

Minutes of the meeting of the expert group to discuss the delegated act on surveillance, eradication programmes and disease free status according to the Animal Health Law

17 July 2018, Brussels

1. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

A preliminary agenda was circulated and agreed at the beginning of the meeting. The working document to be discussed was provided in advance.

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 that the Council and the European Parliament were not represented in the meeting.

3. INTRODUCTION

The Commission gave details on foreseen changes to the Articles of the delegated act which will be re-submitted for discussion in autumn and explained that the discussion at this meeting will focus on specific provisions for certain disease. The Commission explained that provisions for a Union surveillance programme on avian influenza and for an optional eradication programme for Infestation with *Varroa* spp were yet to be developed for this autumn and that provisions for optional eradication programme for infestation with *Echinococcus multilocularis* would be developed at a later stage as current provisions, adopted in the context of Regulation (EU) No. 576/2013, will only expire in April 2026.

4. CONCLUSIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS/OPINIONS

The outcomes of the discussions were the following.

4.1. The Commission made a presentation on its proposed direction for developing rules for infection with Bluetongue Virus (serotype 1 to 24) (BTV) with a view of its changed future categorisation comparing to the existing situation. Experts were invited to express their position orally and in writing.

- The approach would be to grant disease free status for all serotypes 1-24 by using the OIE standards for the recognition of disease free status. The Commission proposes vaccination, surveillance, movement restrictions and seasonally vector free period as main disease control tools. Most experts were in favour to grant BTV disease free status of all serotypes 1 to 24 to kept animals of listed species, but regardless of the situation in wild animals.
- The Commission confirmed that transitional rules for the recognition of historical BTV free status will be provided for, but will not apply automatically since, being a category C disease, this remains a choice for the Member States.
- The Commission explained its preliminary views on the optional eradication programme, which include, where relevant the use of restricted zones and buffer zones aiming to provide security and stability to the geographical scope of the eradication programme. Some experts requested more flexibility to use knowledge

on the epidemiological local conditions and surveillance activity to maintain zones in the Member States.

- About the tools to control BTV, some experts asked for more flexibility in particular on the requirement for mandatory vaccination for 5 years. The Commission explained the role of vaccination in the context of the eradication programme and its use for the movement of animals. It stressed that vaccination will be compulsory under the eradication programme.
- The Commission thanked the experts for the preliminary views and invited them to reflect further on the need for robust criteria to approve the programmes.

4.2 In relation to bovine viral diarrhoea (BVD):

- The Commission presented an overview of the current state of play in relation to BVD control including OIE standards, EU legislation and measures at the MS level.
- The Commission addressed challenges in connection with drafting new legislation in the light of successfully completed and ongoing BVD-eradication programmes in a number of MS, related to the granting of disease-free status or approval of eradication programmes.
- The Member States agreed with the Commission's proposed flexible approach regarding the surveillance and eradication strategies and requirements for granting and maintenance of BVD-free status. The Member States supported the approach to adjust the movement requirements (serological status) in accordance with the prevailing eradication strategy.
- The Commission thanked the Member States for all information on national BVD eradication programmes received and invited them to send further contributions particularly with a view to the strategy changes (testing regimes, vaccination ban) towards finalisation of BVD eradication.

4.3 Experts were invited to express their position on the draft provisions as regards Infection with *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* complex (*Mycobacterium bovis*, *M. tuberculosis*, *M. caprae*) (MTBC), Infectious bovine rhinotracheitis /Infectious pustular vulvovaginitis (IBR/IPV), Enzootic bovine leukosis (EBL), infections with Aujeszky's disease virus (ADV). For the programmes for these diseases the alignment with the OIE was considered and certain specific issues were raised.

- About MTBC, the Commission took note that most experts were not in favour in aligning the conditions to recover the status of an establishment following an outbreak to the initial conditions to grant the status with the OIE. Instead they asked to keep the status quo. Certain experts considered that applying pre-movement tests as laid down in the OIE would not be cost efficient; certain experts consider unnecessary to add risk based surveillance requirements in the criteria to maintain the status.
- About MTBC, the Commission clarified that transitional rules laid down in Article 280 of the AHL permitted to recognise the disease free status granted with previous legislation, which, following this recognition, will have to comply with the new legislation based on the AHL.
- Regarding IBR/IPV, the Commission took note of the experts' opinion that the listing of the virus neutralisation test (VNT) in Annex III would be appreciated.

The Commission invited the Member States to express their position as regards keeping the current requirements for BHV-1-free holdings, in particular the testing regimes (test intervals and frequency, age of animals), or aligning them more with the OIE. Furthermore, the Member States were invited to reflect upon the draft requirements for granting and maintaining IBR/IPV-free status at Member State/zone level based on the OIE requirements.

- The Commission explained that the references to guidelines, such as in the context with granting and maintaining disease-free status have been removed from most provisions on the delegated act and its Annexes.
- About EBL, the Commission took note that some experts supported the proposal of the Commission to distinguish between the suspicion and confirmation of the disease.
- About ADV, the Commission took note that some experts were questioning the epidemiological importance of the reservoirs in wild boars and supported flexibility for the investigation of suspicions. The experts were invited to reflect on the most suitable types of requirements for targeted prevalence to grant and maintain status at establishment and Member State or zone level.
- For IBR/IPV, EBL and ADV, the Commission asked the experts to reflect on the possibility to introduce animals from establishments recognised disease free in Member State or zone which is neither free nor under approved eradication programme.

5. NEXT STEPS

The Commission invited experts to provide written comments by 7 September 2018 at the latest and if possible for MTBC, IBR, EBL and ADV by 1 September 2018.

The Commission invited experts to share information on national programmes on BTV or BVD if not already done, in view of developing provisions for these diseases.

6. NEXT MEETING

The date of next meetings will be communicated as soon as confirmed, requests for meeting rooms have been made for 14 September 2018 (disease specific for aquatic animals), 24 September 2018 (general parts), 1 and 2 October 2018 (disease specific for terrestrial animals) and if needed a last meeting between 12 and 14 November 2018.