

ANNEX XII

SAMPLING PROCEDURES AND DIAGNOSTIC METHODS FOR CATEGORY A DISEASES IN AQUATIC ANIMALS

1. The following procedures apply to the clinical examination and collection of samples:
 - (a) the clinical examination and the sampling for laboratory examinations must include:
 - (i) aquaculture animals of listed species showing clinical signs of the relevant category A disease; and
 - (ii) aquaculture animals likely to have recently died from the suspected/confirmed category A disease; and
 - (iii) aquaculture animals with an epidemiological link to a suspected or confirmed case of a category A disease;
 - (b) the minimum number of samples to be collected is:

Type of animals	Scenario			
	Report of increased mortality	Introduction of infected animals	Post-mortem or clinical signs observed	Suspicion based on other circumstances
Molluscs (the whole animal)	30	30	—	150
Crustaceans	10		10	150
Fish	—	—	10	30

- (c) the following additional criteria apply to the sampling of molluscs:
 - (i) animals suspected to be infected must be selected for sampling. If listed species are present in the population of animals concerned by the suspicion, those must be selected for sampling;
 - (ii) if weak, gaping or freshly dead but not decomposed molluscs are present, those must be selected first. If such molluscs are not present, the molluscs selected must include the oldest healthy molluscs;
 - (iii) if the establishment uses more than one water source for mollusc production, molluscs representing all water sources must be included for sampling to ensure that all parts of the establishment are proportionally represented in the sample;
 - (iv) when sampling from a group of mollusc farming establishments which apparently have identical epidemiological status, molluscs from a representative number of sampling points must be included in the sample.

The main factors to be considered when selecting those sampling points must be stocking density, water currents, the presence of listed species, both susceptible and vector species, bathymetry and management practices. Natural beds within or adjacent to the mollusc farming establishment(s) must be included in the sample;

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- (d) the following additional criteria apply when sampling crustaceans:
- (i) if weak or moribund crustaceans of listed species are present in the production units, those crustaceans must be selected first. If such animals are not present, the crustaceans selected must include crustaceans of different year classes, proportionally represented in the sample;
 - (ii) if more than one water source is used for crustacean production, crustaceans of listed species representing all water sources must be included in the sample to ensure that all parts of the establishment are proportionally represented in the sample;
 - (iii) when collection of samples from wild populations of listed species is required under Article 102(a) of this Regulation, the number and geographical distribution of the sampling points must be determined in a way that ensures a reasonable coverage of the area suspected to be infected.

The sampling points must be representative for the different ecosystems where the wild populations of susceptible species are located such as marine, estuary, river and lake systems;
- (e) the following additional criteria apply for sampling fish:
- (i) if weak, abnormally behaving or freshly dead but not decomposed fish are present, those fish must be selected. If such animals are not present, the fish selected must include fish of listed species, belonging to different year classes, proportionally represented in the sample;
 - (ii) if more than one water source is used for fish production, listed species representing all water sources must be included for sampling to ensure that all parts of the establishment are proportionally represented in the sample;
 - (iii) if rainbow trout (*Onchorynchus mykiss*) or European perch (*Perca fluviatilis*) are present, only fish of those species may be selected for sampling. If neither rainbow trout nor European perch are present, the sample must be representative of all other listed species present, following the criteria in points (a) to (d);
 - (iv) when collection of samples from wild populations of listed species is required under Article 102(a) of this Regulation, the number and geographical distribution of the sampling points must be determined in a way that ensures a reasonable coverage of the area suspected to be infected.

The sampling points must also be representative of the different ecosystems where the wild populations of susceptible species are located such as marine, estuary, river and lake systems;
- (f) the selection of organs to be sampled, preparation, storage and shipment of the samples to the laboratory must be carried out in compliance with recommendations from the European Union reference laboratory for the relevant disease.
2. Samples must be examined in the laboratory using the diagnostic methods and procedures approved by the European Union reference laboratory for the relevant disease.