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Health and Food Safety Directorate General

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Standing Committee on Plants, Animals, Food and Feed
Section *Animal Health and Welfare*
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SUMMARY REPORT

A.01 General information by Member States.

No item raised.

A.02 Information from the Member States on African Swine fever.

Greece, Poland, Slovakia and Hungary presented the ASF epidemiological situation in their countries.

A.03 Update on the FMD situation in the EU neighbourhood and risks for the EU.

Following a presentation by EuFMD Secretariat on the main FMD risks for the Union while underlining the repeated occurrence of “jumps” of exotic disease strains which reached the Mediterranean basin as well as the novel risks represented by SAT-2 strain, the Committee discussed the measures in the neighbourhood and the risks it represents for the EU. The Commission presented the status of the FMD SAT-2 vaccine donation to Georgia. The Committee raised concerns on situation southern Mediterranean countries for “FAST” diseases.

A.04 Information from Member States on highly pathogenic avian influenza.

France presented the updates on the epidemiological situation and the measures taken to control and eradicate the recent episode of HPAI in poultry in the South-West in the area with high density of poultry establishments. Following the control measures implemented in the last month, in particular the extensive decreasing of the poultry density by preemptive culling in a 10 km area around the outbreaks, the situation seems to be under control and no further outbreaks have been confirmed in the last week.

A.05 Information on adopted scientific opinions on animal welfare on farm.

EFSA presented two opinions addressing the welfare of animals on the farm:

1. Scientific opinion on the **welfare of ducks, geese and quail on farm**, adopted on 29 March 2023: this scientific opinion concerns the welfare of Domestic ducks (*Anas platyrhynchos domesticus*), Muscovy ducks (*Cairina moschata domesticus*) and their hybrids (Mule ducks), Domestic geese (*Anser anser f. domesticus*) and

Japanese quail (*Coturnix japonica*) in relation to the rearing of breeders, birds for meat, Muscovy and Mule ducks and Domestic geese for foie gras and layer Japanese quail for egg production. It describes the most common husbandry systems in the EU for each animal species and category and identifies the most relevant hazards leading to welfare consequences in the different husbandry systems. It assesses specific factors in relation to the welfare consequences and provides recommendations on how to prevent these consequences. Main recommendations include that cages and all husbandry systems currently used in foie gras production should be avoided, floors should be solid and littered, more space (three-dimensional) and more enrichment (e.g. manipulable materials, in the case of ducks and geese water bathing and in the case of quail dust-bathing possibilities) and outdoor access, or at least access to a covered veranda, should be provided. The opinion is available here:

<https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/efsajournal/pub/7992>.

2. The scientific opinion on the **welfare of dairy cows**, adopted on 29 March 2023, includes three assessments:
 - a) description of the most prevalent housing systems for dairy cows in Europe and assessment of their main strengths, weaknesses and hazards potentially reducing the welfare of dairy cows;
 - b) assessment of five welfare consequences (e.g. restriction of movement, locomotory disorders, mastitis, metabolic disorders), suggestion of a set of animal-based measures, analysis of the prevalence in different housing systems, and a comparison of the housing systems as well as investigation of system- and management-related hazards and respective preventive measures;
 - c) analysis of farm characteristics (e.g. milk yield, herd size) that could be used to classify the level of on-farm welfare. The analysis resulted in the identification of five farm characteristics (more than one cow per cubicle at maximum stocking density, limited space for cows, inappropriate cubicle size, high on-farm mortality and farms with less than 2 months access to pasture) and the recommendation to conduct an assessment of cow welfare on the farm in question using animal-based measures for specified welfare consequences if one or more of the identified farm characteristics are present. The opinion is available here: <https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/efsajournal/pub/7993>.

A.06 Information from Spain on sheep pox and goat pox.

Spain informed the Commission and Member States that no new outbreaks of Sheep and Goat Pox (SGP) were recorded since the last PAFF Committee meeting (last outbreak was in mid-May, in the municipality of Casas de Fernando Alonso, in the province of Cuenca). Spain further explained that a number of flocks were moved in 2022, for transhumance purposes, in areas that were later included in the Further Restricted Zone (FRZ). These flocks now need to return to the places of origin. Spain requested to allow exceptionally the movement of these flocks outside the FRZ, using a special sanitary protocol. The Commission proposed to seek an one-off solution to this problem, exclusively for the specific flocks concerned, without altering the current EU measures/zoning in relation to SGP in Spain.

A.07 Report on the sheep pox and goat pox EUVET mission to Spain.

An EUVET mission on Sheep and Goat Pox in Spain took place on 24-26 May 2023, focusing in the area of Castilla – La Mancha where the disease persists in 2023. A Member of the expert team presented the main findings and recommendations. Non-authorized animal movements, contaminated vehicles, proximity to infected farms and special epidemiological links between farms (e.g. same owner), were identified as the main factors for disease spread. Recommendations emphasise, among others, on the maintenance of the current zoning, the importance of biosecurity measures, the implementation of standstill in farms epidemiologically linked to confirmed outbreaks, the implementation of additional measures to prevent non-authorized animal movements and the quick and effective implementation of cleaning and disinfection of affected holdings, following stamping out.

B.01 Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Implementing Decision on the evolution of animal diseases in the Union.

No item raised.

B.02 Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Implementing Regulation amending Annex I to Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/594 of 16 March 2023 laying down special disease control measures for African swine fever.

The Commission presented a draft Implementing Regulation to revise the restricted zones in Greece, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia in Annex I to Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/594.

Vote taken: Favourable opinion.

B.03 Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Implementing Decision amending the Annex to Implementing Decision (EU) 2021/641 concerning emergency measures in relation to outbreaks of highly pathogenic avian influenza in certain Member States.

The EU regionalization has been updated according with the epidemiological situation of HPAI in certain Member States.

Vote taken: Favourable opinion.

B.04 Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Implementing Decision concerning certain measures relating to infection with lumpy skin disease virus in certain Member States.

In view of the expiry of Implementing Regulation (EU) 2021/1070 and Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/361 coming into force, it is necessary to list the areas defined as vaccination zones in relation to Lumpy Skin Disease, in Bulgaria and Greece, and to lay down additional rules regarding the obligations of operators in relation to animal health certificates. To address this issue the Commission prepared a draft Implementing Decision, concerning certain special disease control measures for a limited period of time relating to infection with lumpy skin disease virus in certain Member States (i.e. Bulgaria and Greece). The text of this Decision was explained and presented to the Member States for vote.

Vote taken: Favourable opinion.