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Focus on prevention -voluntary measures in joint venture in Finland

1. Summary

In Finland we started in 1994 to develop new voluntary practices in primary production to manage risks with animal diseases. Traditionally animal health situation has been on high level in Finland. EU-membership 1995 brought new challenges with a free trade –ideology. The membership moved responsibility of diseases prevention more to stakeholders. Food Industry and Farmers Union took action and The Association for Animal Disease Prevention – ETT ra - was founded 1994, to carry out preventive operations in joint venture. The idea was - already then- prevention is better than cure and more cheaper.

Slaughterhouses, dairies, egg packing companies, Farmers Union, feed companies, Advisory Center, veterinary practitioners, and other operators in primary production have all been active in joint venture to aim at the same target - keeping Finland and farms free from contagious diseases. During last twenty years voluntary practises and common national rules have formed and adopted in primary production. Focus has been on prevention: biosecurity at the farm, rules in animal trade, frequently veterinary visits with documentation, herd health schemes, health classification, transport logistic, group- insurance conditions ext. We have managed quite well this far; only few new diseases have occurred and, at the same time, we have managed to eradicate some diseases. But the work continues even harder.