

Comments to the "Notice of Availability of Draft Document Concerning the Identification of EU Administrative Units" [Docket No. 04-081-1].

The European Communities (EC) would like to thank USDA/APHIS for the opportunity to provide comments on the "Notice of Availability of Draft Document Concerning the Identification of EU Administrative Units" [Docket No. 04-081-1].

The EC welcome the Notice of Availability but would like to stress that this has to be considered only as a positive interim step towards the change of its policy and procedures on the regionalization of the EU for animal diseases in the direction laid down by the relevant provisions of the Agreement between the EC and the United States of America on sanitary measures to protect public and animal health in trade in live animals and animal products (Council Decision 98/258/EC), Article 6, as respectfully requested by the EC in the comments to the proposed rule "Importation of Swine and Swine Products From the European Union", published on the US CFR Vol. 70, No. 67, Friday, April 8, 2005, [Docket No. 02-046-1], RIN 0579-AB79" submitted on 7 June 2005 to the relevant docket.

The EC welcome in particular the principle that "*although addressed in this document in the context of CSF, the concept of regionalization to the AU level would not be disease-specific.*" The EC respectfully requests confirmation that, pending the requested implementation by USDA/APHIS of the relevant provisions of the Agreement, in the event of an outbreak of one of the diseases referred to in its Annex III¹ in the territory of the European Union, USDA/APHIS would implement the regionalisation in accordance with the Administrative Units principle.

The EC would like to encourage USDA/APHIS to proceed swiftly with regard to identifying administrative units in the ten new EU member states which USDA/APHIS would consider "regions" in the event of an animal disease outbreak, so that USDA/APHIS can have a uniform policy for the entire EU.

The EC would also like to bring USDA/APHIS' attention to the fact that the name of the Swedish governmental agencies mentioned at page 13 of the document annexed to the Notice of Availability (APHIS Considerations on the Identification of Administrative Units for Certain Member States of the European Union) are not correctly translated. The correct translations are as follows:

¹ The diseases listed in Annex III are the following

ANNEX III

LIST OF DISEASES FOR WHICH REGIONAL FREEDOM IS RECOGNISED

Animal diseases: Foot and mouth disease, Swine vesicular disease, Peste de petits ruminants, Contagious caprine pleuropneumonia, Sheep and goat pox, African swine fever, Enterovirus encephalomyelitis, Newcastle disease, Pseudorabies/Aujeszky's disease, Vesicular stomatitis, Rinderpest, Contagious bovine pleuropneumonia, Bluetongue, African horse sickness, Classical swine fever, Fowl plague/avian influenza, Venezuelan equine encephalomyelitis;

Aquaculture diseases: The list of aquaculture diseases is to be discussed further by the Parties on the basis of the International Aquatic Animal Health Code of the OIE.

Jordbruksverket - The Swedish Board of Agriculture,

Livsmedelsverket - The National Food Administration,

Statens Veterinärmedicinska anstalt - The National Veterinary Institute.

In closing, the EC wants to thank USDA/APHIS for the opportunity to provide comments on this notice of availability concerning the identification of EU Administrative Units. The EC welcome the notice, but as indicated in the comments to the proposed rule "Importation of Swine and Swine Products from the European Union," [Docket No. 02-046-1], respectfully request that USDA/APHIS proceed swiftly towards following EU regionalization decisions for the entire EU and for the full range of animal diseases as specified in Annex III of the Agreement between the EC and the USA on sanitary measures to protect public and animal health in trade via live animals and animal products.