

MEMORANDUM

between the European Community and the Russian Federation on veterinary certification of animals and animal products to be exported from the EC to Russia

1. To remove the main concern of Russia the EC will establish a system guaranteeing an implementation of the Russian veterinary and sanitary requirements along the whole production chain involving raw materials and animal products (from live animals to final products shipped to the Russian Federation).

Consignments for export to Russia will only be sourced from farms, regions and establishments that can guarantee and certify that the animals, products or material meet the Russian requirements.

2. The system will be based upon a chain of pre-export official support certification for the steps in each Member State, using official certificates issued by the certifying officials of the competent authority.

A pre-export support certificate will accompany each stage of the consignment until the final certification point is reached. The final certificate alone will go with the consignment to Russia but it will be signed on the basis of the chain of support certificates.

Pre-export support certificates will remain as an archive for the period of not less than 12 months for audit under the care of the official veterinarian at the certification points.

3. The final certificate will be issued by the official veterinarian of the Member State in the last establishment before the consignment leaves the EC to Russia.

In case there are pre-export certificates the final certificate should include the data from pre-export support certificates such as the country of origin, the establishment, the type and quantity of the product, a certificate number.

Should consignments certified from the final establishment have to travel via a port in the EC where the product is unloaded from the sealed container noted on the certificate, for possibly temporary storage in a warehouse, this will constitute a separate step in the chain and require further official certification to guarantee that the status and condition of the product had not been compromised.

Should a container and the seal be damaged the resealing will be done only under official supervision and certification.

The period of validity of certificates should be determined by the importing party.

4. The official veterinarian certifying the OIE list A animal disease status in the appropriate steps will have the authority to do so for a wider region than his/her own, or where relevant for the whole EC. This statement will be based upon the information of the ADNS (Animal Disease Notification System) and the instructions from the SCOFCAH (Standing Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health). At each meeting of the Committee an agenda point will be included concerning Russian import requirements.

If there is an outbreak of an OIE list A disease affecting the chain of certification in any Member State, the relevant products will be excluded from the pre export certification system for Russia in line with the Russian requirements and respecting the time limits set by Russia for lifting restrictions.

In the event of product having been originally sourced from a region at a time when list A disease was possibly incubating, the emergency safeguard process including SCOFCAH meetings and the EC disease notification system (ADNS) allows for blockage and recall of all product not meeting Russian requirements.

5. The Food and Veterinary Office (FVO) would be involved in auditing the correct implementation of the chain of certification linked to the inspection or supervision of the establishments included in the exporters to the Russian Federation.

6. In response to Russian concerns about problem consignments, the EC also suggested a protocol be developed for the return of consignments that are refused for whatever reason but that such a protocol would have to respect principles of proportionality.

7. In discussion on the detail of the veterinary certificates certain amendments have been made to the wording concerning freedom from OIE list A diseases. The issue of regionalisation will be further discussed in the working groups and details should be agreed upon within wider context on a parity basis.

Meat and meat products may only originate from slaughterhouses, cutting plants and coldstores approved for export to the Russian Federation.

In the process of drafting the 14 models of the uniform certificates Russia has indicated that it would retain the current system of control over consignments of particular products from the EC Member States to the Russian Federation conducted by Russian veterinary specialists.

The decision to use the uniform veterinary certificates under the above mentioned Russian requirements is taken by a Member-State which is interested in exporting certain types of live animals or animal products to the Russian Federation.

8. 14 new uniform veterinary certificates on live animals and animal products exported from the EC to the Russian Federation will take effect on 1 October 2004.

The certificates shall be in English, Russian and a third EU language chosen by the exporting Member States. Linguistic verification and clarification of the certificates will take place in the coming two weeks.

In order to prevent fraud, all EC Member States will issue the certificates according to uniform models. For the production of certificates water marks, embossed paper, harmonized numbering of certificates, stamps, coloured ink for signatures, etc. will be used. The parties agreed that for the future establishing an electronic certification system would be desirable.

Both parties agreed to introduce the transitional period until 1 January 2005. In the course of the above-mentioned period the current bilaterally agreed veterinary certificates for exports of live animals and animal products from the EC to Russia may continue to be used.

Exports of commodities not covered by the 14 certificates will continue using the contents of the current certificates on the new forms until new certificates are agreed.

9. The discussion of important issues that concern both sides such as the fraud prevention and transit rules will proceed further in working groups to be set up and start working as from 1 October 2004.

10. It was agreed between the parties to conduct an annual review of the certification system.

11. Requirements of the uniform veterinary certificates for certain infectious diseases, safety indicators and quality could be reviewed by an agreement of both sides depending on the epizootic situation and new scientific data.

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