

Minutes of the meeting of the expert group to discuss the delegated act on surveillance, eradication programmes and disease free status according to the Animal Health Law

24 September 2018, Brussels

1. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

A preliminary agenda was circulated and agreed at the beginning of the meeting. The working document to be discussed was provided in advance.

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 that the Council and the European Parliament were not represented in the meeting.

3. INTRODUCTION

The Commission gave an overview presentation on the changes made to the working document compared with the version circulated in the expert group meeting of 11 June 2018 and the introduction of certain recitals specific to certain provisions. The Commission presented the work ahead to complete the working document and gave details on the organisation of future meetings, pointing out that so far no date has been confirmed after the 2 October 2018 other than for aquatic animals on 18 October.

4. CONCLUSIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS/OPINIONS

The outcomes of the discussions were the following.

4.1. The Commission presented the provisions for surveillance.

- The Commission explained that the Chapter on notifications was deleted as it appeared unnecessary. It confirmed that the surveillance requirements would consist of the general "passive" surveillance for all listed diseases, completed when necessary by the disease specific activities listed in the working document.
- The Commission explained the proposed provisions specifying the targeted animal population for surveillance. Some experts considered that the possibility to include non-listed animal species for surveillance of emerging disease in aquatic animals could be extended to terrestrial animals if it was completely optional.
- The flexible approach proposed by the Commission on diagnostic methods was welcomed. The Commission answered to experts that the proposed provisions would not be an obstacle for the development of new methods by national reference laboratories, including for emerging diseases.
- Experts supported the possibility to use the results of official controls and other official activities as a possible source of information for surveillance. An expert was concerned that data protection regulations may impair the transmission of certain information, which the Commission will further investigate.
- The approach to confirmation of disease and case definitions was largely welcomed.

4.2 The Commission presented the general provisions for eradication programmes and the specific provisions for certain diseases.

- The Commission explained that the eradication programmes should be implemented in an area with a minimum size in order to be approved. Some experts discussed the proposed minimum size.
- The Commission presented the maximum period during which an eradication programme against category C diseases can last and consequentially, the Member State is entitled to apply trade restrictions. This maximum period of 6 years, with possibilities for its extension, was discussed by several delegates.
- The Commission explained a possible approach to exclude granting a health status to circuses, other establishments keeping animals for sporting, culture and similar events, requesting the opinion of the Member States.
- Several delegations requested the alignment of the wording throughout the text, in particular when the Commission refers to actions that are not compulsory.

4.3 The Commission presented the general provisions for disease-free status which were supported by experts.

- The Commission will further detail which provisions from the general criteria should apply with a five years period for the granting of disease free status based on absence of listed species, incapacity of vector or of disease agent to survive.
- The Commission explained that the transitional measures to grant disease free status based on "grandfather's right" would only apply to diseases for which status were already previously granted by the Commission.

5. NEXT STEPS

The Commission invited experts to provide written comments by 22 October 2018.

6. NEXT MEETING

The next meetings will be held on 1 and 2 October 2018 (disease specific for terrestrial animals), request has been made for additional meeting at the end of November or beginning of December 2018.