



Brussels, 10 November 2023

## **Minutes**

Meeting of the **ANIMAL HEALTH ADVISORY COMMITTEE, Working Group of the Advisory Group on Sustainability of Food Systems**, the sub-group of the food chain, animal and plant health held in the **10 November 2023, 09:30-15:00, at Rue de la LOI 130. Floor 11-room B.**

### **1. Introduction, opening - Unit G2 Animal Health (Chair: Head of Unit G2)**

The Commission welcomed the Members of the Animal Health Advisory Committee and also the Members of the Council of the European Union Presidency Trio – **Sweden, Spain and Belgium** and explained briefly the purpose of the meeting and then proceeded with the approved agenda.

### **2. Update on animal diseases (Unit G2 Animal Health)**

#### **• Latest state of play on ASF**

- The Commission provided an update on the ASF epidemiological situation in Europe and in the EU and reported about 14 member States affected by ASF. The disease is mainly present in wild boar, with some spill over to domestic pigs.
- There are some challenging, new situations in Croatia, Italy and Sweden.
- In Croatia the disease was notified in June 2023 for the first time in the domestic pigs, and more than 1000 outbreaks were notified in few months in a zone of relatively small size, and in not registered small pig establishments.
- In mainland Italy, ASF is spread in the North, in the Centre and in the South mainly in wild boar with few outbreaks in domestic pigs in Lazio and Calabria regions. However, in August 2023 Italy notified several ASF outbreaks in domestic pigs in the Lombardy Region indicating a deterioration of the situation. The whole province of Pavia was put under restricted zone. One secondary outbreak of ASF Genotype II was also notified in Sardinia.
- On the other hand in Sardinia, genotype I seems to be under control and the regionalisation was revised in a favourable way.
- In Sweden, the first outbreaks of ASF in wild boar were notified in September 2023.
- FESASS asked if considering the situation in Croatia the Commission was considering to revise the guideline for the ASF management. COM replied that this situation although peculiar for the high number of outbreaks in a short period and in a limited zone, the risks posed by small farms with low biosecurity and the lack of proper implementation of identification and registration of farms were not a novelty.

#### **• Latest state of play on avian influenza**

The Commission presented updates regarding the epidemiological situation with the disease. It highlighted that the virus is already detected in all parts of the EU and therefore measures like awareness and enhanced biosecurity are cornerstones for preventing poultry establishments to get infected with HPAI virus that is circulating in the wild birds.

#### **• Situation on sheep pox and goat pox**

The Commission presented an update of the epidemiological situation of sheep pox and goat pox (SGP) in the EU. In Spain, SGP has been effectively eradicated since the last outbreak (May 2023) and all control measures have been lifted since September 2023. In September however Bulgaria reported an SGP outbreak, close to their border with Türkiye, in Burgas, a region where

SGP had occurred again in the past. This was the first outbreak since the last occurrence of the disease in the country, 10 years ago. Greece also reported an outbreak of SGP, in October, on the island of Lesbos (East Aegean sea, very close to the Turkish coast). Last outbreak in Greece was in 2018, again on Lesbos island. Both outbreaks, in BG and EL, occurred in areas identified as “high risk” for exotic animal diseases, subject to enhanced surveillance for SGP (“THRACE” programme and “TADs” programme, both financed by the EU). To date no additional SGP outbreaks have reported, in either MS.

- **Information on BTV and EHD**

The Commission presented an update of the epidemiological situation on infection with bluetongue virus (1-24) (BTV) and infection with epizootic haemorrhagic disease virus (EHD).

- COPA, UECVB and FVE stressed the importance of the availability of a vaccine to limit the spread of serotype 3 of BTV;
- UECVB pointed out the importance of facilitating movements of animals amongst areas where EHD is present;
- FESSAS mentioned the workshop organised by FESSAS already held on surveillance for vector borne diseases; the recommendations will be shared with the Commission services, Member States and EFSA.

### 3. Ongoing work under Animal Health Law (Unit G2 Animal Health)

- **Rules on compartments**

- The ongoing work on a draft delegated regulation on compartments for terrestrial animals (poultry) was presented, included the objectives, structure and content of the draft, outcomes of the comments of the Member States Expert Group, which met twice, next steps and needed updates on disease control related rules;
- Questions from the floor related mainly to the management of already approved compartments, once the Delegated Regulation is in force, this will be discussed with Member States for the next version of the draft.

- **Amendments to Delegated Regulation (EU) 2020/687 on disease control**

- The Commission presented the amendments done to the rules for prevention and control of Category A diseases by Delegated Regulation (EU) 2023/751 which is already applicable since March. In addition, informed on the new amendments that are proposed by the Commission and discussed with the Expert Group on Animal Health. The new amendments are, in particular for taking into account the conclusions and recommendations of EFSA in the scientific opinions published following assessing of the measures included in the Annexes to Delegated Regulation (EU) 2020/687 (e.g. sampling procedures, monitoring period, minimum radius of the protection and surveillance zones, minimum duration of the measures in the restricted zone, risk-mitigating treatments for products of animal origin and other products) for each Category A disease. In addition, new amendments are proposed to articles referring to movement of manure from protection and surveillance zone, the duration of the measures in the restricted zone (ensuring clarity and consistency with the general rule as in Article 68 of Regulation (EU) 2016/429), repopulation and lifting of the control measures in the affected establishment.
- AVEC informed that the amendments intended for the article related to duration of the measures in the surveillance zone will extend, in certain situations, the restrictions, with significant economic consequences. The Commission reiterated that the procedures as detailed in the amendment of Delegated Regulation (EU) 2020/687 are already required and applicable as they are the general rules laid down in the Animal Health Law and that the amendment was not imposing any additional restriction/burden.

- **Rules on animal health certificates**

- The Commission presented the state of play of the amendments to Commission Implementing Regulations (EU) 2020/2235, (EU) 2020/2236 and (EU) 2021/403 as

regards model animal health certificates and animal health/official certificates for the entry into the Union of consignments of certain categories of animals and goods for human consumption, for the entry into the Union of consignments of certain aquatic animals, and for entry into the Union and movements between the Member States of consignments of certain categories of terrestrial animals and germinal products thereof.

- **Information on adopted amendments to Delegated Regulations (EU) 2020/688 and 2020/689**
  - The Commission presented the amendments to Delegated Regulation (EU) 2020/688 on EHD conditions related to movements within the Union of animals, providing for additional risk mitigating measures, movements of captive birds to exhibitions in another member state, premovement checks of equine animals and diagnostic tests for bovine viral diarrhoea. These amendments are laid down in Delegated Regulation (EU) 2023/2515.
    - FESSAS thanked the Commission for the amendments, particularly for the EHD aspects;
    - UECVB stated that one of the additional EHD risk mitigating measures (vector protected establishments) is difficult to implement.
  - The Commission also presented the amendments to Delegated Regulation (EU) 2020/689 related to the target species for surveillance, to further enable and support competent authorities to conduct structured surveillance for HPAI in mammals as appropriate, the pathways to obtain disease freedom and the requirements to maintain Newcastle disease free status without vaccination. These amendments are laid down in Delegated Regulation (EU) 2023/1798.

#### **4. Update on EFSA opinions on aquatic animal diseases and listed species (Unit G2 Animal Health)**

The Commission presented an update on recently published EFSA Scientific Opinions concerning vectors and reservoirs of the diseases of aquatic animals which have been listed in accordance with the AHL, and on listing and categorisation of diseases for which certain Member States and parts thereof have national measures which have been approved in accordance with Article 226(3) of that Regulation. The representative from Ornamental Fish International (OFI) thanked the Commission for the clarifications which had been provided, in particular concerning disease listing and categorisation.

#### **5. Update on poultry vaccination including EFSA outcomes (Unit G2 Animal Health)**

- The Commission reminded on the EU legislation and rules in place regarding vaccination against HPAI. In addition, informed on the vaccination trials that are carried out by certain Member States to test the efficiency of certain vaccines for different poultry species. It informed that France started on 1 October 2023 to apply a preventive vaccination against HPAI in all establishments keeping ducks for the production of meat. Information has been provided as well about the Member States that have informed on the preventive vaccination against HPAI in captive birds from zoos.
- The Commission also shared the main outcomes of EFSA assessment regarding available vaccines and vaccination strategies for HPAI, as published on 10 October 2023.
- EAZA informed on the publication of their position statement regarding vaccination of captive birds and mentioned that the EU rules, in particular concerning movement of vaccinated captive birds may need to be clarified.
- AVEC, FESASS, Copa-Cogeca were interested in the trade consequences following implementation of vaccination in France. The Commission informed that few trading partners have informed on restrictions imposed to the imports of poultry and products following implementation of vaccination in France. Discussions are ongoing with those third countries, to explain in details the governance and the rules in force in the EU when HPAI vaccination is implemented and to reply to all their questions.

## **6. One health surveillance (Unit G2 Animal Health)**

The Commission presented the activities being carried out under one health (OH) surveillance within the work programme 2022 of the EU4Health initiative. It presented the work done by EFSA, ECDC and HADEA to support Member States in carrying out this initiative. SAFE sought clarification on how this initiative promoted OH. ECVC highlighted the need for more fora where to discuss OH approach. Animal Health Europe sought insight on what can be the role of stakeholders in the EU4Health initiative. The FVE highlighted that the EU4Health had very focused calls in relation to ambition of the initiative. The Commission replied that the EU4Health programme was indeed very ambitious and with a substantial budget; there were several meetings with stakeholders inviting to shape and adjust future priorities of the EU4Health initiative. The animal component in there was quite modest due of the novelty of the initiative. The linking with the OH approach was done on several levels both in the design and planning phase (involvement of Member States, EFSA and ECDC to include both animal health and public health components in the assessment) as well as in the data collection and ex-post assessment. The SANTE conference on OH of 13 November 2023 was only one of the venues where OH approach would be discussed. More events were organised both at the international and national levels.

## **7. Technical alignment of ABP rules Commission Regulation (EU) No 142/2011 with Official Control Regulation and Animal Health Law (Unit G2 Animal Health)**

The Commission presented a planned initiative as regards technical alignment of Regulation (EU) No 142/2011 with the Official Control Regulation and Animal Health Law. Regulation (EU) No 142/2011 which provides a comprehensive set of rules for the implementation of the EU legislation on animal by-products. The main principles and provisions are still valid, however, several references to the Union legislation are outdated. The main objective of the commission is update of the text with correct reference to the Official Control Regulation and Animal Health Law, as well as, the corresponding implementing and delegated acts. The Commission is also ready to explore this opportunity and amend some parts of Regulation (EU) No 142/2011 provided that such amendment is based on a favourable EFSA opinion or is regulated by the international standards.

## **8. Miscellaneous, discussion – question/answers**

**END**