



Brussels,

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 in the Conference Centre in Rue Froissart (CCAB) on June 7th, 2022.

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

The Commission welcomed the Members of the Animal Health Advisory Committee and also the Members of the Council of the European Union Presidency Trio – France, Czechia and Sweden and 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 African swine fever (ASF), SARS-CoV-2 and Highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI).

- **African swine fever disease (ASF)**

An update was given on African swine fever (ASF) by the Commission.

Following the interventions by FACE (on National action plans for the management of wild boar), FESASS (on the movements of germinal products within the restricted zones and shift of pig production in the affected Member States) and FEFAC (on the research targeting feed), the Commission has clarified that a review of ASF Regulation is ongoing (6 working group meetings with the experts of the Member States took place). Pending the internal consultations and the outcome of the final discussions with the Member States, the Commission intends proposing a concept of legally binding National action plans for the management of wild boar for the Member States, prohibitions of movements of kept porcine animals within the restricted zones (with a set of ‘safe’ derogations).

In relation to the research on feed the Commission referred to the latest EFSA’s opinion on the matter (published on 27 April 2021, EFSA Journal 2021;19(4):6558).

- **SARS-CoV-2**

An update was given on SARS CoV-2 in mustelidae and raccoon dogs by the Commission. The prolongation of the legal requirement for monitoring and surveillance was presented along with the new mandate issued to EFSA, in coordination with ECDC, to review the risk factors and related risk mitigating measures.

On request of the FVE, the Commission clarified that the EFSA mandate would encompass the risk factors, including the host species spectrum when this represents a risk for humans.

- **Avian influenza**

The Commission presented an overview of the situation regarding outbreaks of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI).

Following the intervention by FVE, the Commission provided information on the ongoing work for the specific rules on vaccination against HPAI (during the presentation at point 4 of the Agenda). In addition, considering intervention from FESASS, the Commission informed that EFSA has reassessed with intention to update the list of wild bird species that are recommended to be targeted by the surveillance for HPAI. This updated list will be published by EFSA and EURL in the near future.

3. Animal Health Law – Information material (SANTE G2)

The Commission informed participants about the information material on the Animal Health Law, which has been made available to all stakeholder groups in April 2022 and is accessible in all EU languages at the Commission websites.

FESASS and OFI/EPO thanked the Commission and welcomed the material, which was well accepted and is used by their members. FESASS suggested an easier access to the documents in the Web. The Commission will look into that.

Other AHL related questions:

FOUR PAWS asked about the rules for persons who are systematically breeding pet animals and should these be registered? The Commission confirmed that persons keeping pet animals in their households with the main purpose of breeding them and possibly selling the pets, must all be registered as establishments. Other persons, who are just keeping pet animals in their households as companion animals, should not be affected by that rule.

OFI/EPO asked about the state of play of amending the list of species related to aquatic animal diseases. The Commission informed that an implementing act is in the final stages before adoption for amending susceptible species, while the work is ongoing on the EFSA mandate for vector species. That list of vector species will be amended following the results obtained from the EFSA opinion.

OFI/EPO reported on a recent issue with the import from the US related to testing requirements for disease free status for certain aquaculture animals. The Commission informed that it is not aware of these specific difficulties and that the rules for testing have not been recently changed. The Commission invited OFI/EPO to provide more details, so that it can properly assess the issue.

4. Animal Health Law - Future rules for the use of VMPs for disease prevention and control (SANTE G2)

The Commission presented the main points and modalities of a new draft “Delegated Regulation supplementing Regulation (EU) 2016/429 of the European Parliament and the Council as regards rules for the use of certain veterinary medicinal products for the purpose of prevention and control of certain listed diseases” (*i.e rules on the use of Veterinary Medicinal products for Category A and some Category B Diseases, including vaccines*). In the ensuing discussion the following clarifications were provided in response to questions of certain members of the AHAC:

- The procedures, regarding decision-making and initiation of vaccination are the same, irrespective of vaccination strategy selected against a Cat. A disease, e.g. as in the case of preventive vaccination (*FESSAS*).
- The COM, has the legal powers (art. 71 of the Animal Health Law) to adopt an implementing decision, for additional control measures against a listed disease in a MS, including vaccination, although this is reserved for exceptional situations and is not expected to be common practice (*FESSAS*).

- The present Regulation will be implemented in parallel with the acts on the Union antigen, vaccine and diagnostic reagent banks, one without interfering or contradicting the others and vice versa (*FESSAS*).
- EU financial support for preventive vaccination in MS is subject to the same rules as any other veterinary emergency measure (*FESSAS*).
- Implementation of disease control measures listed in other acts (e.g. Delegated Regulation (EU) 2020/687) is not affected by this act (*EFFAB*).
- The COM is working closely with the OIE on the acceptability of the new measures introduced by the present act by non – EU trade partners (*FVE*).

5. Animal Welfare - Results of the study recently concluded on animal welfare labelling (SANTE G5)

Following a presentation by the Commission, FOUR PAWS asked why the study did not investigate if consumers prefer voluntary or compulsory labels. The Commission replied that the study focused on existing labels and the issue of voluntary or compulsory labels will be explored by the ongoing impact assessment study on animal welfare labelling.

FESASS referred to differences between the producer price and consumer price and asked if the study explored the willingness of consumers to pay. The Commission replied that differences between consumer prices and production costs have been investigated in the study. Based on limited evidence, it shows that the transmission of additional costs to consumers varies, depending mostly on the price strategy of each retailer. The Commission also mentioned that the proportion of the production costs in the consumer price varies depending on the level of transformation and services associated to the final product (transport, publicity, etc.). As regards the willingness to pay, the Commission declared that the study indicates that there are discrepancies between declaration and actual shopping behaviour. It shows that even if there is some willingness to pay, it does not go beyond the price of an organic product.

FVE, COPA and Independent Retailer Europe wanted to have clarification regarding the timeline of the initiative on animal welfare labelling. The Commission specified that if the decision of an EU label was taken, the proposal would be part of a package on the revision of the EU animal welfare legislation by the end of 2023.

COPA also made a statement regarding the necessity to have a system that compensate for higher investments and ensure a better share of benefits for farmers.

Independent Retailer Europe also asked how the Commission would address the issues of price differential. The Commission replied that a possible legislation on an animal welfare label was not an instrument for addressing prices negotiations between players in the food chain. It could create opportunities for farmers for better incomes but the evidence of the study on this aspect was not conclusive enough to guarantee that a label will necessarily lead to a change in the situation, in that respect.

6. Fertilisers & soil improvers - State of play – Safe end point for fertilisers (SANTE G2)

The Commission welcomed the members of the List of Observers in the DG GROW Expert Group on fertilising products and presented information on the state of play as regards the legal exercise on determination of safe end points for fertilisers

In the discussion that followed *EFPPRA*, *ECOFI*, *IPIFF*, *EUROFEMA*, *EBIC* asked for further information on the timeline, use of insect frass, hydrolised protein, processed manure, composition and packaging of fertilisers.

The Commission clarified the questions and explained that only products with a favourable EFSA opinion and which can reach an agreement quickly were included in the draft to open an efficient new EU market as soon as possible.

At the end of the discussion EFPPRA presented a position statement on the needs for determination of safe end points for fertilisers in the scope of the green deal.

The Commission acknowledged the position and clarified that trade in fertilisers subject to national rules within the existing legal framework will continue with no interruption. The objective of the legal exercise is to determine end-points for fertilisers which are safe to be placed on the market without any further official control. In the future, any product or method can be included, provided a positive EFSA assessment.

7. AOB

The Commission informed the meeting that a new Advisory Group on Sustainability of Food Systems will replace the existing Advisory Group on the food chain and animal and plant health at the end of its mandate (15 July 2022). The Animal Health Advisory Committee (AHAC) is a sub-group of that latter Committee. The Commission intends keeping the AHAC sub-group also under the new Advisory group constellation and will proceed with its re-establishment accordingly. The participants speaking, welcomed this initiative.

The Commission also informed the participants that a provisional date of October 28th has been set for the next meeting (subject to confirmation).

STAKEHOLDER ORGANISATIONS
AVEC - Association of Poultry Processors and Poultry Trade in the EU
CNC
COGECA - European agri-cooperatives
COPA – European farmers
EFFAB - European Forum of Farm Animal Breeders
EMFEMA – European Manufacturers of Feed Minerals Association
ELO – European Landowners Organisation
EPO – European Pet Organisation
EUCOLAIT
FACE
FACE-NETWORK-EU
FEAP – Federation of European Aquaculture Producers
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 Drink Europe
FVE – Federation of Veterinarians in Europe
Independent Retail Europe
IPIFF - International Platform of Insects for Food and Feed
OFI – Ornamental Fish International
OIE – World Organisation for Animal Health
UECBV – European Livestock and Meat Trades Union
Vier Pfoten/Four Paws

MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION PRESIDENCY TRIO

France

Czechia

Sweden

DG GROW Stakeholders

European Consortium of the Organic-Based Fertilizer Industry (ECOFI)
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IFOAM Organics Europe

EBA European Biogas Association

European Biostimulants Industry Council (EBIC)
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EurFertilizers Europe

EUROFEMA

EFRA
