



Brussels, 2/06/2023

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 2nd June, 2023.

1. Introduction, opening: Francisco REVIRIEGO GORDEJO – Head of Unit G2 Animal Health

The Commission welcomed the Members of the Animal Health Advisory Committee and also the Members of the Council of the European Union Presidency Trio – **Czechia, Sweden and Spain** and explained briefly the purpose of the meeting and then proceeded with the approved agenda.

2. Animal diseases - Unit G2 Animal Health

- **Latest state of play on ASF**

The Commission presented the update of the ASF epidemiological situation in the EU highlighting the recent disease development in Czechia, Greece and Italy and EU actions.

- **Latest state of play on avian influenza (EU and globally)**

The Commission presented the updates on the evolution of HPAI in the EU and in the rest of the world. It was highlighted that the virus is still circulating in wild birds, in particular in black-headed gulls that increases the risk for poultry establishments in the areas where they are moving. In addition, the situation of the disease in poultry has calmed down in the last month, with the exception of France where the disease reoccurred in the South West, in particular in ducks. Information on the regionalisation of certain third countries (Canada, Chile, United Kingdom and United States) was also presented.

AVEC asked about situation in South America, and in particular Brazil. Commission replied that a technical meeting with Brazil takes place in the same day and information on the HPAI situation in Brazil will be requested by the Commission.

ECVC mentions that the latest outbreak in France may not be a new introduction but rather the persistence of the virus in that area.

FVE asked if the EU is considering surveillance for HPAI virus in mammals. The Commission replied that there will be an amendment in EU rules, to also allow for surveillance for HPAI virus in mammals.

- **Situation on sheep pox and goat pox**

Sheep and goat pox (SGP) reappeared in Spain, after 50 years of absence, on September 2022, in the province of Granada, in the Autonomous Region of Andalucia. Between September and November 2022 there were 23 outbreaks in total, in two clusters, in the regions of Andalucia and Castilla – La Mancha. From January to May 2023 there have been 7 outbreaks, only in Castilla – La Mancha. To control SGP, Spain has currently in place extended protection and surveillance zones around the locations of the outbreaks, as well as a further restricted zone that includes 4 provinces of Castilla – La Mancha. To date approximately 50.000 sheep and 2.000 goats have been put down to control the disease. In spite of the improvement in the epidemiological situation it is estimated that strict

implementation of control measures will be required for some additional time, in order to fully eliminate the disease.

3. Animal Health Law - overview of ongoing work

- **Adoption of Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2023/361 (use of veterinary medicinal products for disease prevention and control)**

The Commission briefly informed about the adoption, publication and entry into force of Delegated Regulation (EU) 2023/361 on the use of veterinary medicinal products for disease prevention and control and recalled the main elements of that Regulation. During discussion FESASS asked about the possibility to use preventive vaccination also for other diseases in addition to highly pathogenic avian influenza. The Commission explained that a theoretical possibility for that exists, but there are no plans for such in foreseeable future.

- **ASF regulation Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/594 and ASF Guidelines**

The Commission presented the main principles of the new ASF Regulation (Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/594) indicating the main changes from the previous special disease control rules and updated the Committee in relation to an ongoing revision of EU guidance documents on ASF. SAFE Food Advocacy Europe asked how the awareness on ASF is raised for general public in the EU. The Commission referred to EU legislation (both the Animal Health Law and ASF Regulation) which obliges the competent authorities of the Member States to ensure that information on ASF is shared properly. The Commission has also indicated that the new action plans on wild porcine animals (part of ASF Regulation) could be used by the MSs for the information sharing and that awareness raising on ASF can be subject to EU co-financing for all EU MSs (not only those that are affected by ASF).

- **Amendments to Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2020/688 on movements of terrestrial animals**

The Commission explained the main drivers, objectives, and elements of an ongoing amendment. Several questions were asked in relation to epizootic haemorrhagic disease, on availability of vaccines, alignment to international (WOAH) standards, and delisting of the disease, as well as intention stated that more data will be sent to the Commission on how the diseases behaves in the EU in practice. The Commission replied to all the questions and reiterated that vaccine availability and production would be a key element to fight the disease but that is in the hands of national actors (veterinary medicines producers, and competent authority). The Commission also confirmed that it welcomes any new data which might be channelled to EFSA for further assessment.

- **Amendments to Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2020/689 on surveillance, eradication disease freedom**

The Commission explained the main drivers, objectives, and elements of an ongoing amendment. No questions were asked.

- **Amendments to CDR Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2020/686 on germinal products: CDR (EU) 2023/647**

The Commission briefly explained that the referred amendment is already applicable, and that the amendment of the relevant certificates will follow later by amending a different, implementing act (CIR (EU) 2021/403) considering limitations for planning and resources also. Such is a normal practice, and it does not seem to create any problems so far. No questions were asked.

- **Amendments to Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2020/687 on disease control measures**

The Commission presented the main amendments and corrections to Regulation (EU) 2020/687) that have been adopted recently and entered into force since 3rd May 2023 (Delegated Regulation (EU) 2023/751). In addition informed on the further amendments that are currently being prepared by the Commission based on the results of the assessments carried out by EFSA for the control measures, prohibitions and risk mitigating treatments for Category A diseases.

AVEC thanks the Commission for this work, which is helpful for their members.

- **Discussion**

4. HPAI vaccination

- **Outcomes of discussions at the working group on vaccination for HPAI and further steps**

The Commission explained the EU rules on HPAI vaccination and the background and aims of the technical working group on HPAI vaccination. The first working group took place on 22 March 2023.

The European Commission's presentation on HPAI vaccination in the EU, which was presented at the side event during the 90th General Session of WOAAH on 22 May 2023 is available on the HPAI webpage of DG SANTE: https://food.ec.europa.eu/animals/animal-diseases/diseases-and-control-measures/avian-influenza_en#Vaccination

- **Commission's actions with international trading partners**

The Commission explained its activities directed to international trading partners.

In particular the tools and frameworks for consultation with them: Free trade and other agreements, bilateral relations and other tools under SANTE remit (BTSF, STMs, PI, etc.). FESSAS asked about the sustainable training missions. This is an activity of DG SANTE, directed at one country. WOAAH commented on the impact on trade and mentioned that GFTADS is providing a structured platform for information sharing. WOAAH asked also about the difference between trade partners. The Commission explained that there are big differences between developed and not developed countries and trade-oriented partners.

AVEC suggested that if it would be useful if senior Commission representatives could also travel to the most important trade partners.

EAZA stresses that for zoos, the HPAI threat is very real and vaccination will be a very important measure to protect certain animals. A position paper is being prepared. Strongly supports EU's leading role on HPAI vaccination.

COPA-Cogeca asked the state of play as regards China, regarding vaccination and regionalisation. The Commission replied that currently, there is no trade on poultry, whilst there is trade on pork, but only from countries not affected by the disease.

FVE: agreed that quality of surveillance will be pivotal for the success of HPAI vaccination, and asked if more efforts are needed to also warn pet owners about possible HPAI infections. The Commission replied that the regular reports of EFSA/ECDC include information and recommendations on infections in mammals, including pets. In addition to these reports, EFSA/ECDC publishes press releases and this leads to attention in other sorts of media.

5. Main outcomes of 90th WOAAH and EuFMD general sessions

The Commission informed about the main outcomes of the 90th WOAG general session including on several side events that happened on that occasion, in particular many of those related to avian influenza. The Commission has also informed on EuFMD General session. FAO also stressed the importance of EuFMD, thanked for the update and the support from the

Commission. EFFAB asked about the deadline for adjustments of the text on tilapia lake virus in the aquatic animal health code.

6. Miscellaneous, discussion – question/answers