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Health and Food Safety Directorate General

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Standing Committee on Plants, Animals, Food and Feed

Section *Animal Health and Welfare*

18 - 19 June 2020

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SUMMARY REPORT

A.01 General information by Member States.

Update : Highly pathogenic avian influenza.

The Commission briefly presented the updated situation on highly pathogenic avian influenza within EU during the period since the last PAFF Committee meeting and the activities carried out by the Commission in relation with this epidemiological situation. Furthermore, Bulgaria informed regarding the new outbreak of highly pathogenic avian influenza confirmed recently in a laying farm in the Plovdiv region.

A.02 Presentation of the first EU animal welfare reference centre focussing on the welfare of pigs.

The reference centre presented its structure, its role and its main tasks as laid down in the work programme for 2019-2020. The tasks include the creation of a targeted website (www.eurcaw-pigs.eu) and the development of dossiers for specific pig related welfare issues. Most of the outputs of the centre are published on its website. The reference centre calls upon Member States to indicate areas of particular interest to be considered for the work programme as of 2021 (e-mail: info.pigs@eurcaw.eu).

A.03 Presentation of the Fitness Check of the EU legislation on the welfare of farmed animals.

The Commission presented the upcoming evaluation ("Fitness Check") of the EU legislation on the welfare of farmed animals, and its relation to the "European Green Deal" and the "Farm to Fork" strategy. It follows from the latter that a thorough revision of the animal welfare legislation, including on animal transport and the killing of animals, is planned for the end of 2023. The Fitness Check will assess whether the current legislation remains fit for purpose, in particular with the sustainability objectives of the Farm to Fork strategy in mind. Together with new scientific opinions requested from EFSA, this will provide important input to the revision of the EU legislation. Further details of the Fitness Check may be found in the roadmap which is published for public feedback until 29 July 2020: <https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/12400-Fitness-Check-of-the-EU-legislation-on-animal-welfare>.

A.04 Commission overview report on the welfare of animals exported by road.

The main findings of the overview report on the welfare of animals exported by road were highlighted. These included general issues detected in many Member States and the achievements obtained during this project, primarily a 70% reduction of exports by road to Turkey in Summer over three years (2017-2019).

Member States were informed that more effort is still required for proper implementation of animal welfare rules, in particular:

1. Verifying that journeys are planned taking weather conditions into account;
2. Verifying that transporters have contingency plans in place to care for the animals in case of unexpected long delays at the Turkish side of the Bulgarian-Turkish border;
3. Carrying out effective checks after completion of the journeys, including checks on Satellite Navigation System data for the entire duration of the journey until final place of destination in the non-EU country.

A.05 Information on African swine fever by Member States.

The Commission provided an overview on the African swine fever situation in the EU and globally, and on the ongoing EU initiatives. Member States affected by ASF (Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Greece, Belgium and Italy) updated the Committee on their epidemiological situation of the disease. Germany presented an update on ASF preparedness due to ASF in the western part of Poland. The presentation by Estonia was postponed due to technical (connection) problems.

A.06 State of play on the revision process of the unit costs for certain measures in the framework of the veterinary programmes - presentation by JRC.

DG SANTE and the Joint Research Centre presented the state of play of the revision of the methodology to calculate unit costs for the financial management of the veterinary eradication and monitoring programmes to Member States. Feedback from Member States is expected by 20 June 2020.

A.07 Update on the Single Market Programme Regulation covering the period 2021-2027.

The Commission presented a short update regarding the adoption of SMP, the legal frame for DG SANTE 2021-2027 expenses: it has been specified that SMP will be adopted after the adoption of MFF 2021-2027, still not finalised. In principle the adoption of MFF is expected by September and, as a consequence, the SMP would be adopted by October/November. However, this is still an estimation of timelines. The SMP trilogue has been frozen at political level since the beginning of 2020. No questions were raised by Member States.

A.08 Presentation of the preliminary draft annual work programme for 2021 for the implementation of EU co-financed veterinary programmes.

The Commission presented the preliminary draft work programme for 2021 and 2022 veterinary programmes. In particular, Member States' feed-back on previous presentation at the CVOs' meeting of November 2019 has been presented and taken

into account to revise the preliminary draft WP 2021-2022. The Commission presented objectives and criteria based on which basis the animal diseases have been prioritised in order to be EU co-financed in 2021-2022 and the expected results. Animal diseases have been prioritised in two groups and, based on listed criteria, including budget availability. Both can be co-funded, but Group 1 would be given priority. No questions were raised by Member States.

A.09 Information on the submission of 2021 veterinary programmes.

The Commission presented the updated situation concerning the submission of the 2021 veterinary programmes, based on the current adoption process of the MFF and the SMP. A preliminary draft timeline for the submission of the 2021 vet programmes was presented. Updates will be provided when available in upcoming PAFF Committees.

A.10 Information from Spain, Portugal and Italy on the results of the implementation of their bovine brucellosis eradication programmes in 2019.

Spain, Portugal, Italy, Greece and Croatia presented the results of their EU co-financed programme for ovine and caprine brucellosis in 2019. The trend observed in 2019 for the eradication of this disease has been favourable in general, with a decrease in herd prevalence and incidence in these Member States. As regards Greece, it should be noted that only the purchase of vaccines against sheep and goat brucellosis is co-financed by the EU.

A.11 Information from Spain, Portugal, Italy, Greece and Croatia on the results of the implementation of their ovine and caprine brucellosis eradication programmes in 2019.

Presentation by Member States on the results of their EU co-financed programme for bovine brucellosis in 2019. The trend in the eradication of bovine brucellosis in 2019 has been favourable in general, with a decrease in herd prevalence and incidence in all these Member States, with the exception of some regions or species such as in buffaloes in Campania in Italy, for instance. The importance to implement additional measures to achieve final eradication of the disease in these regions has been emphasized.

A.12 Information concerning a declaration from France on disease free status for viral haemorrhagic septicaemia (VHS) and infectious haemopoetic necrosis (IHN): zone de la Saire.

Please see under Point A.18.

A.13 Information concerning a declaration from France on disease free status for viral haemorrhagic septicaemia (VHS) and infectious haemopoetic necrosis (IHN): zone amont de la Risle.

Please see under Point A.18.

A.14 Information concerning a declaration from France on disease free status for viral haemorrhagic septicaemia (VHS) and infectious haemopoetic necrosis (IHN): independent compartment of pisciculture de Venables.

Please see under Point A.18.

A.15 Information concerning a declaration from France on disease free status for viral haemorrhagic septicaemia (VHS) and infectious haemopoetic necrosis (IHN): dependent compartment of Huisne.

Please see under Point A.18.

A.16 Information concerning a declaration from France on disease free status for viral haemorrhagic septicaemia (VHS) and infectious haemopoetic necrosis (IHN): dependent compartment of Beaumont les Autels.

Please see under Point A.18.

A.17 Information concerning a declaration from France on a surveillance programme for viral haemorrhagic septicaemia (VHS) and infectious haemopoetic necrosis (IHN): dependent compartment of Beuvron amont et la Sauldre, site n°856.

Please see under Point A.18.

A.18 Information concerning a declaration from France on a surveillance programme for viral haemorrhagic septicaemia (VHS) and infectious haemopoetic necrosis (IHN): dependent compartment of Beuvron amont et la Sauldre, site n°707.

Summary for Points A.12 - A.18:

The Commission briefly explained some elements of the above seven declarations which concern either declarations of disease freedom or surveillance programmes and were presented pursuant to either Article 44 or Article 50 of Directive 2006/88/EC. The Commission informed the delegates that a link to the relevant DG SANTE page will be placed immediately as usual, leading to the French site which contains the declarations themselves for their further information: https://ec.europa.eu/food/animals/live_animals/aquaculture/declarations_en. The Commission also informed the delegates about the legal deadlines within which clarifications can be sought or concerns can be indicated, before the declarations shall take effect.

A.19 Information and discussion concerning exports of certain organic fertilisers and soil improvers of Category 2 materials.

Member States proposed several improvements of the current text, including limitation of exports to small packages of not more than 25 kg in weight. The text will be further discussed at technical level in the forthcoming meeting of Member States' experts. One Member State expressed negative opinion on exports of organic fertilisers or soil improvers due to problems with the detection of a marker in the products and the absence of a component to be mixed in organic fertilisers and soil improvers to exclude the subsequent use of the mixture for feeding purposes.

A.20 Information from Hungary on the situation of highly pathogenic avian influenza in poultry.

Hungary informed about the updated epidemiological situation in relation with highly pathogenic avian influenza, results of surveillance and additional protective measures introduced in order to control and eradicate the disease.

A.21 Information regarding future BTSF activities for the new Animal Health Law legal framework.

The Commission presented to Member States the proposed training activities for the new animal health legal framework under the Better Training for Safer Food programme. These training activities will consist of a series of seminars, workshops, e-learning modules and a conference. The different training activities have the aim of increasing the understanding by Member States' officials and interested parties on the structure and content of the new animal health law legal framework. The training pack combines different learning methods including theoretical and practical sessions (simulations, case studies, group exercises), and classroom setting and distance learning. The initial plan is to start with the roll out of seminars during the autumn of 2020, a conference in April 2021 on the day of coming into force the new legal framework, to be followed by workshops and e-learning modules from April 2021 onwards.

A.22 European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development: support for ASF prevention, control and eradication - presentation by DG AGRI.

DG AGRI gave a presentation on support for prevention against and control and eradication of African swine fever.

A.23 Update from the Netherlands with regard to COVID-19 infections in farmed mink.

The Netherlands reported about the detection of SARS CoV-2 in mink farms in mid May. It is likely that it was introduced in the farms by workers affected by Covid-19. Action was taken following report of symptoms in minks by the farm management.

A number of measures have been put immediately in place to prevent the spread of the disease from the infected farms, including: prohibition of movements of minks, obligation to notify suspicions, serological surveillance of all mink farms, biosafety measures to implement in the farms.

A total of 15 farms have been infected – all animals have been culled and rendered.

The decision to cull the minks was taken after a strong indication of a case of human infection (employee of infected farm) derived from mink, based on genomic comparison of virus isolates.

Denmark informed about the detection of SARS CoV-2 in a mink farm managed by a family, which resulted to be affected by Covid-19. Testing of dead minks revealed to be SARS CoV-2 positive. The competent authority decided to proceed with culling and rendering of all animals in the premises.

B.01 Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Implementing Decision on the evolution of animal diseases in the Union.

No item raised.

C.01 Exchange of views of the Committee on a draft Commission Implementing Regulation laying down rules for the application of Regulation (EU) 2016/429 of the European Parliament and of the Council with regard to traceability of kept terrestrial animals.

The draft Implementing Regulation was briefly presented by the Commission. Member States were invited to provide their written comments by 3 July 2020.

M.01 IHN Germany.

Germany informed the Committee about several outbreaks of the aquatic disease IHN. Some of these outbreaks were in previously free areas hence the Committee needed to be informed. Some are linked to each other. The competent authorities have duly investigated and handled the cases in accordance with Directive 2006/88/EC. The Commission thanked Germany.

M.02 Reminder on deadline of 30 June 2020 for annual reporting on safeguard Decision concerning trade in salamanders.

The Commission briefly reminded the delegates about the deadline of 30 June for those Member States to report, which handled salamander consignments in 2019. This obligation is laid down in Article 9 of Commission Implementing Decision 2018/320/EU.

M.03 Reminder on certificates for Animal Health and Animal Wealth checks.

The Commission informed the delegates about a recent message to Member States sharing with them three draft regulations with many new draft veterinary certificates, in parallel to internal Commission consultation between Services. These drafts are planned to be voted by the Committee later this year. The Commission asked the delegates to comment only on the on technical aspects of the animal health and welfare attestations because the public health attestations are being circulated at other fora and will be commented there.

M.04 Intra trade with Bulgarian bovines vaccinated against LSD.

Upon request from Bulgaria, the Commission facilitated for this Member State to bring the issues they experience concerning trading of live bovines with certain Member States, if the bovines were vaccinated against Lumpy Skin Disease (LSD) with a certain vaccine, to the attention of the PAFF Committee. The Commission briefly informed about the LSD epidemiological situation and the countries that are continuing the annual revaccination of the bovine livestock in 2020. It was also mentioned that the Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2016/2008 concerning animal health control measures relating to lumpy skin disease in certain Member States lays down specific rules which allows for such trade with animals vaccinated against LSD can continue. It was underlined that those specific rules, including also a waiting period after the vaccination of the animals until their dispatch, were laid down with the intention to facilitate the continuation of the activity in accordance with the appropriate risk mitigation measures, to prevent for unnecessary disruption to intra-community trade.

M.05 EIA outbreak – Germany.

Germany reported on a confirmed outbreak of EIA on 2 June on a horse in a holding with seven horses in Hoffenbach am Main in Land Hesse. The infected horse was a 14 year old animal born in Spain and was culled and safely destroyed. Appropriate measures were taken with the establishment of restriction zones and clinical and laboratory testing of all horses on the holding. All other animals tested negative. The horse was transported to Germany in September 2018 via several other Member States. The Member States concerned have all been informed.

The cause and date of infection are unknown and an epidemiological investigation is ongoing.

M.06 African swine fever - Assessment of projects likely to affect Natura 2000 areas – Presentation by DG ENV.

DG ENV gave a presentation on the current EU legislative framework in relation to the assessments of projects that could likely affect Natura 2000 and other specific areas.