

Minutes of the meeting of the expert group to discuss animal health requirements for the movement within the Union and the entry into the Union of poultry, captive birds and hatching eggs

13 April 2018, Brussels

1. Approval of the agenda

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

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 Council and the European Parliament.

3. List of points discussed

3.1. Introduction, opening

The Commission started with a presentation providing an overview of the Animal health Law (AHL), its structure, the empowerments contained in it, including the different Delegated (DA) and Implementing (IA) acts that are being drafted to develop those empowerments, with a special emphasis on poultry, captive birds and hatching eggs.

Member States raised issues related to possible administrative burden, definitions and asked for clarification on zoonotic salmonellas and how the consultation with third countries will be carried out.

The Commission clarified that the aim is to have animal health requirements that are proportionate and effective in protecting the Union against animal diseases. It was also clarified that, although under the AHL hatching eggs are defined as germinal products, the intention is to include them in the same DA for the movement of terrestrial animals, as the animal health requirements for their movement are more aligned to live poultry. It was further clarified that requirements for compartment will be included in the DA for surveillance measures and that requirements in relation to zoonotic salmonellas will be covered by the public health legislation. Furthermore, the Commission informed Member States that the consultation with the Third Countries will be carried out following the SPS procedures.

3.2. Presentation and discussion on the animal health requirements for the movement within the Union

General requirements for movements

The discussion of this document started with the definitions for the different categories of birds. The Commission clarified that the AHL defines poultry, captive birds and pet birds on the basis both of the purpose for which the birds are kept and on the species of birds.

Member States referred to new practices of the industry for the handling of day-old chicks and asked that those are reflected in the definition of day-old chicks. The Commission requested information about those practices and comments on any possible health risk associated with those.

In relation to transport requirements, one Member State suggested to include 'drying' as part of the cleaning and disinfection process.

Specific animal health requirements for movements of poultry, captive birds and hatching eggs

Presenting the draft the Commission noted that the provisions are based on current requirements, however, some of them have been modified to align the requirements between different commodities or categories of poultry.

During the discussion Member States commented on the responsibilities of operators and officials provided for in the draft. They questioned, in particular, the relevance of checks on the epidemiological unit of origin prior to the movement of day-old chicks. They also commented that it is difficult for the official veterinarians to perform physical checks on the epidemiological units of hatching eggs, because they usually originate from more than one epidemiological unit, which implies not only administrative difficulties, but also difficulties in respect of the biosecurity measures on the establishments of origin. They also suggested that requirements for movements of certain species of poultry, that don't show clinical signs of avian influenza, are set separately from the rest. Furthermore, one Member State suggested in the case of hatching eggs to use a more generic term like 'sanitation' instead of 'disinfection', to allow for the use of other possible treatments, such as irradiation.

The Commission will reflect on the comments from Member States on physical checks and division of responsibilities between operators, officials and other veterinarians, ensuring that the requirements proposed are aligned with the provisions of the Animal Health Law and the Official Control regulation and they are proportionate, effective and do not compromise animal health and farm biosecurity.

In relation to the time of slaughter of poultry after their arrival to the slaughterhouse of destination, Member States asked for alignment to the timeframes in the animal welfare legislation. The Commission responded that this DA concerns animal health requirements and that the proposal is based on current legislation.

Following the discussion on the movements within the Union of hatching eggs, the Commission asked Member States to provide feedback in relation to the movements of Specified Pathogen Free eggs.

In relation to the provisions for movements of consignments of less than 20 poultry or hatching eggs, Member States commented on the possibility of positive cross-reaction for *Salmonella Pullorum* and *Salmonella Gallinarum* when poultry has been previously vaccinated and suggested that a bacteriological test would be more appropriate than a serological one.

Next discussed were specific animal health requirements for the movement of captive birds. Member States considered the proposal from the Commission to introduce certification for all movements of captive birds as adding administrative burden. The Commission acknowledged the aspect of administrative burden, but defended the proposal on the basis of animal health risk. One Member States asked for the harmonisation of the certificates required for events such as exhibitions and competitions. Member States were asked to provide their comments taking into account animal health risks posed by those movements and the needs of the operators also in relation to expositions and competitions.

Finally, Member States commented on the sample types and sample size proposed for different categories of birds and suggested to use more general terms, such as referring to representative statistical sampling.

3.3. Presentation and discussion on the animal health requirements for the entry into the Union of poultry, hatching eggs and captive birds

The Commission presented the proposed requirements for the entry into the Union of poultry and hatching eggs and clarified that certain provisions would need to be amended based on the

conclusions of the discussion on similar provisions for movements within the Union. The Commission further clarified that the animal health attestations that will be included in the certificates for the entry into the Union in the relevant IA, will depend on the provisions contained in the AHL and the relevant DA. One Member State suggested reviewing and harmonising the rules for the marking of hatching eggs between movements within and entry into the Union.

Member States commented on the testing techniques proposed for the entry of poultry and hatching eggs into Member States with non-vaccination status for infection with Newcastle Disease virus and suggested alignment with the methods used by the EU reference labs.

4. Conclusions/recommendations/opinions

The Commission obtained useful information on the view of Member States on issues which have to be addressed in the future legislation. Such inputs are important for the Commission while drafting a possible future delegated act for the animal health requirements for the movement within the Union and the entry into the Union of poultry, captive birds and hatching eggs.

A follow up expert group meeting will be organized around June 2018 to discuss a revised text.

The Commission thanked Member States for their input and comments during this meeting and encouraged them to reflect on the issues discussed and provide written feedback not later than 4 May 2018.

5. Next steps

The outcome of the discussions and opinions provided by participants during this expert group meeting will be used by the Commission during future work towards the preparation of possible future delegated acts under the Animal Health Law.

6. Next meeting

The next meeting has been scheduled for June 2018.