Please find here below the main points discussed and conclusions of the Veterinary Issues working group meeting held in Brussels on 28th March:

1) BSE/TSE

The group was made aware of the state of play of the amendments to Reg. 999/2001 with the European Parliament. After two Irish and Spanish MEPs have presented the amendments proposed to them by UECBV jointly with some other European organisations, the Secretariat has taken further actions in order to find support from other MEPs at the moment of the vote of the amendments within the COM ENVI of the Parliament. A table with clear indication of vote for MEPs has been laid down by the Secretariat together with the other partner organisations. The vote in COMENVI, initially planned for 3rd April, has been postponed until 25th April, so some more time is available. The vote in the plenary session of the Parliament has been planned for the week of 15th May and the final adoption of the text by the Council will probably be by June.

The group was also advised of the results of the SCoFCAH of 24th March as regard BSE surveillance, and an update of the information on the BSE case in one bovine animal in Sweden and on the two BSE suspects in ovine animals in France was given.

Action:
Other organisations will take care of contacting British and Dutch MEPs, while UECBV will contact MEPs of other nationalities. In particular, some federations have been asked to actively look for support with MEPs of their nationality (FR-ES-IT-DE-IE-DK-BE).

2) ABPs

The issues discussed at the Advisory Group held in Brussels on 20th March and concentrating on ABPs were summarised to the group. The Secretariat told that the letter addressed to the Commission services and summarizing UECBV position had already been sent. The possibility for some experts to attend a training initiative of DG SANCO on ABPs was expressed to the group, but no candidates have been identified for this purpose so far.

Action:
A bilateral meeting with the Commission services will be organised, likely in the month of April, to present in a comprehensive way the UECBV position.

3) Hygiene package

In the view of the preparation of the meeting with some representatives of DG SANCO in the afternoon session of the meeting on the issue, a number of topics were discussed, in order to define which questions pose to them and which problems have been encountered so far in the implementation of the Hygiene Regulations. In particular the following topics were discussed.

- Microbiological criteria: The questionnaire sent to the group and collecting information on the implementation of Regulation 2073/2005 in the different Member States was discussed during the meeting, emphasizing the problems faced by the sector. In particular the difficulty of complying with the criteria for Salmonella was addressed.
- Re-approval of plants: a questionnaire was discussed.
- Transitional period for small plants.
- Raw material for minced meat.
- Implementation of the food chain information.
- Cooling carcasses during transport.
- Implementation of the notion of clean animal.
- Decontamination.
- Problems linked to the principle of the primary responsibility of FBO.
- Slaughtering method of sheep: no particular problems were identified but more information is awaited from UK on it.
- New Trichinella regulation: no major problems were identified.
4) CO

A presentation of the results of the CO Working Group meeting held the day before was made to the group.

**Action:**
The single federations will be invited to actively look for possible sponsors and to collect a first and general opinion of their national authorities on the subject for the next working group on CO.

5) Tallow

A presentation of the results of the Tallow Working Group meeting held the day before was made to the group. A meeting was held with the consultancy carrying out the study on the impact of the requirements for the burning of tallow for the Commission.

**Action:**
The Secretariat will draft a brief position of UECBV on the issue and send it to the consultancy by mid April. The federations will be asked to provide data on the interested sector by the end of April.

6) Meeting with the Commission services in charge of the Hygiene Package

An interesting exchange of view took place with the Commission services on the mentioned subjects. The details will follow with the minutes. They expressed interest in receiving all comments from UECBV side as regards the problems faced by the industry on the implementation of the Regulations. The Commission services told that a consultation and review programme of the Regulations will start very soon (likely by the end of 2006) and that the transitional measures won’t in any case be renewed after they expire (end of 2009) and that any establishment will have to comply with the provisions by that date.

7) Date of the next meeting

There was no time to discuss it because the meeting with the Commission services lasted more than it was foreseen.

**Action:**
The Secretariat will propose some dates to the group for the next meeting.