



Brussels, 25th October 2021

Minutes

Meeting of the Animal Health Advisory Committee, the sub-group of the Advisory group on the food chain and animal and plant health held remotely by Skype for Business on October 12th, 2021.

1. Introduction, opening: Francisco REVIRIEGO GORDEJO – Head of Unit G2 Animal Health

The Commission welcomed the Members of the Animal Health Advisory Committee and also the Members of the Council of the European Union Presidency Trio – Portugal, Slovenia and France and explained briefly the purpose of the meeting and then proceeded with the approved agenda.

2. Animal disease outbreaks (SANTE G2)

The Commission gave a presentation on the latest state of play on ASF disease outbreaks, on the situation regarding SARS-CoV-2 and avian influenza and also on the call for tender – vaccine bank for CSF

- **African swine fever disease (ASF)**

An update was given on African swine fever (ASF) by the Commission.

The ASF situation worldwide is still worrying, ASF arrived in the Americas (Dominican Republic and Haiti, during last summer). In the EU the situation remain stable. 10 Member States are affected by ASF which remain confined to relatively limited zones mainly in wild boar. Two Member States eradicated the disease in wild boar to date, namely the Czech Republic and Belgium. Italy is affected since the 1978, with an unrelated epidemiological situation. During the last high season, June to September 2021, as expected there was a mild increase of outbreaks in domestic pigs in certain Member States: in Bulgaria four outbreaks; in Estonia, one single outbreak; in Latvia, two outbreaks; in Slovakia eight outbreaks. Only in Poland (110 outbreaks) the spill over in the domestic pig population remains a concern. Only in Romania the situation in the domestic pig population is increasingly worrying (1390 outbreak in 2021). In the other Member States the situation remains under control.

- **SARS-CoV-2**

An update was given on SARS CoV-2 by the Commission based on the reports by Member States as prescribed by Commission Implementing Decision 2020/2183 adopted on 21 December 2020.

The Commission explained the current legislative framework for reporting SARS CoV-2 in mustelidae and raccoon dogs along with the surveillance requirements for MSs. It provided a summary of the reports received for 2021 and indicated that more detailed reports were available on the Commission's website as all information was already shared with MSs during monthly meetings of the PAFF.

- **Avian influenza**

The Commission presented an overview of the situation regarding outbreaks of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) in the epidemic season 2020/2021. Based on the number of wild birds and poultry affected, this last epidemic is the most severe HPAI epidemic experienced by the EU to date.

The Commission informed about the HPAI detections during summer months and early October in wild birds and poultry in Russia, in areas considered as breeding sites for wild birds that are migrating during autumn to EU countries. It is expected that the migratory wild birds will introduce in EU the HPAI virus that circulated in Russia in summer 2021.

The Commission highlighted that the high risk period for HPAI introduction with the migratory wild birds has started and that proper risk mitigation measures have to be taken to prevent the introduction of the virus into poultry population.

EUWEP asked if discussions have been started by the Commission on vaccination against HPAI. The Commission informed on the status of the draft Delegated Regulation for rules on the use of veterinary medicinal products which will cover also specific rules for vaccination against HPAI (see also comment under Agenda Item 4 on Animal Health Law).

- **Classical swine fever (CSF)**

The Commission informed that a call for tender to set up EU vaccine bank for classical swine fever has been launched by the Commission.

<https://etendering.ted.europa.eu/cft/cft-display.html?cftId=8773>

3. Animal Welfare (SANTE G5)

The Commission gave a detailed and comprehensive presentation on the state of play on Animal Welfare.

- **Update on the European Citizens' Initiative – “End the cage age”**

The Commission presented the actions taken by the Commission in reaction to the European Citizens' Initiative “End the Cage Age”. In particular, he referred to the Commissions' Communication, adopted on 30 June 2021, and the actions listed therein. He also explained how these matters are incorporated in the process of revising the EU animal welfare legislation by 2023 under the Farm to Fork Strategy.

- **Update on the Fitness Check and revision of the EU animal welfare legislation**

The Commission presented the state of play of the fitness check and revision of the EU animal welfare legislation. Based on the preliminary fitness check findings, presented at the EU Animal Platform meeting on 22 June 2021, the Commission published on 6 July 2021 an Inception Impact Assessment with approaches to possible future policy choices. The public feedback received generally supports the initiative and contains calls on the Commission to do more, e.g. as regards the killing of one-day old male chicks. There are also some critical views expressed, e.g. on the proposed phasing out of cages and the phasing out of tail-docking and beak trimming. The main next steps in the process will be a launch of an Open Public Consultation on 15 October 2021 and a Stakeholder Conference on 9 December 2021.

In the exchange that followed, **AVEC, EFFAB, FVE and FEAP** asked for further information on the planning of different animal welfare actions, if possible including those organised by the Council and the European Parliament. **FESASS** asked whether the farmers' cost of compliance and the effects of the Member States' differing approaches to animal welfare will be considered in the process, and recalled that public support for animal measures are needed.

In reply, the Commission promised to provide a more detailed list of known upcoming animal welfare events (see below) and explained that the cost of compliance and the

functioning of the internal market are aspects that will be covered by the impact assessment process.

Indicative planning of upcoming animal welfare events:

2021

15/10: Launch of Open Public Consultation; to run for 14 weeks (COM)

10/11: Meeting of the EU Animal Welfare Platform (COM)

09/12: Stakeholder Conference in Brussels; hybrid event (COM)

2022

Q1: Adoption of the ANIT committee report on animal transport (EP)

Q1: Conclusion of the exploratory study on animal welfare labelling (COM)

Q1: Studies concluded on the transport of end-of-career cows and unweaned calves (COM)

Q1-Q3: Impact Assessment studies performed (external contractors/COM)

June: Scientific opinions on pigs + animal transport (EFSA)

December: Scientific opinions on broilers + laying hens (EFSA)

Q3: Conclusion of the Fitness Check (COM)

2023

Q1: Conclusion of the Impact Assessment (COM)

March: Scientific opinion on calves (EFSA)

Q2: Study concluded on best practices for laying hens: Q2 of 2023 (COM)

Q4: Legislative proposal for a revised EU animal welfare legislation (COM)

4. Animal Health Law- State of play (SANTE G2)

The Commission gave a detailed and comprehensive presentation on the Animal Health Law.

- **State of play of the Animal Health Law.**
The Commission gave a general overview on the state of play of the Animal Health Law.
- **Amendments disease control measures and draft delegated act on the use of VMPs for disease control & Amendments to Regulation (EU) 2020/692 and to the certificates and attestation for entry into the EU**
The Commission gave an update on recent amendments to some of the Delegated Regulations supplementing the Animal Health Law. In particular, the Commission provided for details on the amendments to Delegated Regulation (EU) 2020/687 as regards certain repeals that were missing in the original text and on the amendments to Delegated Regulation (EU) 2020/692 as regards the requirements for the entry into the Union of products of animal origin contained in composite products. The Commission also explained the state of play of the draft Delegated Regulation on the rules for the use of veterinary medicinal products for prevention and control of listed diseases. In this regard, the Commission provided for details on the scope and the general approach of the draft Regulation, which is mainly focused on the use of vaccines against category A diseases.

FVE asked about the possibility to be consulted on the draft delegated act on the use of veterinary medicinal products for disease control purposes. The Commission explained that the draft will be subject to public feedback once the discussions in the expert group are finalised.

EUWEP asked if any discussion on the consequences for trade of possible broader vaccination against AI has already started. The Commission explained the step wise process informing that we have now technical discussions in the expert group for vaccination. The

Commission will also ask EFSA for a scientific opinion for assessment of the measures. Possible implications and consequences will be discussed as well, but outside these technical discussions.

OFI-EPO and **EFFAB** asked about the possibility to extend the transitional period for TRACES NT to be used for intra-EU movements. Operators are not informed enough about TRACES NT and according to their information the system is not ready. They also warned about the problems related to the validity of certificates in TRACES. The Commission informed that at that point there was no intention to have further postponements and that the systems are ready, MSs were trained in the past six months and the TRACES helpdesk has been reinforced to provide the necessary support during this transition from the old to the new system.

All of the presentations relating to agenda items 2, 3 & 4 may be found on our website at the link below:

[Presentations \(europa.eu\)](https://ec.europa.eu/food/animals/animal-health/animal-health-advisory-committee/presentations_en#20211012)

https://ec.europa.eu/food/animals/animal-health/animal-health-advisory-committee/presentations_en#20211012

5. AOB

No other business.

While no date has been agreed yet for the next meeting of the Animal Health Advisory Committee in the first semester of 2022, it is hoped that circumstances will allow for a face-to-face meeting in the Conference Centre in Rue Froissart.

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

| STAKEHOLDER ORGANISATIONS |
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| AnimalHealthEurope |
| ATA – Animal Transportation Association |
| AVEC - Association of Poultry Processors and Poultry Trade in the EU |
| COGECA - European agri-cooperatives |
| Compassion in World Farming |
| COPA – European farmers |
| Diagnostics for Animals |
| EAZA - European Association of Zoos and Aquaria |
| ECDC - European Centre for Communicable Diseases |
| ECSLA - European Cold Storage and Logistics Association |
| EDA – European Dairy Association |
| EFFAB - European Forum of Farm Animal Breeders |
| EFPRA – European animal by-products industry |
| EFSA – European Food Safety Authority |
| EMFEMA – European Manufacturers of Feed Minerals Association |
| EPMA/AEPM - European molluscs’ producers association |
| European Forum of Farm Animal Breeders |
| EPO – European Pet Organisation |
| EU Dog & Cat Alliance |
| EUCOLAIT |
| EURO COOP – European Community of Consumer Cooperatives |

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| EUWEP – European Union of Wholesale with Eggs, Egg Products and Poultry and Game |
| FEAP – Federation of European Aquaculture Producers |
| FEDIAF – European Pet Food Industry Federation |
| FEFAC - Fédération Européenne des Fabricants d'aliments Composés |
| FESASS – Fédération Européenne pour la santé animale et la sécurité sanitaire |
| Food Service Europe |
| Food Supplements Europe |
| FVE – Federation of Veterinarians in Europe |
| IFOAM Organics Europe |
| Independent Retail Europe |
| IPIFF - International Platform of Insects for Food and Feed |
| OFI – Ornamental Fish International |
| OIE – World Organisation for Animal Health |
| PFP – Primary Food Producers |
| Slow Food |
| UECBV – European Livestock and Meat Trades Union |
| Vier Pfoten/Four Paws |

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| MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION PRESIDENCY TRIO |
| Portugal |
| Slovenia |
| France |