

Minutes of the meeting of the Expert Group to discuss a delegated act on prevention and control rules of certain listed diseases under Regulation (EU) 2016/429

5 November 2018, Brussels

1. Approval of the agenda

A preliminary agenda was circulated prior to the meeting and agreed at the beginning.

2. Nature of the meeting

The meeting was non-public. The Member States' and EEA countries representatives from the competent veterinary authorities were participating in the meeting. The Chair noted the absence of the European Parliament and the Council.

3. List of points discussed

A. Introduction

The Commission presented the draft Delegated act on disease control measures circulated previously to the meeting. Due to time constraints the Commission intention was to look through all the chapters of the document. The Commission asked Member States for their feedback on the draft by 21 November 2018.

The Commission informed that although aquatic disease control measures were discussed in a separate meeting of the Expert group, the outcome will be integrated in this delegated act.

B. Presentation and exchange of views with Member States on prevention and control rules of certain listed diseases

The Commission presented the working document and the discussion focussed on the following main points:

- Preliminary disease control measures: even though the requirement to trace animals and products when there is a suspicion of a category A disease is already in the Animal Health Law (AHL), one expert was of the opinion to give more prominence in the document.
- Sampling procedure and diagnostic methods: the Commission informed that the proposed annex will replace the current diagnostic manuals for category A diseases.
- Monitoring periods, duration of measures: some experts asked for clarity of the 'monitoring period' definition. The new approach for African swine fever and classical swine fever was presented and received a favourable feedback.
- The role of official veterinarians (OV) and competent authorities was discussed. The debate was also focussed on the right balance between giving flexibility to apply measures and establishing strict rules to control Category A diseases due to the high risk they represent to the agri-food sector.
- Cleaning and disinfection: few experts expressed the need to explore if the final cleaning and disinfection must only be linked to repopulation of establishments.
- Measures to be applied in the protection zone: most of the experts were favourable to extend the period to carry out visits to all the establishments. However, unspecified period of time must be limited by e.g. avoiding delays. Some experts noted that the most important visit is the one carried out just before lifting the measures.

- Prohibitions concerning animals and products from, to or through the restricted zone: a number of experts supported the new table in Annex V listing the prohibitions to apply in case of an outbreak and specifying for which "category A" diseases they are relevant. In this sense, the Commission asked MSs for feedback regarding the proposed approach and also on the content of the table.
- General conditions for granting derogations: among the general conditions, the need for certification of products originating in the restricted zone was discussed. As it is covered by the AHL, this point will be deleted.
- Specific conditions for certain movements of animals and hatching eggs: some experts asked for more flexibility regarding authorisation of movements of animals intended for slaughter, based in a risk assessment, and regarding movements of hatching eggs, to reflect the current practices.
- Specific conditions for certain movements of products: the Commission explained that the current approach for marking fresh meat originating in the restricted zone has been maintained, nonetheless experts were invited to provide feedback in this regard. The Commission noted that derogations related to animal by-products are still under internal discussion and thus in development.
- Derogations in the surveillance zone: the Commission proposed to apply the same prohibitions in the surveillance zone as in the protection zone. However, conditions to grant derogations in the surveillance zone would be less strict.
- Measures in wild animals of listed species: one expert expressed concerns on the role of the expert group to be established and the need to have a harmonised approach in the EU.
- Emergency vaccination: the draft keeps a positive approach as regards the introduction of vaccination. The Commission reiterated that according to the AHL, vaccination does not require Commission's approval and is therefore a decision of Member States subject to certain conditions.

4. Conclusions/recommendations/opinions and next steps

The Commission obtained a favourable feedback on the structure and measures with comments on the presented draft working document which will be used for further drafting. The Commission thanked MS experts for their input and constructive approach during the meeting.

Last meeting of this expert group will be held on 10 December 2018.