



Brussels, 19th April 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 March 26th, 2021.

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

The Commission 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 and ASF control measures after 21 April, 2021 and also on the situation regarding SARS-CoV-2 and avian influenza.

- **African swine fever disease outbreaks and special control measures**

An update was given on African swine fever (ASF) by the Commission. ASF is present in 11 MS, Germany notified the presence of the disease in September 2020. The disease in the EU remain mainly present in the wild boar population, with spill over in the domestic pig population. The situation looks different only in Romania where the situation of the backyard sector makes the control more challenging, even if the Romania authority is committed to improve the management of this sector. In the first months of 2021 the ASF situation remains dynamic in Poland, Slovakia and Germany.

COGECA asked information on the possibility of continuing trade of domestic pigs when ASF is present only in wild boar, as foreseen in the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code (OIE Terrestrial Code) Chapter on ASF. The commission replied that the EU ASF legislation is already in line with the provisions of the OIE Terrestrial Code.

An update was also given on the new Implementing Regulation laying down special control measures for ASF that should be adopted by the Commission before 21 April 2021, based on the new legal basis – Regulation (EU) 2016/429 ('Animal Health Law'). The Commission presented the main objectives of this new legal act that will replace the current Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2014/709 and will provide for a continuity of EU regionalisation measures.

- **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 also indicated how it intends to use EFSA's scientific report to setup a monitoring system in the EU. FVE sought clarification if this meant that SARS CoV-2 would be notified in ADNS. The Commission clarified that ADIS (which would replace ADNS) will be based on obligations for notification based on Commission Implementing Regulation 2002/2020 and the list of diseases referred to in its Annex I; SARS CoV-2 was not included in this list.

- **Avian influenza**

The Commission presented an overview of the situation regarding outbreaks of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) highlighting the ongoing risk for poultry in EU as the HPAI virus is found in wild birds in many Member States, in particular in the Northern and Central part of the EU.

AVEC raised the following issues:

- the increasing risk of avian influenza for the human health as it was seen from the reports of the Russian authorities on detection of influenza A(H5N8) virus infection in seven poultry workers in an outbreak of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) A(H5N8) virus on a poultry farm in the south of Russia.

The Commission reported on the conclusion of the risk assessment carried out by ECDC in collaboration with EURL and EFSA in relation with the HPAI virus of subtype H5N8 detected in the poultry workers in Russia. The conclusion of this assessment, based on the information available, is that so far, the virus remains purely avian-adapted with no markers for mammalian adaptation.

The Commission was also asked if it collaborates with the OIE to address the problems that EU Member States are facing with the HPAI in recent years, with severe consequences for the trade of the affected EU Member States.

The Commission confirmed that it always closely collaborates with OIE and contributes to the development of the OIE standards. It informed the meeting that changes to the Avian Influenza Chapter of the OIE Terrestrial Code will probably be adopted in May 2021.

EUWEP asked the Commission if it had information on avian influenza in Brazil.

The Commission confirmed that it has no information in relation to detection of avian influenza in Brazil and agreed to share such information with the stakeholders if and when it receives any.

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

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

- **State of play and transitional provisions of the Animal Health Law.**

The Commission presented a general overview of the legislative development, the state of transitional measures and actions with a view of the application of the Animal Health Law. OIE and FACE expressed interest in the BTSF conference on AHL and asked when and how they will be contacted to apply. The Commission informed that they will be contacted by the contractor through BTSF programme.

- **Antigen, vaccine and diagnostic reagent banks.**

The Commission presented the EU legal framework, and in particular provisions of Animal health Law (AHL), related to the Union antigen, vaccine and diagnostic reagent banks.

In addition to Articles 48-51 of AHL, the Commission will adopt:

- delegated act providing rules for the management, storage and replacement of stocks of antigens, vaccines and diagnostic reagents in the Union banks and the biosecurity, biosafety and bio-containment requirements for the operation of the Union banks, and
- implementing act laying down requirements for types (strains) and quantities of the antigens and vaccines in the Union banks, concerning the supply, storage and replacement of antigens, vaccines and diagnostic reagents and procedures on the access to the Union banks.

- **Amendment to Regulation (EU) 2020/688.**

The Commission informed participants on the content and state of play of a draft amendment of Delegated Regulation (EU) 2020/688 on the animal health requirements for movements within the Union of terrestrial animals and hatching eggs, currently under discussion with Member States. The draft amendment contains corrections and clarifications of the text and changes of the certain provisions requested by Member States or stakeholders. In particular, changes are introduced in relation to the requirements for the movement of racing pigeons to sporting events in another Member State and particular requirements are laid down in case derogations are granted by Member States for certain movements.

- **Identification and registration of terrestrial animals.**

The Commission presented Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2021/520 laying down rules for the application of Regulation (EU) 2016/429 of the European Parliament and of the Council with regard to the traceability of certain kept terrestrial animals, which was adopted on 24 March 2021.

FACE asked about the experience that the eartags on goats don't fulfil the Regulation 2021/520, and the Commission explained that the rules regarding the means of identification of goats will remain the same as in current legislation.

- **Amendments to disease control measures and draft delegated act on the use of veterinary medicinal products for disease control.**

The Commission informed on the ongoing amendment to Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2020/687 on disease prevention and control measures, which mainly clarifies the rules on the movements of animal by-products from restricted zones and amends the list of Directives that will cease to apply from 21 April 2021. In relation to disease control, the Commission also informed about the ongoing work on supplementing rules for the use of veterinary medicinal products for prevention and control of category A diseases, in particular the use of vaccines. In this sense, the Commission is working together with Member States in a draft delegated Regulation that will provide for harmonised rules in this field.

- **Rules for entry into the Union**

As regards entry into the Union, the Commission informed that it is currently assessing comments received lately in relation to the animal health requirements for the entry into the Union of shelf-stable composite products containing dairy products laid down in Delegated Regulation (EU) 2020/692. In this sense, the Commission will propose modifications to the applicable rules where the countries of origin are authorised for the entry into the Union of dairy products.

- **Information on the ongoing work on amendments to Regulation (EU) 2018/1882 and exemptions from registration obligation for aquaculture establishments.**

Regulation (EU) 2018/1882 will be amended to take account of new scientific findings, and where possible, to achieve an appropriate level of convergence with the lists of susceptible species published by the OIE. FEAP asked for clarification concerning which diseases and species the amendment will focus on, and the Commission clarified that it will focus on all aquatic diseases listed in accordance with the Animal Health Law and the species relevant to those listed diseases.

In addition, work is ongoing on a draft Implementing Regulation which will set out the types of aquaculture establishments that may be exempted by Member States from the

requirement to be registered, and on the types of aquaculture establishments and operators that may be exempted by Member States, from certain record-keeping requirements.

OFI requested clarification concerning the transition period for certificates which had been mentioned earlier in the meeting, and asked whether it is provided solely for terrestrial certificates or also for aquatic certificates. The Commission confirmed that the transitional period applies to both terrestrial and aquatic certificates.

- **Health statuses and guidance for certification in transitional period.**

The Commission provided an update as regards how the health statuses are recognised under the Animal Health Law framework. Zones with disease-free status or with an approved eradication programme are listed in draft Commission implementing Regulation (SANTE 7166/2020) which is in the last steps of the legislative procedure.

Also, the Commission explained the scope of the Working document SANTE/7104/2021 rev1 aiming at providing guidance for certification during the transitional period for certificates starts on 21 April 2021 when Regulation (EU) 2016/429 becomes applicable and elapses on 17 October 2021.

Questions were raised about the bilateral agreements regime for bluetongue under the framework of the Animal Health Law. The Commission replied that the voluntary options for animal health conditions included in the former bilateral agreements can be found, with certain updates and adaptations, in the legislation supplementing the Animal Health Law.

- **Information on the delegated and implementing act on official controls in animal health.**

The Commission briefly explained the legal context of the two drafts as well as their main elements and also those elements will not be part of them because already covered elsewhere. The participants were invited to send in their comments if they wish. Several organisations asked clarificatory questions, which the Commission replied. Both drafts will be submitted to public feed-back as soon as the internal consultations are completed, possibly in May.

4. AOB

The Commission informed the participants of the dates of the BTSF/AHL Conference on April 21st/22nd (half-days) and also the Platform on Animal Welfare on June 22nd.

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

STAKEHOLDER ORGANISATIONS
AnimalHealthEurope
AVEC - Association of Poultry Processors and Poultry Trade in the EU
CELCAA - European Liaison Committee for Agriculture and agri-food trade
COGECA - European agri-cooperatives
Compassion in World Farming
Diagnostics for Animals
EAZA - European Association of Zoos and Aquaria
ECSLA - European Cold Storage and Logistics Association
EFSA – European Food Safety Authority
EGGVP – European Group for Generic Veterinary Products
EFSA – European Food Safety Authority
EPMA/AEPM - European molluscs' producers association
Eurogroup for Animals
European Forum of Farm Animal Breeders
EPO – European Pet Organisation
EUWEP – European Union of Wholesale with Eggs, Egg Products and Poultry and Game
FACE Network - Farmhouse and Artisan Cheese and dairy producers
FAO – Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations
FEAP – Federation of European Aquaculture Producers
FEAP – and API (Assoziacione Piscicoltori Italiani)
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 Supplements Europe
FoodDrinkEurope
FVE – Federation of Veterinarians in Europe
IFOAM Organics Europe
Independent Retail Europe
IPATA – International Pet and Animal Transportation Association
IPIFF – International Platform of Insects for Food and Feed
OFI – Ornamental Fish International
OIE – World Organisation for Animal Health
Vier Pforten/Four Paws

Members of the Council of European Union Presidency Trio: Portugal and Slovenia