European Commission

PROTECTING
ANIMAL HEALTH

ANIMAL DISEASE CONTROL IN THE EUROPEAN UNION'S SINGLE MARKET

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MAINTAINING ANIMAL HEALTH IN THE SINGLE MARKET

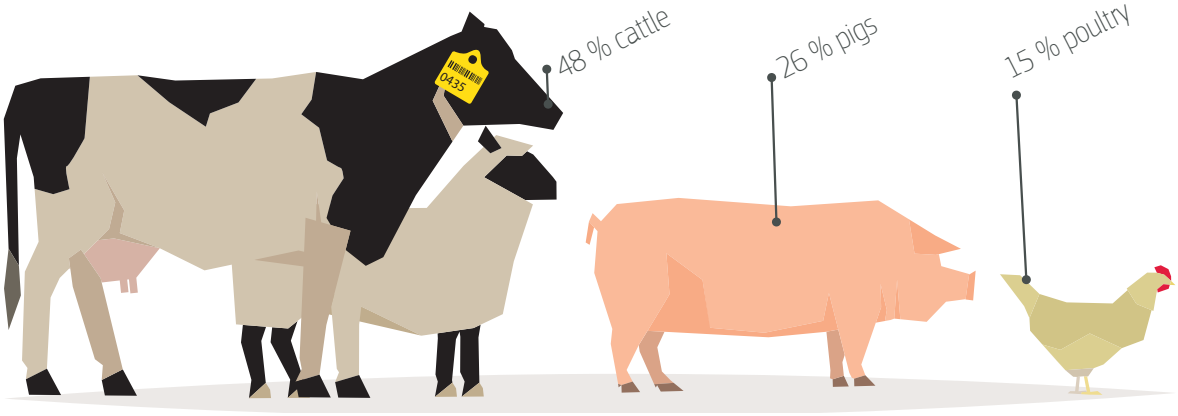
Effective control of animal diseases is essential for the European Union given its Single Market that allows the movement of goods within the EU territory and its intensive trade relations with a large number of countries in the world.

Accordingly, the European Union established a stringent strategy to protect its livestock. The EU animal disease control system is built on a comprehensive set of harmonised rules which are applicable in all EU Member States. Official veterinarians, private veterinary practitioners, farmers and other animal keepers, food business operators but also hunters and wildlife professionals work together for the **prevention**, **detection** and **control** of **animal diseases**, in **full transparency**.

Key facts about EU livestock and trade (figures for 2016)

The EU has **6.27 Mio farms** that keep livestock.
The EU has a total of around **130 million livestock units** (LSU); about 48 % cattle, 26 % pigs and 15 % poultry. In absolute terms, France has the highest number of livestock (21.8 million LSU), followed by Germany (18.4 million LSU), and Spain (14.5 million LSU).

In 2016, the EU imported more than 2 Mio tonnes (€ 5.5 bn) of animals or animal products and exported over 11 Mio tonnes (€ 23.5 bn) to the outside world. Trade within the EU amounted to 43.5 Mio tonnes with a value of € 76.5 bn.



MAINTAINING **ANIMAL HEALTH**

PREVENTION

Biosecurity

Animal **Identification** & Movement Control.
National databases

Intra-EU trade in livestock

EU **imports** from non-EU countries

Import conditions in veterinary certificates

Veterinary

Health certificates

EU The TRACES system

DETECTION

Surveillance
EU Member State

Isolation of suspect holdings

Continuous Health **Surveillance** on farms located in high risk areas

Farmers

The Animal Disease Notification System (ADNS)

Diagnosis
EU Member State

Designated National Reference Laboratories

European reference Laboratory

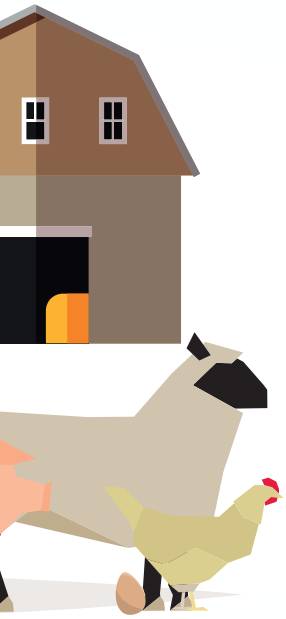
IN THE SINGLE MARKET

CONTROL

Contingency planning

Isolation of infected holdings

Regionalisation – the EU system



Veterinary Emergency Team

Control measures
EU wide cooperation –
Commission oversight
EU funding
Veterinary Emergency Team

TRANSPARENCY

Information **exchange**

ADNS
TRACES
DG SANTE
WAHIS

Independent scientific advice, global standard setting

Training

EFSA

PREVENTION

BIOSECURITY

Prevention is better than cure. Accordingly, the newly adopted framework legislation of the EU introduced a general obligation for livestock farmers to protect their animals and apply biosecurity measures. The measures are now being introduced gradually by 2021 and may vary depending on the animal species reared, the husbandry system, the size and location of the operation and the density of animals in that region. Also other operators that deal with farmed animals or germinal products must be registered or approved and are subject to official controls.

Biosecurity measures in farms may include: (i) enclosing, fencing, roofing; (ii) cleaning, disinfection and pest control protocols, (iii) procedures for entering and exiting the establishment for animals, persons, vehicles and products; (iv) quarantine protocols; (v) safe disposal of manure and other animal by–products.

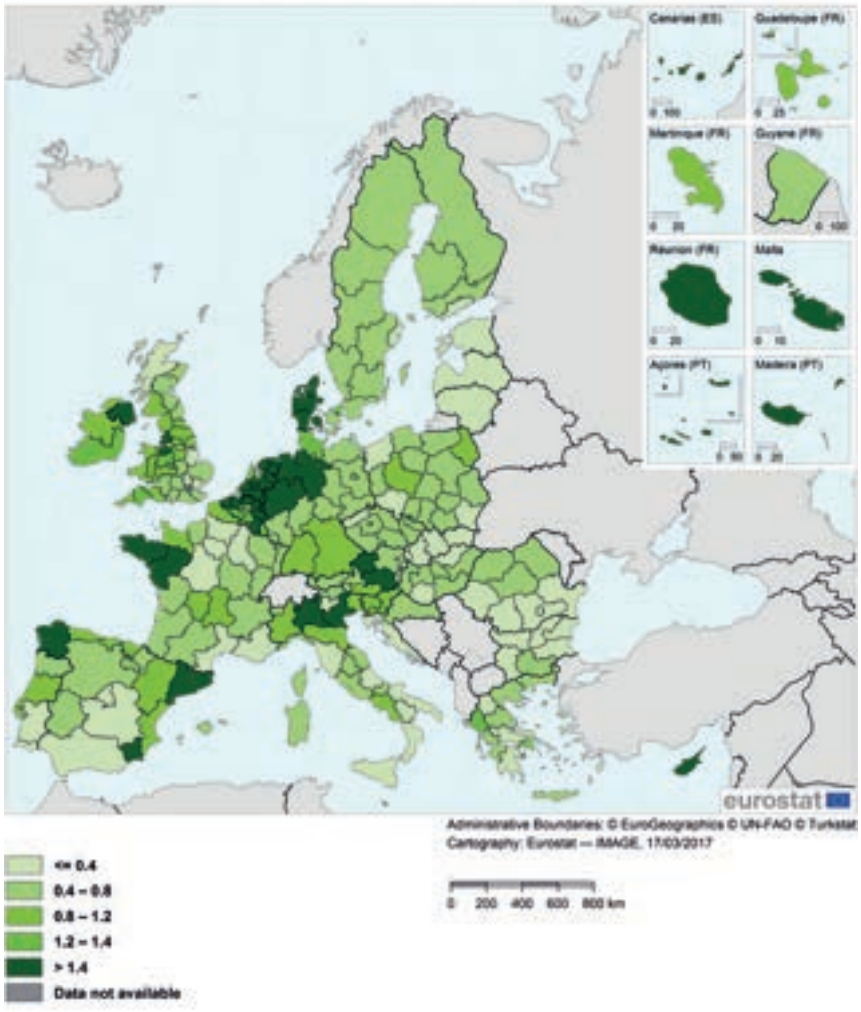
Up-to-date knowledge of animal diseases and potential pathways of infection are prerequisites for efficient disease prevention and control. Accordingly, operators and animal professionals in the EU must be formally educated or follow trainings offered by farmers' organisations and other providers.

All livestock operators must maintain records of animal movements and document their biosecurity protocols.

" Reliable animal disease control is indispensable to support the free movement of goods in the EU. The Commission is entrusted to enforce our control system My services are committed to earn this trust, every day."

Ladislav Miko
Deputy Director General DG Health and Food Safety, European Commission

DENSITY OF LIVESTOCK POPULATION IN THE EU



ANIMAL IDENTIFICATION AND MOVEMENT CONTROL

Effective animal identification and movement control are key elements of any strategy to control animal diseases. Therefore, farmed animals in the EU must be identified according to the species and farming practice, this can consist of individual (e.g. bovine animals) or group identification (e.g. porcine animals)

Farms and other relevant establishments such as assembly centres are registered in national databases, and movements of farm animals must be recorded, to allow tracing.

INTRA-EU TRADE IN LIVESTOCK

Movements of farm animals and germinal products between Member States require veterinary inspection and certification at the place of departure. Health certificates are issued electronically to inform the veterinary authorities in the Member States of transit and at the place of destination to allow inspections during transport to enforce animal health and animal welfare rules.

The intra-EU certification and traceability system has replaced internal border controls since the early 1990s and allowed the EU to establish its Single Market for animals and animal products.

EU IMPORTS FROM NON-EU COUNTRIES

To prevent the introduction of animal diseases through international trade, imports from non-EU countries are subject to harmonised, stringent veterinary conditions in line with international standards. Live animals, germinal products and products of animal origin can only be imported from authorised countries and from approved establishments. Imports must go through designated Border Inspection Posts that are equipped to conduct the necessary controls.

Import conditions are internationally notified and detailed in veterinary certificates that must be signed by the Competent Authorities of the exporting country.

" Through the close cooperation of the EU Border Inspection Posts, our import controls ensure our food is safe Regular workshops and training events spread the best practices. For our customers, we disturb the logistical process as little as possible"

G.E. (Liesbeth) Kooijman,
Head of Import Inspection Department, Netherlands Food and Consumer Product Safety Authority

TRACEABILITY AND RAPID INFORMATION EXCHANGE – THE TRACES SYSTEM

Every day, animals and their products are traded between Member States and food of animal origin is placed on the EU market. Every day, these goods are also traded with non-EU countries.

TRACES is the online system that tracks all relevant movements for many of these goods.

Within the EU, there are no border controls between Member States: TRACES manages official controls, veterinary certification and tracking (route planning) for farm animals transported between Member States. In the event of a disease outbreak, potential contact animals and contact establishments can immediately be identified, located and isolated.

TRACES also controls international trade. Veterinary certificates for EU imports of live animals and animal products are processed through the information system which is used by veterinary authorities and border inspection posts in the EU. Over 50 000 veterinary and phytosanitary certificates for products from almost 80 countries are processed every month through the TRACES system. Results of veterinary checks at EU border inspection posts are registered through TRACES, keeping all other posts informed of any non-conformities.

Read more about TRACES under: http://ec.europa.eu/food/animals/traces_en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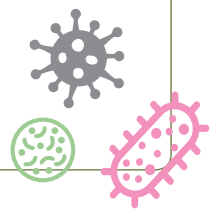
DETECTION

Outbreaks of the most important animal diseases must immediately be notified to allow their effective control. The complete list of these notifiable diseases – which includes also diseases of honey bees and aquaculture animals - is laid down in Council Directive 82/894/EEC.

ALL MAJOR LIVESTOCK DISEASES ARE NOTIFIABLE IN THE EU, SUCH AS

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza,
Newcastle Disease,
Classical Swine Fever,
African Swine Fever,
Foot-and-Mouth Disease,
Bovine Spongiform Encephalopahthie
Bluetongue,
Lumpy Skin Disease,
Sheep and Goat Pox,
Peste des Petits Ruminants
Rift Valley Fever,
African Horse Sickness
Equine Infectious Anemia
Rabies
Anthrax



SURVEILLANCE

Animal disease surveillance is one of the key pillars of EU Animal Health policy.

For the detection of notifiable diseases, each Member State is responsible for the implementation of adequate animal health surveillance on its territory. Advanced surveillance strategies depend from many factors, including the epidemiology of the disease and the regional level of risk. The respective measures taken by each Member State are open to scrutiny of other Member States and the inspection services of the European Commission. Regular exchanges of information taking place primarily in the meetings of the Standing Committee on Plants, Animals, Food and Feed, the Council working parties of the Chief Veterinary Officers but also in expert groups and training events, ensure that best practices are disseminated. The European Food Safety Authority and the EU Reference Laboratories provide scientific advice where necessary or required by legislation.

One of the most comprehensive surveillance programmes is in place for Avian Influenza in wild birds and domestic poultry. The programme is coordinated by the European Commission

In 2015, more than 20,000 holdings were sampled for serological testing, focussing on holdings of heightened risk. All suspect birds that are found by lay citizens, hunters or wildlife professionals are subjected to laboratory testing (6,500 samples tested in 2015). In addition, Member States take samples from wild birds in particularly suitable areas, such as resting places for migrating birds or water courses that are close to areas of high domestic animal density.

CONTINUOUS HEALTH SURVEILLANCE ON FARMS LOCATED IN HIGH RISK AREAS

In areas of high animal density and in areas identified as being at an increased risk for avian influenza infection, poultry farmers must monitor key parameters of their production that may indicate early stages of an infection, such as changes in water or feed consumption or productivity. Reporting of changes to veterinary services is compulsory which will gain precious hours for diagnosis and immediate control measures to prevent a disease from spreading further.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DIAGNOSIS

Every EU Member State has a designated National Reference Laboratory to ensure rapid, harmonised and reliable diagnoses of every major notifiable disease within its territory and allow epidemiological investigations. The National laboratories work together and build EU-wide laboratory networks under the auspices of the related European Reference Laboratory that has been appointed to provide quality control, organise ring trials and proficiency tests and regular trainings, harmonise and validate diagnostic methods and monitor the global epidemiological situation in order to enhance preparedness. There are currently 15 EU Reference laboratories appointed in the area of animal health, each of them is in charge of a certain portfolio of animal diseases.

Read more about European Reference Laboratories under https://ec.europa.eu/food/ref-labs_en

If an outbreak of a notifiable animal disease is confirmed or in case of highly contagious diseases strongly suspected, all other Member States, trade partners and the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) are informed immediately.

THE ANIMAL DISEASE NOTIFICATION SYSTEM (ADNS)

ADNS is a notification system designed for national veterinary services to register and document the evolution of the situation of important infectious animal diseases. All veterinary services in the EU are connected to ensure seamless communication about the epidemiological situation.

A primary outbreak of a contagious animal disease in a previously unaffected region must be reported within 24 hours. The ADNS team of the Commission is on-call 24/7 to process the report and inform Member States and the OIE.

A weekly updated summary of all outbreaks of animal diseases reported in the EU is publicly available:

https://ec.europa.eu/food/sites/food/files/animals/docs/ad_adns_outbreaks-per-disease.pdf

DISEASE CONTROL

CONTINGENCY PLANNING

For the most important notifiable diseases[1], Member States must have contingency plans in place and must conduct regular simulation exercises to maintain a high level of alert and preparedness. The European Commission conducts regular audits of the veterinary services and their emergency preparedness in all Member States. All Audit reports are publicly available. These transparent, regular controls guarantee that required standards of disease control are effectively implemented throughout the Union.

Swedish Chief Veterinary **Officer Ingrid Eilertz:**

"The close cooperation of the Chief Veterinary Officers makes the veterinary control system of the EU highly resilient and contributes to an improved animal health situation. We can count on each other's support at any time."

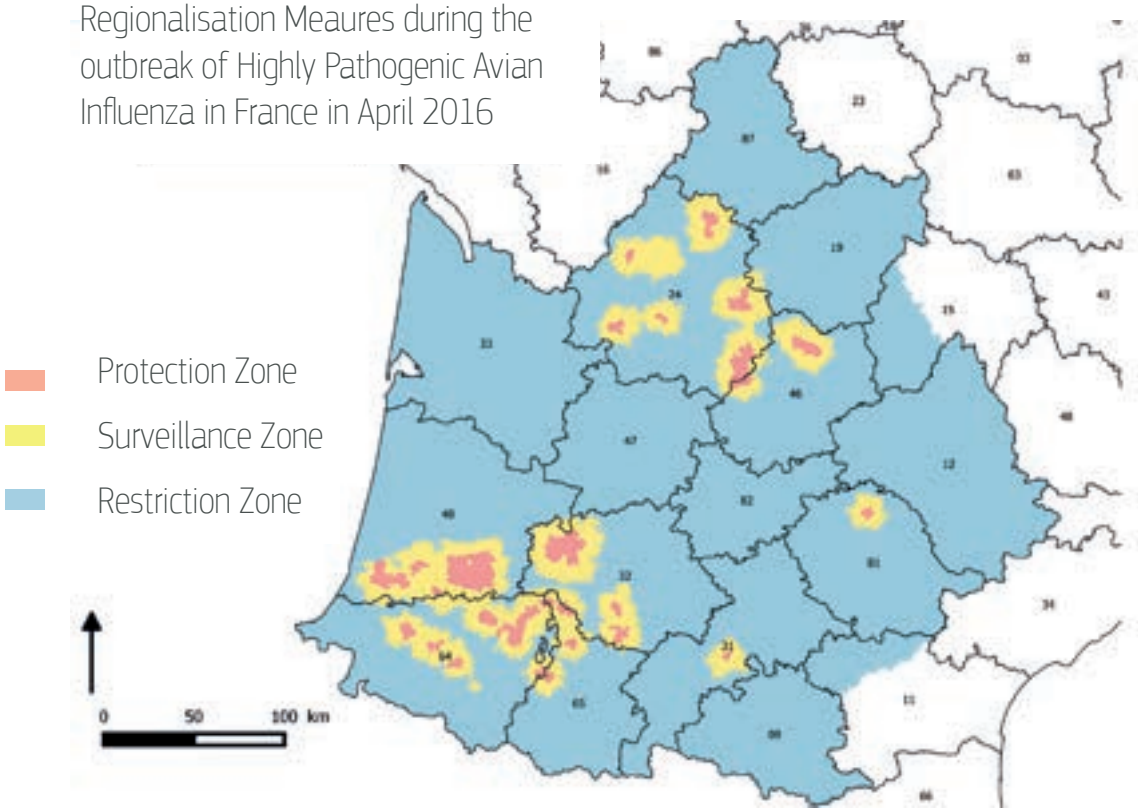
IMMEDIATE MEASURES IN INFECTED HOLDINGS

Animals and animal products and objects that could pose a risk, are immediately isolated if there is reason to suspect the outbreak of a notifiable animal disease. Possible contact farms and animals that may have been transported to establishments in the same country or in other Member States are identified by the competent authorities with the help of TRACES and national systems of movement controls.

In the event of a confirmed outbreak in a holding, immediate movement controls are applied and restriction zones around the affected holding (so-called protection and surveillance zones) are established. Potentially contaminated animals and animal products are identified and isolated. The exact size and shape of the area in which disease control measures and trade restrictions apply may vary depending on natural boundaries, local risk factors, the characteristics of the disease in question and organisational questions. For diseases that are transmitted via vector insects, surveillance zones may be of a radius exceeding 100 km.

1 African Swine Fever, Classical Swine Fever, Foot-and-Mouth Disease, Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza, Newcastle Disease, Bluetongue, African Horse Sickness, Lumpy Skin Disease, Sheep and Goat Pox, Rift Valley Fever, Peste des Petits Ruminants.

Regionalisation Meaures during the outbreak of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza in France in April 2016



REGIONALISATION – THE EU SYSTEM

In the event of an outbreak of a serious animal disease (such as foot-and-mouth disease, highly pathogenic avian influenza, classical or African swine fever) or a disease previously exotic to EU livestock, immediate movement restrictions are applied to the affected holding and all farms in a radius of at least 3 km (protection zone) and 10 km (surveillance zone). For diseases that can be transmitted by insects these zones are substantially larger.

All movements of susceptible animals from these zones are stopped immediately or strictly controlled to contain the disease, pending eradication. Investigations immediately identify, trace and isolate all contact animals that might be carriers of the disease, but also all products, such as meat, milk, eggs, manure or possibly contaminated feed. The disease outbreak is eradicated in the infected farms and intensive monitoring and testing is undertaken in the protection and in the surveillance zone. If necessary, eradication is extended to epidemiologically linked farms (contact farms). Cleaning and disinfection follows. The affected Member State can only lift the movement restrictions and allow farmers to re-stock de-populated farms with the consent of the European Commission and the other Member States.

In addition to the measures, and subject to continuous review, the EU Commission may designate additional restriction zones, where specific rules apply concerning the movement of animals or the marketing of products of animal origin. In may be decided, for example, that only properly heat treated products can leave the restricted area. Without exception, movement restrictions or any other disease control measures applicable to trade within the EU apply equally to export to non-EU countries.

The EU system of regionalisation has demonstrated its efficiency for many years, effectively preventing the spread of disease while keeping trade disruptions to a minimum. Outbreaks of animal diseases may not always be avoidable. But even in times of high disease pressure in wildlife, farm to farm secondary transmission remains very rare.

AFRICAN SWINE FEVER

African swine fever (ASF) is an infectious disease of pigs and wild boars. It does not affect humans nor other animal species. Where African swine fever is suspected or confirmed either in holdings or in feral pigs, stringent control measures apply, which take account of the epidemiological situation and different levels of risk associated with different products.

Differentiated constraints apply for the movement of live pigs, germinal products, fresh meat and meat products from designated zones around the detected outbreak. Quarantine measures must be taken on farms, serological tests are applied and by-products must be treated or incinerated to exclude the spread of the virus. The restriction zones are of sufficient size to reliably protect livestock holdings outside these zones. Specific markings on meat and meat products ensure that products from restricted areas can easily be identified and the measures reliably enforced.

The EU applies all the recommendations of the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) and is constantly in open dialogue with its trading partners bilaterally and via the World Trade Organization (WTO). Independent WTO expert panels confirmed the effectiveness of the measures taken.

Read more about African Swine Fever under

https://ec.europa.eu/food/animals/animal-diseases/control-measures/asf_en

CONTROL MEASURES

The control of a notifiable disease usually includes epidemiological investigations, movement control, culling of affected animals and where necessary and in any case where required by legislation also the stamping-out of herds (humane killing and destruction) of animals in the infected farms and if necessary on other at-risk farms identified by means of epidemiological investigations. Emergency vaccination may be applied in exceptional cases and after official approval and authorisation. Animal products that might transmit the disease must be properly processed or destroyed to eliminate the risks.

Movement restrictions around infected farms can only be lifted after appropriate measures were carried out such as cleaning, disinfection and surveillance in the affected area. EU legislation and national contingency plans provide for precise timetables for these actions. However, once the appropriate surveillance is carried out and persistence of disease agent in the affected area is scientifically ruled out, measures are lifted in accordance with EU legislation and following recommendations of the OIE. Thereby, the economic impact of trade restrictions can be kept to the unavoidable minimum, whilst no compromise is made in terms of control.

EU WIDE SUPPORT AND COOPERATION

The EU provides financial support to Member States to prevent, control and eradicate certain animal diseases. Emergency grants can be mobilised to finance immediate measures in the event of a severe outbreak. The current EU budget related to animal health (2014 – 2020) allocates around €1.3 bn to these objectives.

Joint EU funding is also used to maintain vaccine banks in order to allow emergency vaccination for the control of certain diseases (foot-and-mouth disease, classical swine fever).

THE EU EXPENDITURE RELATED TO ANIMAL HEALTH

Community support in the field of animal health helps Member States to finance National Veterinary Programmes and it maintains a flexible reserve at the EU level for emergency measures.

The fund aims to achieve a higher animal health status for the Union and to support improvement of the welfare of animals. Success is evidenced by the continuous expansion of disease free areas in the EU

https://ec.europa.eu/food/funding/animal-health_en

COMMISSION SUPERVISION

In the event of an outbreak of a notifiable disease the European Commission follows the situation very closely in continuous cooperation with the Member States. Control measures implemented and the progress of eradication may be verified through audits carried out by the audit and analysis service of the Commission. Such audits may also be undertaken to support any decision related to the lifting of restrictions.

If necessary, experts of the EU Community Veterinary Emergency Teams can be deployed to assist Member States in their control measures and epidemiological investigations.

Through its Better Training for Safer Food (BTSF) programmes the European Commission disseminates best practices among Member States and interested Third countries on animal disease control, contingency planning, border inspection and other topics related to veterinary controls since more than 10 years.

COMMUNITY VETERINARY EMERGENCY TEAM

Serious animal epidemics in the past have highlighted the importance of having well-prepared, highly-trained personnel available to effectively manage animal disease outbreaks. In the EU, an extensive experience with control and eradication of animal diseases has been gained over recent years. In times of crisis, animal disease experts have been called upon to support the authorities of the Member States or non-EU countries that were affected by a disease for the first time.

For this reason the Community Veterinary Emergency Team was established.

The team includes experts in the fields of veterinary sciences, virology, wildlife, laboratory testing, risk management and other relevant areas. The experts are on stand-by, ready to respond in difficult animal health situations.

" The Single Market helps to stabilise farm income. Without reliable animal health controls it would be impossible to sell where prices are the best. "

Lorenzo Fontanesi
livestock farmer in Lombardy and Emilia Romagna, Italy

TRANSPARENCY

INFORMATION EXCHANGE

Full transparency is essential every single day to maintain the functioning of the EU Single Market. Only the constant, reliable scrutiny and full transparency of the EU veterinary system allows farmers in all parts of the EU to trust that their livestock is protected in the best possible way.

The same is true for the EU's international trade relations. Nobody can guarantee that there will be no outbreak of an animal disease. But the EU's trade partners must be sure that they will be informed of any incident and that immediate and effective control measures are taken to prevent spread of disease through exports from the EU.

In the event of an outbreak of a contagious animal disease, potentially affected parties must be informed immediately. The Animal Disease Notification System (ADNS) of the EU provides around the clock information exchange between the Commission and the veterinary services in all Member States. Immediate notifications also go to the OIE and to EU trading partners both by direct information from the Commission and via the World Animal Health Information System. In the event of a prolonged situation, regular status reports are published on the DG SANTE website of the Commission.

The audit and analysis service of the Commission publishes its audit reports of control systems in EU Member States and non-EU countries from where imports take place so that all shortcomings and corrective actions are transparent to any interested party.

Trade partners of the EU can be sure that they are fully aware of the animal health situation in all Member States. The EU applies the same policies and guarantees the same high level of safety to intra-EU trade and to exports to non-EU countries.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

The safe and smooth functioning Single Market of the EU demonstrated over many years the EU's ability to meet the dual objectives of maintaining a high sanitary status and free trade. The successes achieved by the EU in the last decade in containing, controlling and eradicating animal diseases underline the competence and experience gained in preventing, detecting and controlling animal diseases in EU Member States.

INDEPENDENT SCIENTIFIC ADVICE, GLOBAL STANDARD SETTING

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) provides independent risk assessments that underpin regulatory decisions taken by the European Union. The assessments provide the scientific basis for the veterinary standards of the Union that are applicable to domestic production and imports from non-EU countries.

EFSA brings together the best available scientists in its scientific panels. EFSA opinions and reports help to shape the rational, science-based veterinary policy of the European Union.

Since its creation in 2004, EFSA has become a globally recognised institution that stands for the core values of the European Union — state of the art science, transparency and a high level of protection.

Also the network of EU reference laboratories is an important source of independent, high scientific competence that is available to the EU Commission.

The EU is actively involved in the development of international standards, such as those recommended by the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE). This work contributes to improving animal health around the world and helps facilitate trade in food and agricultural products based on globally agreed rules.

The EU offers many programmes that help developing countries to comply with these rules.

THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION WEBSITE: HTTP://EC.EUROPA.EU/INFO/INDEX_EN

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