



Brussels, 28/10/2022

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 28th October, 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 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. Terms of Reference of Animal Health Advisory Committee meeting (new- under the AGSFS)

The Commission provided a short state of play on the key elements governing the activity of the AHAC, following recent changes. Differentiation was made between what is covered by the Terms of Reference of the AHAC and what is covered by the Terms of Reference of the AGSFS. Several stakeholders highly appreciated efforts of the Commission to continue with this forum, which they consider very valuable. Some regretted that several past AHAC members were not selected to be member of AGSFS (and therefore not member of the AHAC either). The Commission explained how that selection was done on a higher level following a public procedure, based on horizontal rules. The Commission assured the members that specific expertise can, and will, be sought ad hoc.

3. Animal diseases – Unit G2 Animal Health

- The Commission gave presentation on the latest state of play on African swine fever (ASF), Highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) and situation on sheep pox and goat pox.
- **African swine fever disease (ASF)**
Latest state of play was given on African swine fever (ASF) by the Commission was focusing on the epidemiological situation of ASF globally and in the EU and on the ongoing and planned EU initiatives. The Commission also referred to a recent high-level Ministerial event on ASF organised on 27 September 2022 by the Commission and the Czech Presidency of the EU Council. EU Dairy Association asked about research and development of ASF vaccines. In its response, the Commission referred to ongoing internal reflections (as a follow-up to the conference) that are led by the Joint Research Centre. FESASS informed about their activities related to ASF referring in particular to a workshop that took place on 14 October in Brussels and to a planned seminar on 9 November in Torhout. In its response, the Commission indicated that the outcomes of these events could be used for the upcoming review of EU guidelines on ASF.
- **Avian influenza**
Latest state of play was given on highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) by the Commission.

The Commission presented the summary of the latest HPAI epidemic seasons and highlighted that biosecurity remains the cornerstone of prevention measures to protect poultry from infection with the HPAI virus. It mentioned that other tools, like vaccination, that can complement the biosecurity in the efforts to prevent or control HPAI are also explored. For this, it informed that harmonized specific rules are on the last procedural steps towards adoption by the Commission. In addition, EFSA was mandated by the Commission to issue a new scientific opinion on vaccination against HPAI, to update the scientific knowledge on this topic. The Commission also presented an overview of HPAI outbreaks globally.

AVEC, FVE, FESSAS have raised concerns about the consequences to trade following the implementation of vaccination by Member States and urged the Commission to engage in discussions with the trading partners on this subject. The Commission agreed that after the EU specific rules on vaccination will be published the topic will be included on the agendas as part of discussions with third countries or with WOA. H.

- **Sheep pox and goat pox**

The Commission presented the current sheep pox and goat pox situation in the Spain and an overview of the situation globally as well as the characteristics of the disease and its pathogen. Finally, it concluded, presenting the measures implemented in the Union.

On request of FESASS, the Commission clarified that the biosecurity measures for this disease are of particular relevance due to the resistance of this virus in the environment. It also pointed towards the EFSA opinions of 2014 and 2022, which reviewed the risks and the measures for this disease, for getting more detailed information on the effectiveness of the control measures.

4. **Animal Health Law - Unit G2 Animal Health**

- **General overview and state of play**

The Commission presented a general overview of adopted legislation and the one under development under the Animal Health Law. The Commission also informed about the mandates and the work with EFSA in relation to this legal framework. FESASS asked about the Commissions' intentions to amend Delegated Regulation (EU) 2020/689. In its response, the Commission explained that it has no such plans and sees no need to amend that regulation.

- **Specific information on certain acts**

- The Commission presented draft amending Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2020/692 supplementing Regulation (EU) 2016/429 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards rules for entry into the Union, and the movement and handling after entry of consignments of certain animals, germinal products and products of animal origin.

Delegated Regulation (EU) 2020/692 applies from 21 April 2021. Since that date, the experience gained on its application has shown the need to refine further several provisions. The draft proposal amends the entry rules in the following fields: entry of aquatic animals and products, entry of dogs, cats and ferrets, identification, entry of poultry, entry of meat products, dairy products, composite products, entry of equine animals, entry of ovine animals, entry of germinal products and entry of captive birds. AVEC acknowledged the Commissions' work on this act and thanked for the efforts. FVE asked about the public feedback on this amendment. The Commission clarified that the amendments are of finetuning nature and therefore the draft was not presented for public feedback.

- The Commission presented the outcomes of the public feedback exercise concerning the draft Delegated Regulation on the use of veterinary medicinal products for disease prevention and control purposes. The Commission thanked all for their contributions. FESASS, EU Dairy Association and AVEC expressed acknowledgments to the Commission in relation to this draft.

5. Animal Health – germinal products - Unit G2 Animal Health

- Update on the revision of the germinal product rule CDR (EU) 2020/686: main elements and highlight public feed-back period.
- The Commission explained the key elements and the time frame for this initiative. There were no questions.

6. Animal Health – Unit G2 Animal Health

- Presentation of the outcomes of EFSA scientific opinions on AMR related pathogens for possible listing under the AHL

The Commission explained the key elements of this initiative and gave all the links to the numerous scientific opinions. The Commission highlighted the elements of gaps and uncertainty in the scientific opinions. The Commission also explained that the scientific opinions still contain a wealth of collected data which may be studied and used by the stakeholders to improve the health and welfare of kept animals and in their quest to fight AMR in the EU, to research or to collaborate with national competent authorities. That is pending (and regardless of) any regulatory follow-up which will be decided with the competent authorities of the Member States at a later stage. Those who spoke, highly appreciated this ground-breaking initiative.

7. FVE (Federation of veterinarians of Europe) - Animal health visits (Article 25 of the AHL)

FVE presented their recent work on Animal health visits. Since the entry into force of the Animal Health Law, FVE engaged in two surveys on animal health visits in EU countries, the first one in 2017 and the second one in 2022. FVE has also published a position paper on the subject. FVE would like to see a more uniform approach across the EU, introduced possibly by an implementing act. The Commission thanked for the presentation and stressed that it doesn't see a need to develop more detailed rules as Member States seem to deal well by organising the visits and adjusting them to the local circumstances and organisation of services in their countries. FESASS agreed on the importance of this subject and stressed that Member States are in the process of implementation of these relatively recent rules, with a direct applicability of the responsibility on operators. FESASS favours a flexible approach and finds it difficult to add more EU regulation on this topic.

8. AOB

The Commission informed the participants of its intention to continue with the meetings of this Committee twice per year and if needed also more frequently. Next meeting is planned in spring 2023. The final date of the meeting is subject to later confirmation

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