member States with the exception of Cyprus, Luxemburg, and Switzerland, and close to thirty percent of the allocated credits has already been delivered by EuFMD.

The Veterinary ethics module has not received enough training allocation for allowing the organization of a course and possibly it will be delivered as e-learning. A deadline has been indicated for allocation of training credits to countries that have not provided response.

The proposed Regional Approach to use 56 TC not spent in previous biennium needs further considerations as allocations were lower than anticipated. This may relate to the system being new and the onus being upon MS to liaise with their neighbours to make proposals. The interest of Spain and Portugal to receive support for a multi-country simulation was noted as a good example. As some countries interested in regional courses are not neighbouring each other, the benefits of low travel costs may not be realized but it may still be an effective mechanism if the support is given to enable MS to meet to progress initiatives of common interest. One example may be the planned workshop on the disease spread model (EuFMDiS), which is a regional workshop but relevant to all of Europe.

Jenny Maud and Dinara Imanbayeva (EuFMD) then provided a report (via AdobeConnect©) (**Appendix 9**) on the training programme of Pillars II and III, illustrating the number of online training courses provided or planned for the next period in English, Russian, French and Turkish for Pillar II countries. The Risk Analysis Along the Value Chain and Russian Language FMD Investigation Training Course were organized for Pillar II countries. The Post Vaccination Monitoring and FMD Laboratory Investigation Training Course was organized for global audiences. Dinara Imanbayeva spoke on the initiative with the OIE to develop two courses, on safer trade and on application of containment zones, with the first course for delivery in April 2018, preceded by e-learning developed in the past two months.

The Chairperson congratulated the team on the progress. He considered the number and quality of relevant courses and the scale of delivery to be very impressive. He opened the floor for discussion, during which it was clarified that Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Albania had each allocated their full training credits, but it was proving difficult to get Albania to take up the training once agreed – changing personnel there seems to be the issue. It was agreed that more attention is needed to countries like Albania compared to Switzerland, in our effort to ensure training is delivered.

There was a short discussion on how to reach agreement with the CVO of Kenya. A meeting at the OIE General Session in May could be proposed and it was felt that once the situation was discussed at CVO level, there would be mutual understanding, particularly since the CVO is newly appointed.

Conclusions

11. The expression of interest of some countries for regional courses was noted. The workshops relating to intra-EU disease spread modelling might attract some of the countries currently interested in regional workshops, and should be suggested.
12. Some countries should be prioritized on basis of risk for attention to achieve utilisation of the training credits.
13. A meeting should be proposed with the CVO-Kenya to reach agreement on the continuation of the Real-Time courses, or an alternative location, within a similar flight time, be found.

Item 5. Progress on tools for emergency preparedness

Graeme Garner (via AdobeConnect©)) provided a report (**Appendix 10**) on the progress of the adaptation of the Australian spread model for application in seven countries of Central Europe. There has been a very good take up of the opportunity and commitment of the focal points from each country, so that the project, though very ambitious, is on track. The work involved per country is significant to ensure datasets are provided or generated to populate the model. This has been handled directly by himself and the model developer. The model is now functioning sufficiently well to be able to simulate inter-country spread, at least for several of the countries and this was demonstrated. The adapted tool is being called the **Eu**ropean **F**oot-and **M**outh **Dis**ease **S**pread Model ("**EuFMDis"**), and he and Mark Hovari raised a number of points for consideration of the future directions of the initiative beyond July 2018, at which point a workshop for the seven lead-countries is planned. These include 1) the participation of further countries (the costs per country of the adaptation must be considered), 2) the addition of wildlife involvement in the model (a new feature needing considerable model adaptation) and 3) the addition of other diseases, including vector borne ones (this has been a direction for Australia).

Discussion

The progress was seen as substantial and important, and there was a need now to ensure the "big players" involved in intra-EU livestock movements are involved (not only big in terms of numbers sent /received but also for movements by road). There was a concern that the overall picture of what is moved via where is unclear and transmission potentially can occur at resting points (as seen in the France in 2001 following movement of animals from the UK). The value of adapting the model to the wildlife/domestic interface was strongly supported. Dr Füssel considered that the outcomes of this project should be shared at the general session with all the EuFMD member States.

Conclusions

14. Effort should be made to interest additional MS, especially those with the biggest role in intra-EU movements of animals, in the modelling progress and uptake of the opportunity. They could be invited for a special session at the July workshop, as observers and at their own cost.
15. The adaptation of the model to include wildlife was supported. The call for proposals for this adaptation could follow the FAR Fund procedures, and this was referred to the STC.
16. While very promising, there is a need to ensure the model is well understood, is robust and the system for future support/maintenance is costed before commitment is given post July

2018 on its maintenance and support. The next ExCom should receive a report of the July workshop and take an active role in steering and guiding future support and development.

AESOP: *Assured emergency supply options for FMD vaccines*

Keith Sumption reported on the developments relating to vaccine supply for emergency settings (**Appendix 11**). Since the last Executive Committee, he had participated in the OIE Think-Tank on vaccine banks, in November, where the "AESOP" option was discussed as a potentially useful way forward. Since then, as part of an FAO process to explore if long term agreements (LTAs) with vaccine suppliers could be reached to cover both emergency and routine procurement contexts, a call for expression of interest had been launched, and teleconferences used to consult with the six vaccine producers which responded. He reviewed the feedback received and noted that the quantities (<5 million doses in store) of individual antigens are - for some producers- a small fraction of the monthly production volume and thus, potentially, the cost to them of storing antigens or replenishment should not be significant or require much investment. The issue may be "niche" antigens, where no producer currently has a high and regular sales volume and so these would need to be made especially for the contract. The technical requirements, the mandatory criteria to be met and the evaluation criteria on which differences between producers would be evaluated, remain to be resolved before a tender could be launched. Dr Sumption re-iterated that until costs of the AESOP are known, no decision on the advantages could really be reached. However, for routine procurement, the FAO processes are likely to proceed to an agreement based on FAO having every year emergency or additional funds for procurement. This part may proceed even if EuFMD has not the funds for the AESOP option.

In discussion, it was clarified that the option is interesting to explore and this should continue – and that the AESOP system would not duplicate the EU Vaccine Bank but may offer an additional, complementary mechanism. It was suggested that Marketing Authorisation (MA) might be an evaluation criteria, but not mandatory, to ensure a wider range of options to cover the priority antigens.

Item 7. Progress of Regional FMD control programmes

Under this item, the "Pillar II" support to regional programmes in the TranCaucasus and REMESA countries was discussed, with FAO (Drs Rostalnyy and Raizman) providing a summary of the planned programmes involving the Russian Federation.

REMESA: report on recent meetings and progress in North Africa and the Middle-East

Dr Fabrizio Rosso provided the report (**Appendix 12**). Of significance is the progress in sero-surveillance to clarify virus circulation and develop a risk based surveillance programme in each country. The EuFMD had organised and supported a workshop in Tunis (with OIE and FAO agreement and participation), which had for the first time brought public and private stakeholders from each of Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco. National reports and results of the sero-surveys for Morocco and Algeria were presented and indicated the scale of the 2017 epidemic was much wider than previously realised or reported. The main outcomes of the workshop were: a) the actual number of outbreaks detected in Algeria in 2017 was 108 outbreaks (416 cattle cases and 169 small ruminant cases) with the spread over 65 communes in 27 Wilayas mainly in the North of the country, despite the four outbreaks notified to OIE; b) the results of the surveillance promoted and supported by EuFMD to provide

evidence of absence/presence of FMDV circulation. The surveillance was implemented by Morocco (May 2017) and Algeria (November 2017) and Tunisia (January 2018 – results not available). In Algeria, 1537 animals were sampled from 111 herds in 43 Wilaya (75 communes). Results of ELISA NSP tests show the circulation of the virus in risk areas. The results of ELISA SP tests indicate the presence of 16 sera positive for O serotype, three sera positive for A serotype, one serum positive for A and O serotypes. The remaining 13 sera NSP-positive provided negative results for SP ELISA test and it was requested to verify the results with a Reference Laboratory through the shipping of the positive samples. In Morocco, 739 animals were sampled from 78 herds in 14 provinces (29 communes). Results of ELISA NSP lab tests showed 33 positive sera with herd prevalence of 10 % and animal prevalence of 4.5% (from 0 to 23%) in different provinces at high risk included in the surveillance. In some positive herds the number of positive animals was up to 80% (especially in the extreme East of Morocco).

He reported on the work involving CIRAD under a letter of agreement (LOA), to better utilize the livestock movement data from the three countries, and with added data from Libya, to refine the risk mapping and its use to prioritize surveillance. It must be noted that the surveys do not prove virus is currently circulating, they only show it has occurred. Confidence in lack of circulation would need increase in frequency of sampling or a system similar to THRACE whereby negative surveillance findings are accumulated.

Of note from other regions, Palestine had voluntarily indicated they would remain in PCP-Stage 1 until political level endorsement occurred of their programme, and this seems a good use of the PCP pathway to gain national commitment. In a similar position, Jordan has committed 500,000 dinars for RBSP implementation (PCP Stage 2).

In discussion, it was asked if type O has disappeared from North Africa. The seroconversion of unvaccinated small ruminants in 2017 suggested that it may remain present. Regarding Tunisia, the REMESA meeting should be used to send a strong signal by EU MS of what is expected. The interest of Italy in co-operation with Tunisia and North Africa was noted and meetings are planned to carry this forward under the programme of Italy with OIE.

Conclusions:

17. The extent of the 2018 epidemic in North Africa has been previously underestimated. The willingness of Morocco and Algeria to participate in development of risk based surveillance for FMD is a positive signal from the region;
18. Attention and effort is needed to ensure the risk of recurrence of incursions from or through Tunisia and Libya are understood;
19. There is a need for the EU member states in REMESA to bring attention and promote cooperative activities to engage Tunisia in the risk based surveillance; the efforts of Italy in this regard are applauded.

Regional co-operation for FMD management in West Eurasia/TRANSCAUCASIA

The Executive received reports (**Appendices 13 and 14**) from Dr Lasha Avaliani (Georgia) and Dr Naci Bulut (GDFC, Turkey). The first speaker covered the epidemiology network for West Eurasia (meeting September 2017, GFTADS) and recent workshop in Georgia at which five of the six signatories (of the

Statement of Intentions for countries neighbouring the Caucasus) participated. He highlighted the extent of change and the movement towards international trade and the progress to establish PCP Stage 3 zones. The latter is most advanced in Georgia and the recent workshop reviewed actions needed to prevent virus entry and circulation in such zones. The PCP process, with development of national risk based strategic plans (RBSP) has assisted Georgia to develop a suite of such plans, covering multiple TADS. This is attractive for national uptake and also for gaining financial support. He recommended this approach within the region. He reviewed the ambitious programme of the Epi-Network; all the actions were possible but without a dedicated persons the focal points from West Eurasia countries have insufficient time to take it forward; support is needed from EuFMD and others.

The President thanked Dr Avaliani for the report and his support for regional workshops, as well as evidence of progress. He drew attention to the Meeting planned at the OIE in May (22nd) and the need to ensure that this is used well. Effort is needed to bring Iranian participation since this matters for all the other countries. The OIE indicated the availability of a room for the meeting.

Turkey: Report on FMD control

Dr Bulut provided a comprehensive report, in which the major changes are both in terms of virus strains (a new incursion of type O (lineage TOK-17) with 132 outbreaks in the first two months of 2018, and in terms of national strategy. On the first, the current vaccine contains O TUR2007, two type A components (GVII and SAM16). Asia-1 is not currently included. On the second, the national plan (RBSP) was revised in 2017 after problems of implementation; the new plan has the goal of national FMD freedom with vaccination in 2023, with the steps of Stage 3, 2018, stage 4, in 2021 and after two years, FMD freedom with vaccination. In support of this, the EuFMD/GDFC training programme has been important to bring in routine use of a system of outbreak investigations. The TURKVET information system has been upgraded, to automatically restrict movement permit in surveillance zones, and other features to improve vaccination/booster rates, with a subsidy payment linked to booster vaccination. Stamping-out is planned for high risk areas (this drew some discussion), but is dependent on budget allocation.

Relating to regional control, GDFC called for:

- Continuity of support for Roadmaps, to ensure an annual process;
- More urgency for progress – free of clinical FMD by 2025 remains a distant goal and has already slipped from 2020;
- Greater support for work with Iran, and engagement of Turkey in this;
- EuFMD to undertake the pilot study on animal price differentials across the regional border, as proposed following the mission to Turley and Iran;
- Greater co-operation in the region to prevent incursions, which currently are detected much too late.

The President responded to this by proposing a meeting at the OIE between Turkey, Iran and EuFMD (and not excluding others who may wish to join), to find a way forward that will better engage or commit to a series of activities. This was supported by the Committee.

Conclusion

20. Greater effort is merited under the Pillar 2 programme to engage with Iran, particularly on data sharing, on laboratory co-operation and on the study on livestock price differentials. The interests of Iran in this need to be understood and the Secretariat should propose to the parties a meeting to be held at the OIE in late May.

Initiatives for FMD management in Central Asia and on the borders with Mongolia and China (for information).

Dr Andriy Rozstalnyy provided an update on the project expected to be funded by the Russian Federation through FAO, for Armenia, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. As these countries could be gateways of infection entry from countries to the south, improved control would help to reduce the potential circulation in Caucasus and risks to Kazakhstan/RF. Dr Raizman (**Appendix 15**) provided a briefing on the intention to revive/support trilateral meetings between Russian Federation, Mongolia and China; these had occurred with some positive spirit under FAO support but it was some time since the last one. He hoped to see the meeting resume in 2018.

Dr Lebedev (RF) confirmed the strong interest to promote FMD control in these regions and expressed concern that several countries in central Asia are not openly reporting the FMD circulation, and this may be behind the incursion of the type O into RF in 2017. More projects with an emphasis on surveillance and monitoring are needed. Currently Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan remain gaps where the extent of FMD circulation is unclear.

Conclusion

21. The Committee welcomed the development and asked to be briefed on progress at subsequent Sessions.

Item 8. Support to the Global Strategy

The report (**Appendix 16**) was provided by Dr Nick Lyons (Pillar III Supervisor of the Global actions under the EC programme). He briefly reviewed how the Pillar III work is structured, largely into PCP support, Global Laboratory Surveillance and Global Training programmes. In relation to the Global Strategy, a major area of weakness had been the follow-up at country level to actions recommended at Roadmap meetings. Twenty five (25) countries were in the category of “provisional” for their PCP stage, meaning they need to improve or complete their national plans – they had been given six months to complete this and it had usually not occurred. The proposal developed by EuFMD to support the follow-up was presented (PCP-support officers system, or **PSOs**) in which experts from the EuFMD roster would be assigned to countries on basis of experience in the country or region, and provide guidance (“desk-support”). The proposal had been sent to the other members of the OIE and FAO Working Group. The OIE had provided its support and indicated this was urgently needed. FAO had not provided its position; Dr Raizman indicated it also supported. The need to train additional PSO was evident and to some extent EuFMD could so this by training on the job, working alongside senior PSOs/experts during in- country PCP activities. The experience criteria for a PSO had been defined,

since these persons must be capable to provide an assessment of the actions needed at national level and what is required at that level to reach a nationally agreed plan.

Conclusions:

22. The Committee supports the proposal to provide PCP-support officer (PSO) expertise to provide guidance to national follow-up to GF-TADS Roadmap recommendations;
23. The development of further PSO expertise by training or accreditation is needed, to address the needs of regions such as West Africa. These experts might come from partners already active in the regions, from FAO, OIE and technical institutions;
24. EuFMD should continue to develop a training approach for these experts as well as for staff at national level.

Item 9. Report of the Standing Technical Committee

The Report (**Appendix 17**) was presented by Dr Eoin Ryan, Chairman of the STC.

He reviewed the position of six funded projects:

- four funded from the 4th call
- One each from the 5th and 6th calls

Selected for support under the 4th EuFMD-FAR (issued February 2017)

- *European multi-country FMD Spread model (EuFMDiS)* - Project Lead Applicant: Dr Graeme Garner. Signed: 18 October 2017/Duration: 18 months. Overall cost: € 48 600.00. The progress was good, on track and already reported at the 95th Session.
- *Validating the use of bulk tank milk for surveillance of FMD among commercial dairy farms in endemic settings)* - Project Lead Applicant: Dr Nicholas Lyons, The Pirbright Institute. LoA Signed: 20 July 2017/Duration: 12 months. Overall cost: € 48 881. Evaluating the use of bulk-milk as a prospective, integrated surveillance tool for infection among large-scale commercial farms in the endemic settings of Iran and Kenya. Good progress in Kenya and Iran, the former have already set samples to Pirbright and results are very promising; Iranian partners are working well with sampling on track.
- *Evaluation in field conditions of a safe and cost-effective protocol for shipment of samples from Foot-and–Mouth Disease suspected cases for laboratory diagnostic (FIELD_EVAL_INACT)* – Dr Sandra Blaise-Boisseau, French Agency for Food, Environmental and Occupational Health & Safety (ANSES). LoA Signed: 18 October 2017/Duration: 18 months. Overall cost: € 75 940. To evaluate/validate, in real situation under field conditions, the performance and safety of a protocol for improving the cost-effectiveness of FMD samples shipment, based on the inactivation of FMDV on the Lateral Flow Device (LFD). Samples are currently being collected on the field using LFDs in Turkey, Nigeria and Pakistan. Progress on track, reported by ANSES under Item 3.
- *Validating multiplex real-time RT-PCR as a tool for FMD detection in bulk tank milk (Acronym: Tank Milk Multiplex)* – Dr. Michael Eschbaumer, The Friedrich-Loeffler Institut (FLI). LoA Signed: 26 January 2018/Duration: 6 months. Overall cost: € 23 715.23. Just started, and works in partnership with the project funded through the Pirbright Institute

Selected for support under the 4th and 5th EuFMD-FAR calls

- *FMD RiskmapS (FMD Risk map surveillance system): Development of a FMD surveillance program on risk information and mapping tools for southern European neighbourhood, integrating movement patterns of domestic livestock* – CIRAD. Signed*: by the end of February 2018/Duration: 18 months. Overall cost: € 168 000.00. Reported at the 95th Session, the first activity under this project was the workshop that will take place in Tunis (Tunisia) (27 February- 1 March 2018) on surveillance for early detection and confidence of freedom in Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia
- *A pilot project for the evaluation of a system for engaging para-veterinarians and animal health workers for FMD surveillance and sample collection and for the preliminary assessment of the demand for FMD control services in Mali* - Project Lead Applicant: Dr Abdoulaye Diaoure, Vétérinaires Sans Frontières Suisse (VSF-Suisse). Signed March 2018/Duration: 18 months. Overall cost: € 20 000.00 (*although the project proposal has been received though a FAR Call the funds will be mobilized under Component 3.3.2). Works closely with ANSES project, who will use the "biosafe transport system" and test the samples collected by paravets. Status update: the project is expected to start by the end of March 2018.

In his view, and supported by the STC, is that the FAR Funding system provided excellent value for money and had made important progress through "proof of concept studies" that could then be applied by others.

He then proposed the themes for future calls, as agreed with the STC:

1. Developing an alternative to the R value as an estimate of vaccine efficacy.
2. Integrating wildlife transmission into the **EuFMDiS** disease spread model.
3. Environmental sampling as an early warning system.
4. Vaccine stability tests.

He reviewed each of these. The first came out of expert meeting to review if the principle method of vaccine matching tests for estimating cross-protection could be improved by use of alternative tests or data analysis on a wider range of test results. The experts had identified a way ahead and provided a modestly costed proposal. It was agreed the theme was a vital one and the proposal should be peer reviewed in the usual way.

The second had already been discussed under the EuFMDiS report. The third comes from work that has shown, as part of the Real-Time Training, that there is sufficiently high environmental contamination of FMDV in animal holdings and markets in Nepal, that FMDV can be detected by swabs taken on site, and even for several weeks after the last reported case. The method might be useful for a variety of purposes including to detect FMDV in wildlife (Bait sampling) and in markets (early warning) or pig herds (early detection, or quantitating extent of long term environment contamination).

The FAR Fund has previously supported development of vaccine stability tests, but these had not reached a usable lab test for application in the field (e.g. to show if the vaccine is intact in cold stores). New test options may even allow to do this as a fridge-side test, to check vaccine stability in the field, which would have major utility.

Finally, he covered the major topics planned for the Special Committee on Biorisk Management (SCBRM), planned for Palermo, Sicily, 15-16th March 2018.

These were:

a) Development of a Biorisk Management training programme;

b) Minimum Standards for FMD Containment – review of the 2013 Standard and identification of areas for updating;

c) Inactivation procedures (issues relating to the cessation of use of some biocides, and treatment of sera from non-FMDV free countries before entry to Europe).

Katharina Staerk is the STC focal point, though unable to attend in person to Palermo.

The Chairman thanked Eoin Ryan for his report and opened the paper for discussion. It was agreed that the problem associated with carcass transport (UN packaging requirements) be also referred to the SCBRM. The themes for the 7th call were supported.

Open Session 2018

A short presentation was provided (**Appendix 18**), and Dr Silvio Borrello indicated the support now agreed with the Central and Regional authorities, and via the relevant Instituto Zooprofilattico, to host the next Session in Puglia in Italy, in October. This was warmly applauded.

The technical title of the Session ("Improving Global Vaccine Security") was proposed by the Secretary, giving an explanation on how the lack of availability of suitable vaccines for FMD affects both free and endemic countries, and as a result of the limited supply, affects all risk management decision making. The lack of supply also affects preventive actions, and development of progressive control. This "lack of security" is a big issue that needs attention, going well beyond the usual technical discussions into conditions for vaccine market development, and investment in increasing supply, to AESOP and emergency supply options. It lies behind the modelling work to find an effective and smart control that requires limited vaccine, and risk based control to optimise use of vaccines in endemic regions. It is hoped to encourage vaccine producers and investors to side meeting at the Session, as well as around 200-250 technical participants.

The proposed title and theme was supported.

Conclusions

25. The progress of the projects supported under the 4th Call is encouraging. The projects under the 5th and 6th call should be reported at subsequent Sessions as they have an importance for surveillance and risk to North Africa and Europe;
26. The proposed Themes for the 7th Call were endorsed;
27. The title and theme for the Open Session were supported.

Item 10. Financial and Administrative

Keith Sumption provided the Financial Reports (**Appendix 19**), with the certified Financial Statements relating to the Administrative (MTF/INT/011/MUL) and Emergency and Training (MTF/INT/004/MUL) Trust Funds. As time was limited for this item, and since the balance in both Trust Funds is in the position expected at this point in the financial year, he suggested there was no significant issue to be brought to attention.

In relation to the EC Trust Fund, Phase IV, uncertified expenditure statements were provided, giving a breakdown of expenditures by Component and Pillar. Of importance is that the Phase IV agreement is a four-year one and the expenditure in the first two years is in line, with few exceptions, to the expected position at 24 months.

He indicated that the four-year budget had been proposed by FAO to DG-SANTE EC, observing the PAGODA rules that apply to this Phase IV agreement, and since the changes were within the permitted level of variation, the proposal had been noted and cleared.

On the Administrative side, the Secretary brought attention to the continuing problems over recruitment issues associated with the revised procedures. In line with all others in FAO, EuFMD had been required to advertise the upcoming vacancies even for current incumbents and around 100 applicants received. The process of panel interviews will take time to work through, all of which is in short supply when delivery of project activities is the priority. The aim is to complete these interviews by end of April.

The major concern of the Secretariat relates to the recruitment of the P1/P2 officer, to act as Programme Co-ordinator (effectively the Chief Operating Officer). As agreed by previous ExCom Sessions, this position is senior and reports to the Committee and also to FAO hierarchy and DG-SANTE Financial Unit. It has been the aim to avoid having a consultant undertake this role and Cecile Carraz has been managing this as a P1 Grade officer since mid-2017. The problem is to go beyond the short term (<11 months) to stabilise the position and retain the recruited officer. This requires a formal selection process after vacancy announcement and this is planned. An expected problem relates to there being other candidates as a result of hundreds of applications already scrutinized by panels organized by other parts of FAO. He asked for the full support of the Committee for the process since to lose Ms Carraz would have a severe effect on the entire administration and would also be unfair given the depth of professional commitment she has demonstrated and the relationships established in DG-SANTE. He re-iterated that in recruitment, the DG cannot appoint without the approval of the Executive Committee, but this may happen for the reason that Commissions are the minority in FAO and so the hierarchy normally assumes it has the final say.

The President provided this assurance and indicated his willingness to assist in the interview panels or to provide supporting arguments and interventions as needed.

Conclusions

28. The sound financial position of the Administrative and Emergency Funds was noted. The Committee recognised that in large part this is due to the work of the Programme Co-ordinator, and re-iterated their support to ensure that the position and incumbent of the current programme co-ordinator is retained for at least the duration of the main programme (EC project), to September 2019.

Item 11. Any other business

Next Session of the Executive

The dates of 27-28th September were proposed. Checks would be needed with the Austrian Presidency. The OIE Regional Commission meeting, in Georgia, was noted, but to have it later would bring it close to the Open Session planned for the end of October.

Conclusion:

29. The dates of the 96th Session are proposed as 27-28th September.

Closing

Dr Angot thanked Lajos Bognar and his team for the time and effort to make the arrangements, and for ensuring smooth working arrangements, and the excellent hospitality.

He thanked the EuFMD team for their work to prepare the Session, particularly the work of Nadia Rumich to prepare the documents and ensure the online participation, and the team of Cecile Carraz, for the arrangements for those requiring travel.

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