

Minutes of the meeting of the expert group to discuss the delegated acts on Parts II and IV of Regulation (EU) 2016/429 (Animal Health Law), as they apply for certain diseases of terrestrial animals

14 November 2018, Brussels

1. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

A preliminary agenda was circulated and agreed at the beginning of the meeting.

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

3. INTRODUCTION

The Commission gave a detailed presentation of the draft requirements for movements between Member States as regards animals of listed species for infection with Bluetongue Virus (serotypes 1 to 24) (BTV), the provisions for eradication programmes and disease free status against infection with BTV and against Bovine Viral Diarrheal (BVD). The Commission also invited experts to provide written comments on the updated working document related to the delegated act on surveillance, eradication programmes and disease free status and the corresponding annexes circulated.

4. CONCLUSIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS/OPINIONS

The outcomes of the discussions were the following.

- 4.1. The Commission presented an overview of the requirements for the safe movements of animals of listed species between Member States as regards infection with BTV. The Commission indicated that bilateral agreements were not foreseen in the context of the Animal Health Law and invited experts to propose which additional requirements for movements should be, in their view, allowed as a derogation to the general rules.
 - The Commission provided clarifications on the conditions for movements of animals intended for immediate slaughter to non-BTV free Member States and zones and took note of the request of some Member States to keep the status quo and allow BTV free Member States and zones as a possible destination.
 - Some Member States considered that requiring vector protected establishments to be approved as quarantine establishments triggered unnecessary burden and was not relevant for the targeted objective.
 - One Member State requested to maintain the status quo for conditions for movements of animals between Member States with equivalent status.

- The Commission took note of the views of some Member States who considered that the recognition of seasonally BTV free status or natural immunisation should not be limited to Member States or zones under eradication programme.
 - The Commission indicated that in Member States or zones, non BTV-free and not under eradication programme, the serotype against which vaccination was required to move animals to other Member States depended on the outcome of the surveillance. Some Member States expressed concern about the corresponding surveillance requirements. One delegation was concerned with the effectiveness of vaccination and suggested to add a test to the vaccination requirement.
 - Some Member States indicated that a number of issues should be addressed:
 - Requirements for movements of calves not in the age to be vaccinated, currently covered within the scope of bilateral agreements on the basis of maternal immunity or chemical protection from vectors and testing;
 - Requirements for earlier movements of vaccinated animals taking into account the onset of effective immunity following vaccination.
- 4.2. The Commission presented the provisions for eradication programmes for infection with BTV and the conditions for granting and maintenance of the status free of infection with BTV and clarified the following issues.
- Confirmed that the zone under eradication programme could be less than 150 km radius around the infected establishment when justified and based on listed criteria.
 - Acknowledged that alternatives to long-term strategy of vaccination could be accepted in certain conditions. The Commission also reminded the legal possibilities to use vaccine in species not covered by marketing authorisation.
 - Further explained the technical requirements for surveillance, use of sentinel animals and the possible use of other source of information and the external risk of infection to take into account when adapting the surveillance.
 - In case of introduction of the disease in a free area and before starting an eradication programme, it would be possible to apply the generic requirements of disease control measures and risk mitigation measures proposed under the rules for suspension and withdrawal of the disease status.
- 4.3 The Commission presented the provisions for eradication programme against BVD and granting and maintenance of BVD free status.
- A number of Member States raised concerns regarding the expected long duration for the eradication programme until the BVD-free status could be achieved if it was based on the serological proof of antibody freedom as proposed in the Commission's draft.
 - A number of Member States were of the view that the requirements in the draft BVD proposal were too complex, too detailed and asked for simplification.
 - All Member States taking the floor confirmed the need to eradicate persistent infected (PI) animals and some proposed defining the BVD-free status based on the criteria for PI freedom provided for, as an intermediate target, in the Commission's working document.

- The Commission took note of the views and undertook to prepare a revised version of the working document.

5. NEXT STEPS

The Commission invited experts to send written comments by 28 November 2018.

6. NEXT MEETINGS

The next meeting on the delegated act on Part IV of AHL is scheduled on the 26 November 2018 and the next meeting on the delegated act on Part II of AHL is scheduled on 14 December 2018.