

arrangements for intra-Community trade in bovine semen and imports from third countries, and in particular harmonizes veterinary certification (Dir 88/407). In particular a Member State in which semen is collected is under an obligation to see that the semen has been collected and processed at approved and supervised semen collection centres, and obtained from animals whose health status is such as to ensure that the risk of spread of disease is eliminated.

Progress to Date

Present directives and proposals still rely upon the presence of frontier posts for document checks and for quarantine measures and hence are not in agreement with the main concept of EC 1992. As such, they are only transitional measures.

Much work still remains to be done both to determine the detailed arrangements for controls on the movement of animals and animal products, and on the documentation which will be needed. The long-term objective is to raise the health status of all Member States to the highest ruling level so that restrictions on trade are unnecessary. In the short-term, movement will have to be controlled through mutually agreed inspection procedures at departure points and certificate verification at arrival points.

For disease of a serious nature, control will be on a regional basis. For less serious diseases the concept of "herd freedom" will operate and for the lesser diseases there will be a form of certification based on a voluntary health scheme as already happens in the UK. The state veterinary services will be responsible for certification in the above three cases, common rules for which will be laid down at a Community level. Individual traders will be allowed to demand additional standards but certification will then have to be sought privately.

Potential Impact

- i) There will be greater freedom of movement and increased intra-Community trade in beef cattle and pigs and the meat therefrom. Health checks will still be conducted, but at source rather than at frontier posts with verification of the necessary certificates at the point of destination. This will entail a shift of administrative procedures away from border posts to within the country. For successful operation of this system mutual confidence between Member States in veterinary services and meat inspectorates will be essential.