



# "Rare Breeds" in EU Animal Health Legislation ELBARN Workshop Ghent, 5-7 March 2009



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# Disease control measures (1)

- large epidemics of foot and mouth disease (FMD), classical swine fever (CSF) and avian influenza (AI) in recent years have led to mass culling
- legislation has been revised based on the experiences gained and lessons learnt
- “stamping-out” is efficient and effective in rapidly preventing virus spread and remains therefore the principal control measure for these highly contagious diseases



## Disease control measures (2)

### New tools

- improved diagnosis and refined surveillance strategies
- broader use of emergency and preventive or protective vaccination
- eased restrictions on live animal movements and marketing of products from vaccinated animals
- strengthened traceability through animal identification (individual identification for ruminants)
- flexibility for competent authorities based on the epidemiological situation and the outcome of a risk assessment



## How does revised EU legislation and new tools for disease control affect rare breeds?

- there is no unique definition for “rare breeds” in EU legislation
- ..... the “old” FMD Directive 85/511/EEC already referred to the need to **protect special breeds** as a criterion to decide on the introduction of emergency vaccination....
- Now more specific provisions for rare breeds are included in several disease control Directives



# Foot and Mouth Disease

## Directive 2003/85/EC

- in case of an outbreak of FMD the competent authority may grant a derogation from killing of animals kept for scientific purposes or for the conservation of species or **farm animal genetic resources**
- the premises must have been identified and listed **in advance** by the competent authority **as breeding nucleus of animals of susceptible species indispensable for the survival of a breed**



## FMD Directive - vaccination

- the decision on **emergency vaccination** shall take into account the presence of farm animal genetic resources on the premises
- specific provisions for farm animal resources that have been listed by the competent authority as breeding nucleus of animals indispensable for the survival of the breed may be adopted by the Commission to allow for a **derogation from the prohibition of dispatch of vaccinated animals** to other Member States



## Avian influenza

- in the previous AI Directive 92/40/EEC there were no provisions for rare breeds
- **Definition in Directive 2005/94/EC:** “officially registered rare breeds of poultry or other captive birds” means any poultry or other captive birds that the competent authority has officially recognised as a rare breed within their contingency plan



## AI Directive (1)

- in case of an outbreak of in a non-commercial holding, a circus, a zoo, a pet bird shop, a wild life park, a fenced area where poultry or other captive birds are kept for scientific purposes or for the conservation of endangered species or **officially registered rare breeds** of poultry or other captive birds the competent authority may grant a derogation:
  - **highly pathogenic avian influenza** from killing
  - **low pathogenic avian influenza** from killing or depopulation



## AI Directive (2)

When a **derogation from killing/depopulation** is granted the birds:

- must be brought inside a building or confined in some other place on the same holding with no contact to other poultry, other captive birds and possibly wild birds
- must undergo further laboratory testing until test results indicate that there is no significant risk of virus spread
- may only be moved to holdings in the same Member State under instructions of the competent authority or to other Member States following their agreement



## AI Directive (3)

- **'poultry compartment'** or 'other captive birds compartment' means a holding or holdings under a common biosecurity management system containing a poultry or other captive birds sub-population with a distinct health status with respect to avian influenza subjected to appropriate surveillance, control and biosecurity measures
- the Commission is finalising a draft regulation on the conditions for the approval of a compartment with respect to avian influenza



## Pig diseases

- previous Directives 80/217/EEC and 92/119/EC contained no provisions for rare breeds
- Directives 2001/89/EC on Community measures for the control of **classical swine fever** (CSF) and
- Directive 2002/60/EC on Community measures for the control of **African swine fever** (ASF)
- foresee a derogation from killing of animals and destruction of semen, ova and embryos in cases where an outbreak has been confirmed in a laboratory, a zoo, a wildlife park or a fenced area where pigs are kept for scientific purposes or purposes related to conservation of species or **conservation of rare breeds**



## “Common” rules for the four diseases (1)

It is essential - although not always spelled out - that:

- “agreed establishments of nucleus herds” (FMD)
- “officially registered rare breeds of poultry or other captive birds” (AI)
- premises keeping rare animal breeds (CSF, ASF)
  - are identified and listed by the CA of the Member States in “peace time”
  - the list of premises must be included in the disease contingency plans
  - this requires a close co-operation between the animal keepers and the authorities



## “Common” rules for the four diseases (2)

- proper traceability of animal movements by must be ensured; in case of ruminants by individual identification
- stringent biosecurity rules must be applied and restrictions on movements strictly followed, so that the specific provisions for rare breeds including a possible derogation from killing in the event of a disease outbreak **“do not endanger disease control”**.



# The “human factor”

- it is known that humans and their movements constitute one of the most important risk factors for the spread of diseases
- disease awareness, preparedness and knowledge on clinical signs and changes to animal behaviour is crucial to enable early detection of disease
- ongoing training for the better understanding of biosecurity and implementation of hygienic measures is essential



## Some Remarks

- the above mentioned EU disease control Directives provide for the possibility to apply specific rules or to grant derogations for certain provisions for rare breeds
- the competent authority bears the ultimate responsibility for the disease control measures in its country
- it is therefore finally up to the Member States to apply these rules in an appropriate, proportionate, risk based manner based on the local epidemiological situation, but also on other factors related to economy, administrative capacities etc. to best ensure prevention of disease introduction and spread



## Further Remarks (1)

- Various options to conserve the valuable genetic material should be explored (semen banks, donor cows for embryos..)
- depending on the epidemiological situation, it might not always be possible to save all animals in the event of an outbreak despite major efforts
- the nucleus approach of ELBARN can therefore offer very valuable solutions



## Further Remarks (2)

- the implementation of specific provisions for small animal populations can cause high costs (e.g. vaccination of hobby poultry in NL)
- stakeholders play a fundamental role in making the management and monitoring of such populations possible by fully supporting the competent authorities in their work



## Further Remarks (3)

- facilities for isolating newly bought animals and cleaning and disinfection should be foreseen on all holdings keeping rare breeds
- do not only think about the risks posed by the very contagious diseases such as FMD, AI .....
- but also to TBC, Brucella, Leucosis, IBR/IPV....
- zoonotic diseases such as rabies, salmonella, Q-fever...



# Conclusions

- derogations and specific provisions for rare breeds in times of animal disease crisis are not for “free”
- much preparatory work, resources and personal commitment are necessary
- ELBARN project seems to be on the right track!
- the Commission is fully aware of the concerns of keepers of rare breeds and is responsive to the needs of small holders
- the ELBARN project fits very well into the new Community Animal Health Strategy: **“Prevention is better than cure”**



Thank you for your attention and  
good luck for your future work!



DG SANCO - Animal health and welfare:  
[http://ec.europa.eu/food/animal/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/food/animal/index_en.htm)

Community Animal Health Strategy:  
[http://ec.europa.eu/food/animal/diseases/strategy/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/food/animal/diseases/strategy/index_en.htm)