



Brussels, 06/03/2019

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 Brussels on December 3rd, 2018.

Approval of the agenda of 2nd Meeting of 2018 of the Animal Health Advisory Committee

Introduction, opening: Deputy Head of Unit G3 Official controls and eradication of diseases in animals - DG SANTE

The Commission explained briefly the purpose of the meeting and with no points raised under AOB, the Commission proceeded with the agenda.

1. Official Controls

By way of introduction, a description was made of the scope, structure and objectives of the new Official Controls Regulation (OCR), which will mainly become applicable on 14 December 2019. The state of play was presented as regards the delegated and implementing acts that are being developed under the OCR. Some examples were given with special emphasis on animal health related matters such as meat inspections and the future border controls of composite products, hay and straw. Stakeholders were reminded about the adoption process, the relatively short timeline and the possibility to provide public feedback on the respective legislative acts through the Better Regulation portal. No major concerns were signalled by the stakeholders. Interventions were made by IPATA, UECEBV, FESASS and EAZA. The questions raised revolved around matters such as border controls of pets, the frequency of border controls and derogations from such controls, as well as the relationship between the new Animal Health Law and the OCR. As for the latter, it was clarified that the OCR lays down the rules on how to perform controls to verify compliance with certain requirements such as those established in the Animal Health Law and its tertiary legislation.

Link to Presentation

https://ec.europa.eu/food/sites/food/files/animals/docs/comm_ahac_20180702_pres-00.pdf

2. Animal disease outbreaks (SANTE G3)

The Commission gave a presentation on the state of play regarding avian influenza, lumpy skin disease, peste des petits ruminants and African swine fever.

Avian influenza: The situation as regards highly pathogenic avian influenza is characterised by a low number of outbreaks in poultry and captive birds during 2018, in particular when compared to the large epidemic in 2016/17. 27 out of the confirmed 33 outbreaks in poultry have occurred in Bulgaria where the disease is still ongoing. The last outbreaks in other Member States were detected up to March 2018. The infection pressure from wildlife persisted throughout the summer although at a low level. The highly pathogenic avian influenza subtype H5N8 is predominately found in poultry holdings and the H5N6 subtype in wild birds.

The cornerstone of disease prevention is biosecurity. Decision (EU) 2018/1136 on biosecurity and risk mitigation measures was therefore presented in detail. It requires that Member States establish a high risk area for disease introduction based on risk factors for virus transmission from wild birds to poultry. Depending on the level of risk, Member States have to take preventive measures including housing of all poultry kept in the open, prohibiting use of surface water, increasing wild bird surveillance and other risk mitigating measures. The Committee was informed that the annual report on EU surveillance in poultry and wild birds has been published.

No questions raised.

Lumpy skin disease & peste des petits ruminants: FESASS congratulated the Commission for their role in the control of the LSD epidemic across South Europe. In addition it expressed their concerns in relation to the trade restrictions, imposed on animals vaccinated against diseases like LSD and inquired on any forthcoming amendments of the LSD chapter of the OIE Terrestrial Code. In response, it was stressed that the Commission shares the same concerns with regard to trade measures imposed on vaccinated animals, however one should always keep in mind that these measures must always balance the need to minimize the risk for disease spread as well as the need to maintain trade. Regarding the LSD chapter of the OIE Code, the Commission is not aware of any imminent plans for amendment.

African swine fever:

Following the presentation of the Commission on the update on disease outbreaks, various representatives took the floor:

- EFFAB – with regard to ASF - concerning the transport and movement of animals through infected regions.
- FESASS - who can declare a country ASF-free? Investigation of the human factor regarding illegal movement of wild boar. Is vaccination possible in the future?
- FEFAC - Management of packaging of material from infected regions (biosecurity training) + what is OIE doing on ASF?
- CLITRAVI - what about the control posts in Third Countries and does it make sense to establish resting places for animals in infected areas?

In response the Commission made reference to the issue of biosecurity in resting places which was raised as well as the improvement of the animal health situation in the Czech Republic and when the restrictions would be updated accordingly. The importance of the OIE international standards on ASF was reiterated.

The Commission clarified that that the regionalisation measures are regularly reviewed and adapted to the changing needs related to the fight against the disease. It also clarified the intention to review the risk factors for spreading ASF through different matrices and that this should involve EFSA.

As indicated during its presentation, significant resources from the EU budget were allocated to vaccine research under the programme H2020.

Link to Presentation

https://ec.europa.eu/food/sites/food/files/animals/docs/comm_ahac_20180702_pres-02c.pdf

3. Animal Health Law

The Commission gave a detailed state of play on all aspects of the delegated and implementing acts with regard to the Animal Health Law as follows:

- General overview and overview of priority drafts
- List of animal diseases, disease categories, list of animal species
- Overview on aquatic animals
- Overview on disease control measures
- Overview on germinal products
- Surveillance, eradication programmes, disease freedom
- Registration and approval of establishments, record keeping, animal identification and registration rules
- Movements of terrestrial animals
- Entry into EU

FESASS, UECEBV and FVE made some general remarks on the AHL delegated and implementing acts development process and expressed certain views on contents of the drafts; FESASS presented a statement.

In response the Commission explained the efforts made to finalise the key acts and the time pressure to finalise the drafts. This is based on the deadlines set by the co-legislators. The Commission is consulting all relevant parties in accordance with the procedure agreed between the three EU institutions. Due to the tight deadlines more is not possible.

On the question of FVE concerning various definitions of veterinarians the Commission explained that the AHL and the rules under it should not interfere professional qualifications of veterinarians (not in the scope of this legislation) nor with the role of statutory bodies. Definitions used in some acts are there just to clarify certain specific roles of veterinarians.

With regard to the question from Vier Pfoeten whether the dog breeders could be exempted from the registration requirement, the Commission explained that Member States may exempt from registration requirements the establishments posing an insignificant risk as provided for in an implementing act to be adopted by the Commission in accordance with Article 86 of AHL. However, recital 99 of AHL, excludes dog breeders.

With regard to the question from EU Dog&Cat Alliance and the FVE, the Commission explained that it has been proposed in a draft implementing act on animal identification to oblige Member States to maintain the uniqueness of the individual animal identification code also for dogs, cats and ferrets when they are moved to another Member State as due to the ISO standard change, the re-sellers of the transponders may obtain the manufacturer's code if certain threshold of transponders' sale is exceeded, which might impact the traceability of the animal. FVE and Vier Pfoeten supported the Commission proposal.

The Commission clarified to the FVE that the definition of the 'establishment veterinarian' has been updated as proposed by the FVE to limit his/her activities carried out at the quarantine establishment for kept terrestrial animals other than primates or at a confined establishment.

With regard to the horses' identification question from FVE and Vier Pfoeten, the Commission explained that the single identification document with minimum animal health requirements as defined in AHL is obligatory for any horse, additional requirements such as for breeding, alternative means of identification etc. will require more complex documents than those of today.

The Commission clarified to UECEBV that as soon as ISO standards are set for UHF (Ultra High Frequency) chips, the Commission would elaborate the possible use of such chips as an official means of identification of kept terrestrial animals.

FESASS raised the following issues with regard to eradication programme and assembly operations:

- The maximum duration of 6 years foreseen for the eradication programmes of C diseases may not be adequate.
The Commission replied that this period might be expanded in duly justified cases
- For the eradication programmes for C diseases, the approach in the draft should be to lay down expected outcomes giving full flexibility to Member States on how to reach the outcome.
The Commission replied that basic provisions are needed to ensure a common approach whereas giving a sufficient degree of flexibility to Member States. In addition, these programmes are to be approved by the Commission, and therefore provisions on how to reach the outcome are needed.
- In the particular case of Bluetongue, they requested the maintenance of the current regime of Bilateral agreements.
The Commission explained that it is currently working in the best way to address this issue through other means.

Link to Presentation

https://ec.europa.eu/food/sites/food/files/animals/docs/comm_ahac_20181203_pres-03.pdf

4. Animal Welfare – Update on animal welfare issues (SANTE G2)

The Commission presented an update on the animal welfare activities since the last meeting in July 2018. It includes the outcomes of the newly published report of the European Court of Auditors, the last meeting of the EU animal welfare platform, the activities of the first EU reference centre for animal welfare, the adoption of a recommendation for a coordinated control plan on online sales of dogs and cats, a pilot project on pig castration and an EFSA mandate on the protection at the time of killing. The Commission announced that it will carry out an evaluation of the animal welfare strategy and will designate a second EU reference centre for animal welfare.

Eurogroup for Animals asked for the confirmation of their correct understanding of the Commissioner's statement at the last platform meeting that the second EU reference centre will cover fur animals. EFFAB wanted to know the outcome of the first subgroup on pigs (which took place the week before) and if there was a list of national reference centres for animal welfare. EPO asked if the EU coordinated control plan had been elaborated with the EU Pet Advertising Advisory Group (an NGO initiative).

The Commission confirmed that the scope of the second centre will cover fur animals and informed that there was no list of national reference centres for animal welfare since there is no obligation in this regard. The Commission also stated that the EU coordinated control plan had been only prepared with the Member States even if the idea was initially inspired by EU PAAG.

Link to Presentation

https://ec.europa.eu/food/sites/food/files/animals/docs/comm_ahac_20180702_pres-00.pdf

5. Any other business/next meeting

The date of the next meeting has not yet been decided upon. Members of the Advisory Committee will be informed as soon as possible on the proposed date for this meeting.

6. List of participants

<i>Stakeholder Organisation</i>
AIPCE-CEP European Fish Processors & Traders Association
ANIMALHEALTHEUROPE
AVEC Association of Poultry Processors and Poultry Trade in the EU
CEFIC European Chemical Industry Council
CLITRAVI Centre de liaison des industries transformatrices de viande de l'UE & EFPRA European Fat Processors & Renderers Association
COGECA European agri-cooperatives
DIAGNOSTICS FOR ANIMALS

EAZA European Association of Zoos and Aquaria
EPBA European Professional Beekeepers Association
EFFAB European Forum of Farm Animal Breeders
EHPM European Federation of Associations of Health Product Manufacturers
ELO European Landowners' Organisation ASBL
EMPA European Mollusc Producers Association
EPO European Pet Organisation OFI Ornamental Fish International
ERPA European Rural Poultry Association
EUCOLAIT European Association of Dairy Trade
EUROCOOP
Eurogroup for animals
FACE Federation of Associations for Hunting and Conservation of the EU
FEAP Federation of European Aquaculture Producers
FEFAC Fédération européenne des Fabricants d'Aliments Composés
FESASS Fédération européenne pour la santé animale et la sécurité sanitaire
FVE Federation of Veterinarians of Europe
IFHA International Federation of Horseracing Authorities
INDEPENDENT RETAIL EUROPE

IPATA International Pet and Animal Transportation Association
UECBV European Livestock and Meat Trading Union
VIER PFOTEN

TROIKA – Bulgaria, Austria and Romania