

Meeting of the sub-group on transport

Export to third countries by road

Third meeting, 30 May 10:00-12:30
(Videoconference on Teams)

- MINUTES -

Attendance

Independent expert	Michael Marahrens
Civil society organisations	Animal Welfare Foundation Animals' Angels
Business and professional organisations	UECBV Copa
Member States	Portugal The Netherlands Spain Czech Republic
European Commission	DG SANTE G5 DG SANTE F2
Guest(s)	Millieu/Ecorys Consortium Arla Foods

Discussion

1. Welcome and short introduction on the topic

The Commission briefly presented the topic of the meeting, export of animals by road.

2. Presentation by Arla Foods on supporting local dairy production in several third countries

A representative from Arla Foods gave a short presentation on a project aimed at exporting dairy cows to Nigeria where they work in training farmers to take care of these animals for them to breed their own herds for the purpose of producing milk.

- The general mortality rate in herds like this is 3.-5% for adult animals, and there is indication that it should be higher on this particular farm.
- The project ensures that a veterinarian takes care of the farm.
- The majority of animals are transported by air. The project makes sure EU rules are respected beyond EU borders. The practical experience with transports like this is that animals dying during and from transport is extremely rare and almost not heard off.
- The main issue with these transport operations are the loading and unloading of the animals, especially when they are not in crates, and making sure enough staff is available to ensure it is done appropriately.
- The transports by road from airports take place mostly at night to avoid high temperatures but they have established their own conditions for trucks to ensure the welfare of the animals.
- Arla Foods recommends a follow up after the transport operations from the competent authorities in the third countries and to require specific conditions to be met by facilities at destination.

a. Do you think a ban on exports by road of small and large ruminants is a solution?

The Commission opened the discussion on the items of the agenda by asking members whether they would support a total ban, a seasonal ban or a ban for certain categories of animals when it comes to transporting them by road.

Some members expressed their concern towards a ban shifting the transport to third countries and focused on improving the current conditions for transport as practical experience shows that animal welfare is much more about the quality of transport than the length of the journey. Some other members supported a total ban unless there is an assurance that the EU conditions will be met until the place of destination.

The following issues were pointed out:

- Conditions and resting points outside the EU must be respected.
- The journey log needs to include all means of transport and to ensure that it is duly used from the place of departure until the place of destination including in third countries.
- Means of transport should be improved and allow for a better monitoring of the welfare of the animals.
- Requirements on temperature need to be better enforced and should a seasonal ban be considered, the differences between species and categories should be taken into account.
- Transport operations should only be authorised once there it is ensured that the legal requirements are met.
- Level playing field between Member States must be ensured.
- International agreements should include provisions on the welfare of animals during transport.
- Retrospective checks, feedback from third countries and checks of the tachographs are best practices under the current framework, but they are often not enough to ensure that the animal welfare is ensured until the place of destination in third countries.
- On GPS data there is an obligation to upload satellite navigation data in IMSOC but it has not been developed yet.
- Members support the development of a common digital database for all competent authorities to access the relevant information (i.e. traceability, real time GPS data, monitoring parameters etc.) be it TRACES or any other one built for purpose.
- The concept and the current definition of “place of destination” should be redefined to avoid *hopping transport* in particular in the context of export to third countries.

b. Which stricter conditions should be put in place in case if a ban is not a solution?

The Commission oriented the debate on this question by asking the top three stricter conditions members would like to see with regards to transport of live animals by road.

The following were mentioned:

- The use of videos and photographs of resting points in 3rd countries and final destination to ensure compliance with the rules could be a condition for granting an approval of a journey for export to third country.
- Provisions to be enforced in a harmonised way to not shift the transport to Member States with less strict controls.
- The possibility of on-line access for authorities to the navigation system for road vehicles to carry out spot-checks to ensure the vehicles follow the pre-approved route and could help better targeting official controls during and after journeys
- Consider improving the quality of transport means adding a type 3 authorisation to the current EU legislation with stricter requirements for road journeys beyond 24 hours.
- Consider opportunities for letting high health breeding animals rest on new type 3 lorries if certain requirements regarding the quality of the lorry is in place to avoid the stressful situation of off-loading and mixing of animals on resting places and the risk of comprising the health status of breeding animals.
- Rules and/or guidance on temperature sensors and their location in the vehicle.
- Retrospective checks for all transports, not only to third countries with more adequate tool to monitor and control.
- Possibility for competent authorities to access the system of transporters and always have data accessible, that must also be reliable with no possibility to manipulate it.
- Proof from exporters that the GPS works and it is accessible in third countries.
- Strengthen the enforcement of transporters' responsibility to comply with journey requirements to ensure that welfare is met until place of destination on the exporter.
- Harmonised and more dissuasive sanctions must be imposed, as well as a clear definition of "serious violations".
- Control posts in third countries to be certified and audited.
- Organisers must also be trained and be responsible for all stages of the transport operations and capable of proving compliance with rules before approving the journey.
- More scientific data on minimum space allowances and interior heights.
- Ensure implementation and harmonise training requirements across Member States.
- Fast track lanes at borders and adequate facilities for providing shade, water and feeding while waiting at borders/exit points
- TRACES NT to allow competent authorities from a given Member State to see the use of their control posts by non-national transporters, as the old TRACES allowed for, to better target control checks.