Directorate-General for Health & Consumers

Animal Identification & Databases in the EU

challenge or opportunity?

AEMB
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Lugo, SPAIN
28 and 29 April 2011

European Commission
Directorate General for Health & Consumers
(DG SANCO)

Sergio PAVON

Introduction

Main objectives of this presentation:

1. Understanding the European Commission's position for **Animal Identification** and **Databases** *(cattle & sheep)*
2. Opportunity for administrative and cost reduction
3. The current system: any field for **improvement** ?
4. **Electronic identification & database:** the impact on the EU meat sector

Bovine database

- In the light of the Bovine Spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) crisis Community rules on the identification and traceability of bovine animals were re-enforced in 1997
- Regulation (EC) No 820/97 of the European Parliament and of the Council established a regime of individual traceability of cattle

Bovine database

Any traceability system must be based on 4 main pillars:

- Individual animal identification of cattle with *two eartags*;
- *Holding register* for each keeper (e.g. farm, market, slaughterhouse)
- Individual *passport* for each animal containing data on all movements
- Reporting all movements to a *national database* that is able to quickly trace animals and identify cohorts in the case of disease.

The current situation

- These principles were upheld later in Regulation (EC) No 1760/2000 of the European Parliament and the Council

Bovine database

- 3 main objectives:
  - to re-establish *consumer confidence* in beef and beef products through transparency and traceability of bovine food products
  - to *localise and trace animals* for veterinary purposes, which is of crucial importance for the control of infectious diseases
  - To assist with the management and supervision of certain *Community aid schemes* in the field of agriculture such as livestock premiums as part of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) subsidy schemes.

Bovine database

It has to be noted that while the current identification and traceability regulation is perceived as being efficient by most of the stakeholders and answers to the actual policy objectives, it can be improved in order to make *it more accurate and faster* (e.g.: *reducing identification errors and time*)

Directorate-General for Health & Consumers

Bovine Database- the EU legal requirements

- EU member states shall set up a computerised database able to store at least the following data:
  - For each animal: identification code, date of birth, sex, breed or colour, identification code of the mother, holding where born, all holdings where the animal has been kept and dates, date of death/slaughter
  - For each holding: identification number (12 figures), name and address of the owner
  - Able to supply the following data at any moment: identification number of all cattle present on a holding, a list with all changes of holdings starting from holding of birth
  - **Responsibility for implementing the system lies with EU Member States**

Bovine Database

- Databases shall become full operational
- Not legal basis for laying down rules for national databases
- Commission to deem full operability for EU Member States databases
- Recognition of full operability by the COM (12 EU MS)
- Not all EU MS interested
- *Advantages ?*
  - If fully operational: reduction of administarive burden and of related costs
  - No need of passports for national movements
  - Reduction of rate of on-the-spots checks from 10% to 5 %

Bovine database

- Recognition is based on legal requirements (limited) + set of pragmatic and coherent principles (best practices)
- Most relevant elements:
  - the CDB should be able to supply all data to be gone with the passport
  - the information contained at the CDB should be shared with:
    - Surveillance system network (Animal health)
    - Databases on Comunity aid schemes (payment agencies):
      -Reconciliation control
      -more effective on-the-spot checks
      -I&R checks can be carried out in combination with other inspections
    - Issuing and distribution or eartags (including retagging)
  - Ideal if the CDB would contain « plausibility » elements and the capacity to flag potential inconsistencies:
    - Breed of the mother/calf
    - Notification on arrival and not on departure
    - Undue delays (birth, movement, deaths)-***respect of the deadline for notifications***
    - Holdings under animal and public health restrictions
    - High number of multiple births, losses of eartags, etc

Bovine database-next steps

- Review of Regulation 1760/2000 during 2011 on the light of Bovine EID ?
- Recognition of full operability of *databases by the Commission…*
- *Subsidiarity ?*

Directorate-General for Health & Consumers

Bovine database and marketing opportunity

- Following the BSE crisis more than 80 third countries imposed **bans/import restrictions** EU live bovines and/or bovine products.
- Those export restrictions were lifted as long as the EU was able to demonstrate that a proper system of traceability is in place for bovine products intended to be exported to third countries
- re-enforcing the EU traceability system (Animal identification+database) will result in better market access opportunities regarding exports to third countries
- A solid system for AI+database will return confidence to EU exports since it is perceived by third countries as one of the best guarantees vis-à-vis BSE and other animal and food diseases

Sheep database

- In 2003 the Council adopted Regulation (EC) No 21/2004 of 17 December 2003 establishing a system for the identification and registration of ovine and caprine animals and amending Regulation (EC) No 1782/2003 and Directives 92/102/EEC and 64/432/EEC].
- This regulation introduced the principle that sheep and goats should be identified properly and individually and all their movements should be individually traceable.
- Both the Commission proposal and the final text adopted by the Council were in line with the recommendations made in 2001 by the European Parliament, the Court of Auditors and the so-called 'Anderson report' to the United Kingdom (UK) House of Commons after the ***foot-and-mouth-disease crisis in the UK in 2001***, that was mainly spread by uncontrolled and untraceable movement of sheep and had a major negative impact on farmers and the whole society.
- At the time, both the UK National Farmers' Union (NFU) and the UK National Sheep Association (NSA) also ***called for the introduction of more stringent rules on traceability, including electronic identification (EID) of animals.***

Sheep database

- Less strict requeriments
- the system is still in a transitional phase of implementation
- Identification code for sheep born from 1 january 2010+individual recording in the CDB from 2011
- Recording of individual numbers on movement documents will start from 2011
- EU MS to decide whether they prefer to go beyond

Sheep database

- EU MS shall set a computer database containing some minimal information
- If the database is built on individual identification code, there is no need to include the result of an inventory
- To keep un up-date register shall be optional for those EU MS where a centralised computer database is operational

Sheep database

- Animals born before 2010 and moving direct to slaughter may be exempted from individual recording at any time
- Furthermore, Member States have the possibility to authorise electronic reading of animals at destination on behalf of the keeper of the holding of departure, which will again help to reduce costs for reading equipment at farm level. This is, the holding of destination has the possibility/authorisation to properly inform the data-base within 48 hours about the movement and the farm of departure properly up-dates the holding register also within 48 hours.
- This rule was suggested by the Commission after on-the spot visits in order to facilitate the introduction of the system in the UK and to address the practical challenges faced by all member States with individual recording of sheep, in particular using “critical control points” or Central Point Recording Centres (CPRCs), for electronic reading
- The concession to permit the use of CPRC/CCPs is therefore welcomed and depending on uptake, could reduce EID implementation costs around 35-40%

Databases & Food Labelling

- COM's draft proposal for food labelling
- Main objective: consumer information
- current rules on the compulsory labelling of origin for beef should be extended to *pork, lamb & poultry*
- indicating the 3 places where an animal is born, raised & slaughtered, would pose logistical difficulties –still to be decided
- The fact that cattle can be traced by means of a system of Identication & Registration is a prerequisite for guaranteeing the labelling system in the food chain
- Data-bases built on solid animal identification systems will be the solution

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Directorate-General for Health & Consumers

Contents

- New animal health legislation
  - Why?
  - What and how?
  - Changes?
  - When?

Current animal health legislation

- High number of legal acts - ~ 60 directives and regulations
  - Good in terms of animal health protection but
  - Complex, difficult to understand and not enough flexible
  - Alignment with the international standards (OIE)

The objectives of the AHL

- General objectives (AHS)
- Specific objectives:
  - Introduction of preventive approach
  - Simplification, "better regulation"
  - Flexibility
  - Coherence and consistency with other policy areas (food safety, animal welfare, animal nutrition, official controls, VMPs, environment)
  - Coherence with the OIE recommendations

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Directorate-General for Health & Consumers

The new **Community Animal Health Policy Goals**

- **High level** of **public health** and **food safety**.

<u>Also</u>:

- Support **farming** and **rural economy**.
- **Improve** economic growth/cohesion/competitiveness
- Promote **sustainable** farming practices and **animal welfare**.

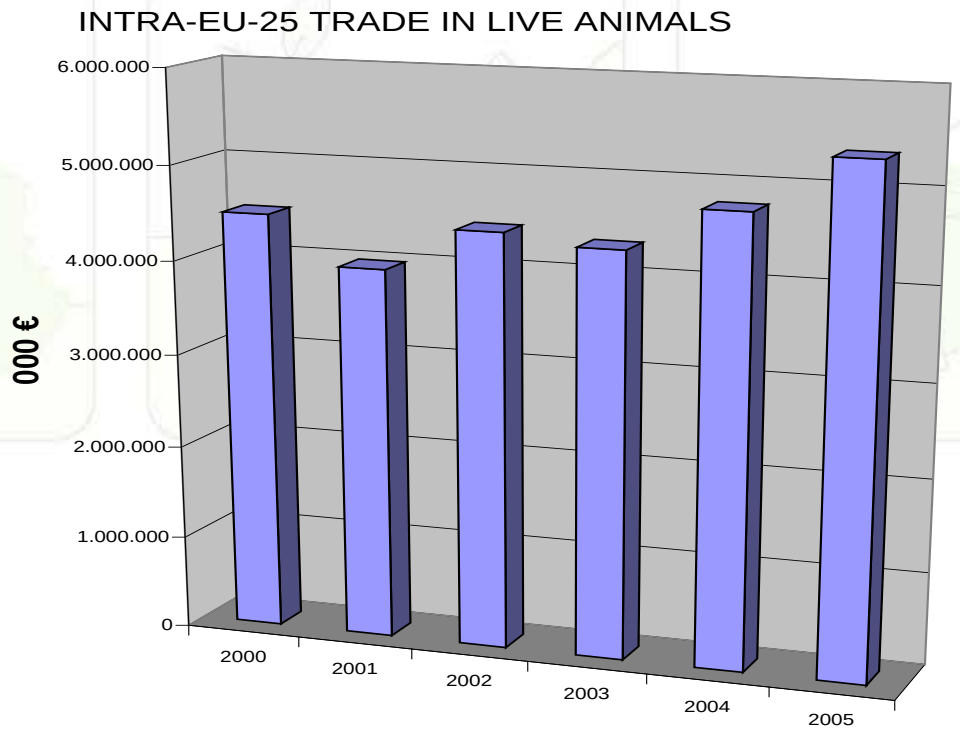
Why a new Strategy?

- **To address the issues from the evaluation**

+

- **New challenges** (emerging diseases, outbreaks of eradicated diseases, climate change).
- **Increased volume of trade** in live animals and animal products.
- **Enlargement** of the EU.
- **Science, technology** and our institutional framework have evolved substantially.
- **Better use of the available resources**, including financial tools.

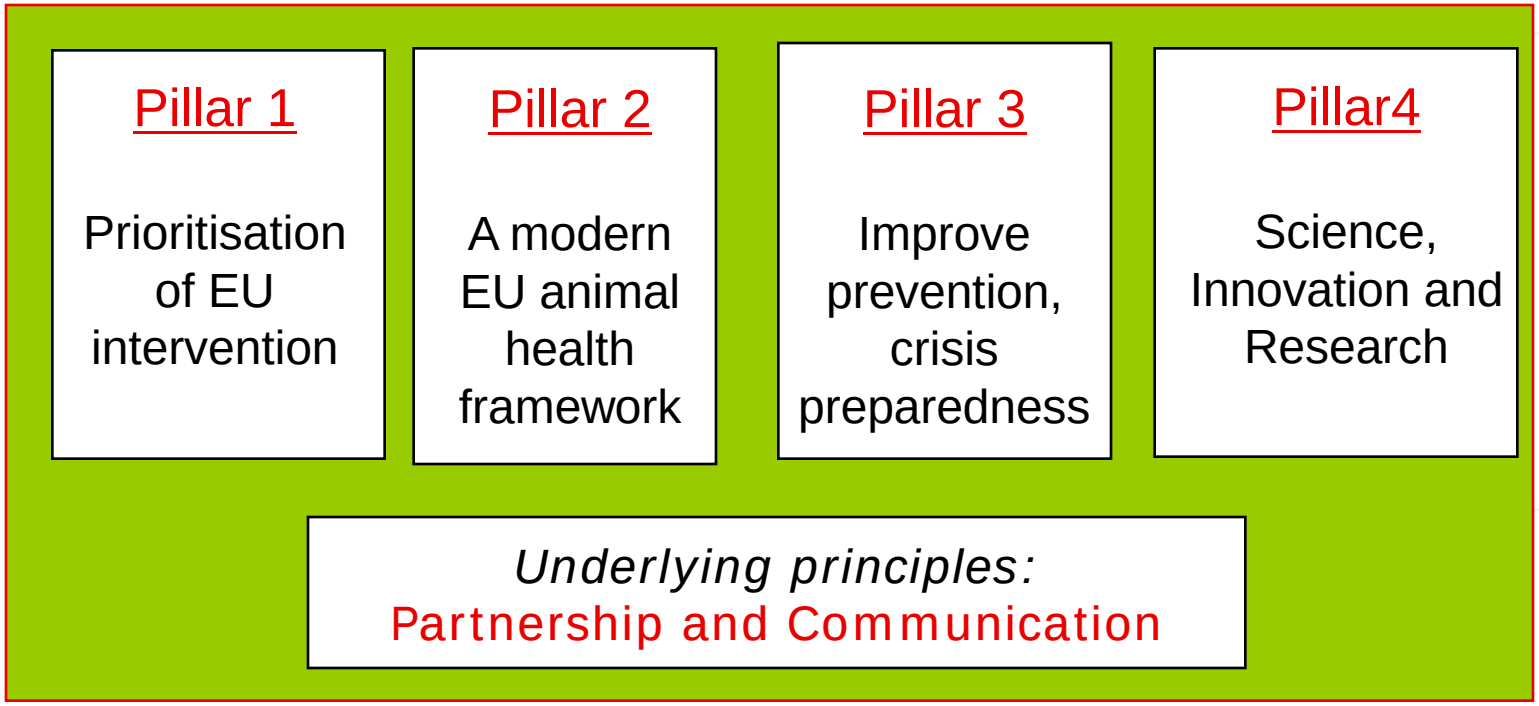
Increased volume of trade in live animals and animal products



Intra-EU trade in live animals (2000-2005). (Source: EUROSTAT)

Directorate-General for Health & Consumers

Animal Health Strategy and Action Plan



Action Plan: vertical structure

3. Prevention, surveillance and preparedness:

- biosecurity measures on farms;
- Improved TRACES; a single portal for all veterinary matters
- Electronic identification of bovine:
- Electronic certification
- Better border biosecurity, proposal
- ADIS system: proposal by 2011;
- Reinforcement of EU vaccine banks

Timetable

- Legislative proposal and Impact assessment adopted by the Commission end of 2011

- Final Adoption ?

Bovine Electronic Identification (EID)

- The Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament (COM (2009)544) on an **"Action Programme for Reducing Administrative Burdens in the EU"** listed the bovine identification procedure and voluntary beef labelling as "*information obligations with special importance in terms of the burdens they impose on businesses*".

Background

- one of the main problems relates to the **excessive administrative burden** caused by requirements related to written notifications for keepers (farmers and other stakeholders)
- Currently, all notifications (births, deaths, animal movements) must be **manually registered** and converted into an electronic format to the computerised **database**.
- This has been subject of concern by farmers and other animal keepers due not only to the **labour costs and administrative implications,** but also due to application of cross-compliance which may lead to **reductions of the Single Direct Payment and other CAP (Common Agriculture Policy) schemes** in case of negligence when performing activities like identifying, registering and/or notifying animal movements.

Bovine Electronic Identification (EID)

- For instances, some operational deficiencies in relation to the current system for identification and traceability have been found
  - holding registers not up date with missing paper and documentation as well as non organised data and documents (e.g.: *holding register shall contain up to date information on each animal: identification code, date of birth, sex, breed or colour of coat, the date of death of the animal on the holding, or in case of departure the identification code of the holding of destination and the date of departure, and in case of arrival identification code of holding of dispatch and the date of arrival. Controls carried out by the CA must be clearly identified in the register*).
  - delays in registering the movements in the national databases
  - delay or absence of reporting events (births, movements, death) to the CDB
  - national database for registration of bovine animals not fully operational, and
  - additional weaknesses in particular in the area of recording animal movements through the markets & assembly centres involved.

  - It has to be mentioned that a lot of paperwork is still involved with the current system, sensitive to human mistake.

Bovine Electronic Identification (EID)

- The current legal framework does not prohibit Member States from using electronic identifiers on a voluntary basis, but this must be done in addition to the official visible tags.
- As no harmonised technical EU standards have been established, different types of electronic identifiers and readers with different RFID frequencies could be used in different places.
- No change to the current provisions would imply no reduction in the current administrative burden

Moving into a new system

- **Electronic Identification (EID)** is capable to transform physical information to electronic (digitalised) information based on the e-reading of the electronic identifier at very early stage (when tagging) and also capable to fully use these e-data for recording and transfer (when tagging) and also capable to fully use these e-data for recording and transfer.
- Introduction of EID *can help:*
  - *to reduce typing mistakes as it allows a more accurate reading* than with classical ear tags
  - to better keep holding registers up-to-date
  - to better secure registration of movements within the 7 days period as required by the EU legislation.

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Directorate-General for Health & Consumers

Moving into a new system- the potencial benefits (I)

- When transferring the read ID to the competent authority in case of manual reading, it is assumed that each ID needs to be re-copied (e.g. *a document that can then be faxed or that it is typed into the corresponding fields on a web interface)*.
- The requirements for *passports and holding registers can be simplified* under the condition that the relevant information is available in the national databases and can be easily retrieved.
- The abolition of *passports* also in intra-EU trade would require a system of electronic exchange of information between national databases. Such system is in preparation but not yet established. If such system would become operational, it could replace the system of paper passports completely, implying an additional burden reduction.
- With this aim, the Commission launched in 2009 an internal IT pilot project "Bovine ID exchange" aiming to develop a web-based exchange of cattle passports between EU MS electronically.

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Directorate-General for Health & Consumers

Moving into a new system- the potencial benefits (II)

- separate holding register on farm would not be necessary if animal keepers keep the central database with their timely online notifications up to date.
- Animal keepers are using increasingly the internet to notify births, deaths and movements to the central database.
- The main benefits are not coming from electronic identification per se but from the fact that EID is *linked to the e-reading.* These two elements are inter-related in the sense that electronic identification would A be an incentive to move to e-reading and management of holding registers in a simple database format (e.g. excel). This can already happen with the current system if the farmer has acumen for computer work or an economic reason for using computers.

Moving into a new system- the real benefits (III)

EID brings the following main advantages to those who invest in IT by purchasing appropriate RFID reading equipment, computer software and internet connections:

- Unambiguously identified animals leading to **better data accuracy;**
- Easy reading and **less errors in notification** could lead to **reduced notification time** and bring the national database closer to "real-time";
- Tracing back and forward can be done in hours rather than days leading to **improved management in case of disease outbreak;**
- **Facilitate CAs controls** for ID but for other control purposes as well;
- Improved **traceability for consumers**;
- Cost savings in other farm management areas linked to multi-purpose use of the system;
- Security of operators;
- Reduction of **data transfer costs** leading to less paper work for both operators and CAs;
- **Trade competitive advantage** relative to those that are not able to provide top level traceability assurances to customers and in managing and responding to animal disease or related outbreaks;
- EID provides incentives to **share production and marketing information** with upstream and downstream actors in the value chain leading to improved transfer of product liability.

Next steps

- Commission legislative proposal for introducing EID in bovine (already in other animal species in the EU)-(*intended to be presented by spring 2011*)
- By amending Regulation(EC) N° 1760/2000
- Objectives:
  - To support competitiveness of the sector
  - To reduce administrative burden and simplify procedures
  - To make the current system of traceability more accurate and faster

Next steps

- Currently, working on the Impact Assessment
- Analysis of the better option: Mandatory /voluntary implementation ?

  ***(The voluntary approach** may provide EU Member States the chance to opt for:*
  - *allow farmers to decide on a voluntary basis whether to introduce it*
  - *For EU MS to decide on a voluntary basis a mandatory introduction on their territory)*
- Taking into account:
  - Experienced gained with EID in other animal species
  - Economic
  - Social
  - Trade (including intra-EU)
  - Enviromental
  - and ethical impacts

Next steps

- Legislative proposal (2011)
- Adoption
- Implementation ?

Other issues

- Animal identification & International trade
- WTO/OIE
- Imports/exports from/to third countries
- Free Trade Agreements and animal identification
- Bilateral trade relations

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Directorate-General for
Health & Consumers

Thank you
for your attention

Sergio PAVON