



POSITION PAPER ON COMMUNITY MEASURES FOR THE CONTROL OF CLASSICAL SWINE FEVER (DIRECTIVE 80/217/EEC)

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1. Background

The control measures to be applied by Member States if an outbreak of classical swine fever is confirmed are laid down in Council Directive 80/217/EEC. This requires stamping out of infected herds, the epidemiological investigation to detect the source of infection and potential spread of the virus from the infected herds, and the establishment of movement restrictions.

Recent and numerous outbreaks of classical swine fever in Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands and Spain show however that these methods alone are not sufficient to control classical swine fever.

Despite the killing and rendering of millions of healthy animals, classical swine fever has not been eradicated and seems unlikely to be eradicated in the near future. In that respect it is economically and ethically debatable whether the current principles of disease control should be maintained. Additional measures may indeed be considered to control outbreaks which threaten to become extensive.

2. Guidelines of a future policy to control classical swine fever

In that respect, the legislation already takes into account that vaccination might be required in an emergency situation. Article 14 of Directive 80/217/EEC gives indeed the possibility to Member States to have recourse to emergency vaccination when classical swine fever has been confirmed and threatens to spread. This requires however the approval of the emergency vaccination plan by the Commission after consultation of the Standing Veterinary Committee.

The FVE subscribes in principle to the Community non-vaccination policy. However, the failure to control outbreaks of classical swine fever must lead the Community to reconsider its current policy. The FVE therefore considers that the ring emergency vaccination by means of marker vaccines must be accepted as an additional measure to control outbreaks which threaten to become extensive.

The development of classical swine fever marker vaccines and of the accompanying diagnostic tests should therefore be promoted, and stocks of such vaccines be constituted.

President

Dr K. Simon

Vice-Presidents

Dr H. Lundström

Dr C. Mir

Dr F. Orozco

The use of marker vaccines in combating classical swine fever by means of ring vaccination in swine dense areas should be permitted as a measure limited both spatially and temporally.

The recourse to ring emergency vaccination can indeed help reduce the spread of outbreaks and thus contribute decisively to limit the number of animals which are currently killed when such outbreaks occur.

In addition, the use of marker vaccine which elicit a protective immunity distinguishable from the immune response elicited by the natural infection with the wild type virus, can overcome the problem relating to the difficulties existing in interpretation of seropositive reactions in animals which have an unknown vaccination status.

Therefore, the trade of animals vaccinated with such marker vaccines and the meat derived from such animals will not be affected as it can be established that they have not been in contact with the wild type virus.

3. Necessary accompanying measures

The Community must now negotiate with its trading partners that trade will not be disturbed in case of ring emergency vaccination with marker vaccines. It must also ensure that this is endorsed by the Office International des Epizooties (OIE), as the Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS Agreement) of the World Trade Organisation explicitly recommends the use of standards, guidelines and recommendations developed under the auspices of the OIE.

4. Outbreaks caused by wild boars

Finally, as the infection is also present in the wild boar population, further measures should also be taken to control and eradicate classical swine fever in wildlife reservoirs, if classical swine fever is to be eradicated at all in Europe.