Joint Veterinary/CITES Border Controls

An Effective Way of Controlling Trade of Exotic Species – The Swiss Experience

Thomas Jemmi, Swiss Federal Veterinary Office
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Responsibilities of SFVO concerning import and export

- Veterinary border controls (animal health, food safety, animal welfare)
- CITES management authority
  - Border controls
  - Import and export permits
- International cooperation
  - Bilateral agreements and cooperation
  - Multilateral agreements
Legal basis

- Bilateral agreement EU-Switzerland on trade in agricultural products (*Annex 11 on animal health and zootechnical measures applicable to trade in live animals and animal products*)
- Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)
Some history

- 1886: Establishment of the border veterinary service in Switzerland (animal health, public health)
- 1975: Entry into force of CITES in Switzerland
- 1982: Entry into force of the Swiss Animal Welfare Law
- 2002: Entry into force of the „Bilateral Veterinary Agreement CH-EU“
- 2009: Abolition of the border veterinary service between Switzerland and EU: „common veterinary area“
BIP‘s and CITES control posts 2012
Import of exotic animals into Switzerland

* incl. bloodsucker, skorpion, coral, giant clam
** without sturgeon
Import of live vertebrates into Switzerland

** Without sturgeon
Joint Veterinary / CITES border controls

Advantages

• One expert authority at the border, one contact point for Custom services

• Cost-effectiveness
  – Personnel
  – Fees
  – Logistics, e.g. opening hours (esp. at smaller control points or BIP‘s)

• Job enrichment for the border vets
• Data management and information flow
Joint Veterinary / CITES border controls

Challenges

- Basic and advanced training of border vets in zoology (identification of animal species)
- Goal conflict between animal/public health and species conservation
Example 1: Smuggled birds (1)

Facts and findings

• Five birds from Vietnam (two parrots and three hill mynas) were smuggled in the personal luggage. The parrots were already dead, the hill mynas in bad general condition.

• Import of birds from Vietnam is not permitted due to the epidemiological situation on Avian Influenza

• Parrots and hill mynas are listed in Appendix II of CITES
Example 1: Smuggled birds (2)
Example 1: Smuggled birds (3)

Decision

• Euthanasia of the surviving birds
• Complaint against the smuggler

What if….?

• The birds would have been listed in Appendix I of CITES?
Example 2: Zoo animals (1)

Facts and findings

• The President of the Russian Federation, Mr. Medvedev, pays a state visit to Switzerland and present two young bears as an official gift to the city of Bern

• Very little reaction time

• No CITES papers available

• The animal health status of the two bears is unknown, rabies is of concern
Example 2: Zoo animals (2)

Decision

• CITES import licence issued
• Immediate organization of a quarantine
• Housing facilities have to be in accordance with the Swiss Animal Welfare legislation
Example 2: Zoo animals (3)
Example 2: Zoo animals (4)
Example 3: Bush meat (1)

Facts and findings

• Targeted custom controls of personal luggage at the international airports reveal a quite high number of smuggled meat and meat products

• Bush meat: meat of terrestrial wild animals, killed for subsistence or commercial purposes throughout the humid tropics of the Americas, Asia, and Africa.

• Bush meat is of concern
  – for animal and public health reasons (e.g. Foot and Mouth Disease)
  – for species protection reasons
Example 3: Bush meat (2)
Example 3: Bush meat (3)

Decisions

• Confiscation and incineration of the bush meat
• Complaint
• Specific information to travellers
• Further control campaigns
Take home messages

• Joint veterinary / CITES border controls are effective in the control of cross-border movements of animals, in terms of
  – Cost – effectiveness (public and private sector)
  – Information flow

• Possible goal conflicts between animal/public health and species conservation
  – Animal/public health rules prevail as a principle
  – Smuggled CITES Appendix I species from countries outside Europe represent a major problem