

Advice 21-2009 of the Scientific Committee of the FASFC on a project of royal decree modifying the royal decree of October 17th, 2002 concerning the control of bovine tuberculosis

The aim of the present project of royal decree is to provide a legal framework so that, under certain conditions, the official veterinarian can order the slaughtering of an entire herd in which one or more cattle are suspected of bovine tuberculosis, without that the presence of *Mycobacterium bovis* can be confirmed bacteriologically.

The Scientific Committee recommends therefore that, in a situation in which cattle farms are suspected since a long time of being infected with bovine tuberculosis without bacteriological confirmation of the presence of *M. bovis*, the official veterinarian (as already provided for by the royal decree of October 17th, 2002) in consultation with national experts, realizes an in-depth epidemiological study and risk-analysis to officially make a motivated decision on the status of the herd and on the measures to be taken. In situations where bovine tuberculosis can not be confirmed by isolation of *M. bovis* in spite of repeated positive or doubtful reactions to the intra-dermal tuberculin test, the Scientific Committee recommends to systematically carry-out, in all animals of the herd, interferon-gamma (IFN- γ) tests.

The Scientific Committee points out moreover that the royal decree of October 17th, 2002, in its current form, allows already the veterinary services to cancel the embargo of cattle farms suspected of being affected by bovine tuberculosis.

Furthermore the Scientific Committee is of the opinion that the replacement of livestock after the total slaughtering of a herd, in which the presence of *M. bovis* is suspected but never confirmed, may not prevent the recurrence of new positive or doubtful results to the intradermal tuberculin tests, without further confirmation of the presence of *M. bovis*.

In conclusion the Scientific Committee is of the opinion that, from a scientific point of view, the present project of royal decree is not justified.

The full text is available on this website in dutch and in french, respectively under the section "Wetenschappelijk Comité/Adviezen" and "Comité scientifique/Avis".