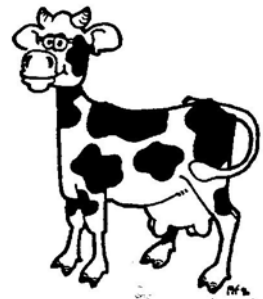


An introduction to the Association for Animal Disease Prevention in Finland

The Association's Operating Philosophy

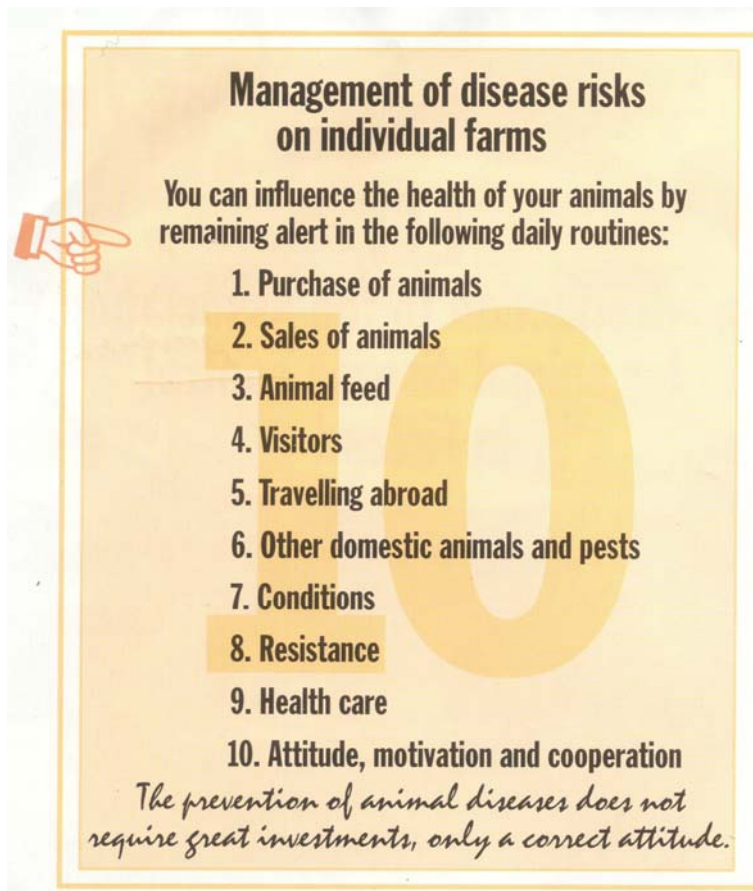
The Association promotes the farm animal health and welfare by coordinating the national herd health schemes and by instructing the import of animals, semen, embryos and animal feed. These measures control the risks of animal diseases and create a basis for the safety of foodstuffs derived from domestic animals.



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Let's work together to keep the diseases at bay!



Why was ETT founded?

Finland's membership in the European Union has affected many kinds of changes in the production of domestic animals and in the entire foodstuff chain.

One of the major changes has taken place in the import of animals and animal feed with the introduction of free trade. The animals will not stay in quarantine or necessarily be tested for diseases in the country of origin. There are also no border controls any more, which will make it difficult to control border crossings and imports.

Free trade also involves far reaching risks which should be considered in advance. Contagious animal diseases are some of these risks.

Other important factors of today include:

1. Animal disease situation in Europe

Many animal diseases classified as dangerous or easily spreading, have been detected within the European Union. These diseases include e.g. Foot and Mouth disease, Swine fever, Newcastle disease and Avian Influenza. Foot and Mouth disease has proven most problematic with hundreds of thousands of animals been emergency slaughtered and destroyed in Great Britain.

The population of production animals in the EU countries has also been infected by a number of contagious animal diseases not classified as dangerous. This means they are not included in the prevention programs and are not controlled by compulsory measures.

These diseases do not immediately cause high death rates and all of them will not infect people, but they impair the utilization of feed, reduce production and impair animals' immune system. Animals will be exposed to other diseases, which increase the need of medication and vaccinations. Diseases increase the production costs on a permanent basis and cause a constant risk of residues in foodstuffs. The increasing use of antibiotics promotes the development of new resistant bacteria.

In many parts of Europe, animal units are large and animal density is high. Live animals are in a large amount transferred from one country to another. The origin of animal feed is not always known. All these predisposing factors increase infection pressure, promote spreading of diseases and may impair the disease situation within the Europe.

If we think of the situation in Europe, the reactions have been seen clearly. Consumers have started to demand tighter measures from the EU regarding animal transport, BSE, salmonella, use of antibiotics and hormones etc.

It is extremely difficult and very expensive to eliminate these diseases after they have spread at the farms or in the country.

2. Finland is one of the countries where the situation is still very good

Thanks to our long-term public efforts, Finland has managed to keep the animal disease situation exceptionally under control. During the last decades only very few cases of animal diseases classified as dangerous by OIE have been detected in production animals in Finland. We have only few of the less dangerous diseases, either. For example we are free from Bovine Tuberculosis, Brucellosis, Infectious Bovine Rhinotracheitis, PRRS, Aujeszky disease, Avian Infectious Bronchitis and Infectious Laryngotracheitis which are common in Europe. We have only few diseases caused by viruses among our production animals.

3. Salmonella under stricter control in the Nordic countries

The salmonella situation is an excellent example of a disease controlled by legislative means in the Nordic countries. In Finland, the occurrence of salmonella is very rare. All salmonella serotypes and also subclinical cases found at farms require restrictive measures and eradication. In Finland farmers have insurances for salmonella cases.

In Central Europe, however, the situation is different. Salmonella occurs frequently, which increases the probability of infection. Because of preventive use of antibiotics, there have arisen several salmonella strains, which are resistant. In many countries, eggs cannot be eaten raw, or even slightly cooked, because of the salmonella risk.

4. Animal feed can also carry risks of diseases

Salmonella bacteria can be introduced to the foodstuff chain e.g. through animal feed; imported feed in particular. Until now, legislative control has managed to ensure a 95 % certainty of salmonella-free feed. With free import, the salmonella risk can grow enormously as animal feed produced within the European Union can be delivered to Finnish farms without any inspections.

Salmonella can never be totally eliminated, but its occurrence and frequency can be reduced to almost zero by means of correct practices. Voluntary control of imported animal feed is one such practice. The Association for Animal Disease Prevention - ETT - has together with animal feed suppliers and importers drawn up *Positive list* published e.g. in farmers magazines since 1995.

Only suppliers, who voluntarily control animal feed and raw materials by import have been approved in the Positive list. Animal feed suppliers are also required to implement approved quality control programs and hygienic standards including transport and storage.

5. Finland can keep up the good health situation - but it has to be done on a voluntary basis

Today the responsibility for keeping Finland free from contagious animal diseases is more than ever up to the farmers and the food production chain. Prevention of animal diseases is important not only for ethic reasons and welfare of animals, but also to maintain the quality of foodstuffs and to protect the consumers.

In order to reduce the risk of diseases in animal and food production, voluntary practices have been adopted. The Association for Animal Disease Prevention - ETT - was founded in July 1994 with most of Finnish abattoirs, dairies and egg packaging companies as members and farmers unions, veterinary associations, feed companies, advisors of primary production, insurance companies, and other quarters involved. The activities of the Association are funded by subscriptions and initiation fees.

The Association gives advice of risk management to farmers and importers and instructs the import of production animals, semen, embryos and animal feed. From 2001 The Association got a new task: coordination of National Health Schemes, ETU, together with stakeholders and authorities. ETT built a database for swine herds, Sikava, 2003 and a database for cattle herds, Naseva, 2006.

The Association's Executive Committee consists of the Chairman and seven ordinary members (three representing slaughterhouses, two dairies and two poultry sector), as well as the secretary who is also the Executive Manager of the Association. The Association has also a large national and international network.

The members of the Executive Committee and the Chairman are elected in the Annual General Meeting for a term of one year. The day-to-day practical matters are executed by four veterinary surgeons and three employees.

In practice, the members of the Association enter into agreements with their producers. In the meat producing sector, for example, the farmer undertakes to deliver only animals born in Finland, or imported animals supervised by the Association.

For the Finnish livestock production, the health of our animals is a strength, only possessed by very few countries in the world. If ever lost, this unique situation can never be reinstated.

**Finland is still free from many animal diseases -
we wish it to remain that way**

*ETT was founded on 30 June 1994 in Helsinki, in the Finlandia House.
The founders represented the interest groups, such as dairies, abattoirs and
egg packaging companies.*

*In the annual meeting of 2009, members of the Executive Committee and the Chairman of the
Association were elected. The Chairman is Mr. Ilkka Nivari from Valio Oy. The Executive Committee
consists of seven ordinary members and their deputy members.*

Ordinary members and deputy members of the Executive Committee

Ann-Charlott Kjerp, Valio Oy (Vice Chairman)	(Laura Kulkas, Valio Oy)
Eeva Brofeldt, Valio Oy	(Tia Lämsä JK Juusto Kaira Oy)
Tomas Gädtnäs, Oy Snellman Ab	(Vesa Hihnala, Oy Snellman Ab)
Elias Jukola, LSO Foods Oy	(Veikko Kemppi, LSO Foods Oy)
Matti Perälä, A-Tuottajat Oy	(Veli-Matti Jäppilä, A-Tuottajat Oy)
Tuija Lilja, Ruoka-Saarioinen Oy	(Ari Pummila, Saarioisten Lihanjalostus Oy)
Johanna Daka, Munakunta	(Jannis Salo, Ovo-Food Oy)

Administration

Mrs. Pirjo Kortnesniemi, veterinary surgeon, acts as the Executive Manager of the Association, with Mr. Olli Ruoho, Mrs. Hannele Nauholz and Mrs. Sanna Nikunen as veterinarians. Paula Halkosaari takes care of the health database Naseva for cattle herds and Tove Hagner of the health database Sikava for swine herds.

Membership

Approximately 95 % of Finnish dairies, abattoirs and egg packing companies have joined the Association. The number of passive members representing various associate groups is also remarkable.

Objectives of Association

- To get all the farmers and associate groups to support the operating philosophy of the Association and commit themselves to it
- To prepare explicit instructions for the import of animals, semen and embryos and to supervise them (case by case)
- To draw up concrete instructions for farms for the management of disease risks and preventive measures
- To draw up rules for the management of animal feed imports and salmonella risks
- To maintain and develop National Health databases Naseva and Sikava
- To develop insurance models for animal diseases