DECISION No 1/2003 OF THE JOINT VETERINARY COMMITTEE SET UP BY THE AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY AND THE SWISS CONFEDERATION ON TRADE IN AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS

of 29 July 2003

concerning the adoption of its Rules of Procedure

(2003/703/EC)

THE COMMITTEE,

Having regard to the Agreement between the European Community and the Swiss Confederation on trade in agricultural products (hereinafter referred to as 'the Agreement'), and in particular Article 19(5) of Annex 11 thereto,

Whereas:

That Agreement entered into force on 1 June 2002,

HAS DECIDED TO ADOPT THE FOLLOWING RULES OF PROCEDURE:

Article 1

Chair

The office of chair of the Committee shall be held jointly by a representative of the European Community and a representative of the Swiss Confederation (hereinafter referred to as 'the heads of delegation').

Article 2

Secretariat

1. A representative of the European Community and a representative of the Swiss Confederation shall jointly perform the secretarial tasks of the Committee. The heads of delegation shall transmit the name and other particulars of the person carrying out the secretarial duties for each Party.

2. The heads of delegation may agree that the secretarial tasks shall be performed alternately by the two Parties for specific periods.

Article 3

Meetings

1. The heads of delegation shall fix the date and venue of meetings by joint agreement.

2. If a head of delegation requests that an extraordinary meeting be held, such a meeting shall be convened within 30 days of the request being received, except where a decision is taken to the contrary.

3. Unless otherwise decided, the meetings of the Committee shall not be public.

Article 4

Delegations

1. Before each meeting, the heads of delegation shall inform one another of the intended composition of their delegation.

2. The Parties shall appoint the heads of delegation who, outside the meetings, shall be the contact persons for all matters relating to the Agreement.

3. The Committee may invite persons who are not members of the delegations to attend meetings in order to provide information on specific issues.

Article 5

Correspondence

All correspondence relating to Annex 11 to the Agreement shall be sent to the secretariat of the Committee. The latter shall send a copy of all correspondence relating to Annex 11 to the Agreement to the heads of delegation and the Swiss Mission to the European Union.

Article 6

Agendas for meetings

1. The secretariat, in agreement with the heads of delegation, shall draw up the provisional agenda for each meeting. The provisional agenda shall be sent to the heads of delegation no later than five working days before the start of the meeting.

2. The provisional agenda shall include the items for which a request for their inclusion has reached the secretariat at least 15 days before the start of the meeting. The items shall be included in the agenda only if, where applicable, the documents relating to them have been sent to the secretariat no later than the date on which that agenda is sent.

3. The agenda shall be adopted by joint agreement by the heads of delegation at the start of each meeting. An item other than those appearing on the provisional agenda may be placed on the agenda if the heads of delegation so agree.

4. The heads of delegation may agree to reduce the time limits set out in paragraph 1 in order to take account of the requirements of a particular case.

Article 7

Minutes

1. The secretariat shall draw up draft minutes of each meeting. The draft shall state the decisions taken, the recommendations made and the conclusions adopted. The draft minutes shall be submitted to the Committee for approval. Once adopted by the Committee, the minutes shall be signed by the heads of delegation and the secretariat of the Committee. An original copy shall be kept by each of the Parties.

2. The draft minutes shall be drawn up within 10 working days of the meeting and shall be submitted to the Committee for approval by the written procedure set out in Article 9. If that procedure cannot be completed, the minutes shall be adopted by the Committee at its next meeting.

Article 8

Adoption of instruments

1. The decisions of the Committee within the meaning of Article 19 of Annex 11 to the Agricultural Agreement shall bear the title 'Decision', followed by a serial number, the date of their adoption and an indication of their subject matter.

2. The decisions of the Committee shall bear the signatures of the heads of delegation.

3. Either Party may decide to publish any instrument adopted by the Committee.

Article 9

Written procedure

1. The instruments of the Committee may be adopted by written procedure where the two heads of delegation so agree.

2. The Party proposing the use of the written procedure shall submit the draft instrument to the other Party. The other Party shall reply, indicating whether it accepts or does not accept the instrument, whether it proposes any amendments to the draft, or whether it requests further time for reflection. If the draft is adopted, it shall be finalised in accordance with Article 8.

Article 10

Expenses

Each Party shall bear the expenses it incurs in taking part in the meetings of the Committee.

Article 11

Confidentiality

The deliberations of the Committee shall be governed by professional secrecy.

Article 12

Working groups

The working groups shall operate under the authority of the Committee, to which they shall submit a written report after each of their meetings. The report shall be sent to the secretariat of the Committee, which shall forward it to the heads of delegation. This report may contain recommendations for the attention of the Committee.

For the Joint Veterinary Committee

The Heads of Delegation

Signed at Bern, 29 July 2003.

For the Swiss Confederation

Hans WYSS

Signed at Brussels, 26 June 2003.

For the European Community

Alejandro CHECCHI LANG