



Brussels, 27/11/2020

## **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 remotely by Webex on October 29<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

Approval of the agenda of the Animal Health Advisory Committee

### **Introduction, opening: Alf Füssel – Acting Head of Unit G2 Animal Health – DG SANTE**

The Commission explained briefly the purpose of the meeting and accepted an ‘AOB’ point raised by EPO and OFI with regard to the relationship between the Animal Health Law and the Biodiversity Strategy. The Commission then proceeded with the agenda.

#### **1. Animal disease outbreaks (SANTE G3) Animal diseases**

The Commission gave a presentation on the latest state of play on ASF disease outbreaks and ASF control measures after 21 April, 2021 and also on the situation regarding avian influenza.

- **African swine fever**

An update was given on African swine fever by the Commission. This addressed the ASF regionalisation, the EU initiatives and the epidemiological situation in the EU with a reference to the global ASF situation. Following the questions from COGECA/FESASS/EFFAB, the Commission replied: a) it clarified that it would be important that each MS carries out a risk assessment to determine whether some derogations to COVID19 could be allowed for proper wild bar management; b) agreed on the importance of having international standards once an ASF vaccine candidate were to be identified; c) a postponement of the AHL legislative package is still being discussed at political level and that, for the time being, the planned date of entry into applicability remains unchanged; d) the review of the ASF regionalisation legislation was currently ongoing and that a simplification of the measures was one of the objectives of this review.

- **Avian influenza**

The Commission presented the overview of the previous epidemic season with highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) that affected EU Member States in the first half of 2020. It also showed that a large number of outbreaks of HPAI have been reported during summer by Russia and Kazakhstan in poultry and wild birds, which represents a warning sign of the high risk of the HPAI virus being reintroduced in the EU by migratory wild birds during their autumn migration season. The high level of risk has already been confirmed by the detection in the Netherlands, since second half of October 2020, of migratory and non-migratory wild birds infected with the HPAI virus. The Commission confirmed that the Netherlands had also notified an outbreak of HPAI in poultry. It also confirmed that will keep the information on its webpage dedicated to avian influenza ([https://ec.europa.eu/food/animals/animal-diseases/control-measures/avian-influenza\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/food/animals/animal-diseases/control-measures/avian-influenza_en)) updated for the map with HPAI distribution in poultry, captive birds and wild birds and for the Chronology of the Commission's activities in relation to the HPAI situation.

#### **2. Presentation - Database of Diagnostics for Animals**

##### **Jean-Louis Hunault, General Secretary of Diagnostics for Animals**

A brief presentation was given by Diagnostics for Animals on their animal diagnostics database.

### 3. Animal Health Law- State of play (SANTE G2)

- **State of play - General overview**

The Commission informed participants about the state of play of development of legal acts under the Animal Health Law.

FESSAS asked about the Commission's position in relation to the possible postponement of the date of application of the Animal Health Law. In its response, the Commission referred to the position expressed by the Commissioner at the Octobers' AGRIFISH Council.

FVE asked about the update of the Commission's website concerning the AHL delegated and implementing acts. The Commission will amend that site as soon as possible.

EFFAB asked if they can contact the Commission with regard to clarifications on some amendments.

EPO asked whether any training was foreseen. The Commission replied that a number of training activities have been planned, but had to be postponed due to the pandemic. Virtual training is, however, under development and expected to start by the end of the year.

- **Amendments to Delegated Regulation**

The Commission informed participants of the proposed amendments to Delegated Regulations (EU) 2019/2035, 2020/686, 2020/687, 2020/688, 2020/689 and 2020/692, which were presented to Member States during the Expert Group meeting of 12 October 2020. The Commission clarified that the proposed amendments are intended to correct obvious mistakes in the Delegated Regulation and further amendments might be necessary after the date of application of the AHL.

In reply to the concerns expressed by AVEC and EFFAB in relation to requirement for clinical inspection of the flock of origin of hatching eggs of poultry prior to their dispatch to the Union, the Commission noted its intention to raise the issue in the next meeting with Member States.

FESASS requested additional clarifications as regards the amendment to the provisions for BVD eradication programmes in Delegated Regulation (EU) 2020/689. The Commission explained that it was just a matter of fixing two wrong cross-references.

OFI requested clarification on the timeframe for the amendment of Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2018/1882. The Commission confirmed its intention to have the amendment ready in time for the date of application of the AHL.

- **Draft Implementing Regulation - Union notification and Union reporting of listed diseases, to formats and procedures for submission and reporting of Union surveillance programmes and of eradication programmes and for application for recognitions of disease-free status, and to the computerised information system.**

A very brief overview was given on the above-mentioned Draft Implementing Regulation with a more detailed presentation to be given in the next Animal Health Advisory Committee meeting in the first semester of 2021.

### 4. Organic Fertilisers – State of play (SANTE G2)

The Commission presented the state of play. The master request for animal and public risk assessment of possible end points in the manufacturing chain of organic fertilisers and soil improvers has been sent to EFSA. The Commission invited operators to launch individual requests for the risk assessment for their national authorised organic fertilisers and soil improvers.

EFRA enquired as to when the Commission will start a discussion on organic fertilisers and soil improvers containing or composed of Category 2 meat-and-bone meal or processed animal proteins.

The Commission has already been contacted by the interested stakeholder's organisation and following the exchange of opinion waiting for the proposal(s) on technical specification and risk mitigation measures for possible end points in the manufacturing chain of organic fertilisers and soil improvers.

## 5. Animal Welfare – Update on animal welfare issues (SANTE G5)

- **‘Farm to Fork Strategy’**

The Commission presented an update on the animal welfare activities under the EU Farm to Fork Strategy (F2F), including information on the public feedback received on the roadmap for the evaluation (“Fitness check”) of the EU animal welfare legislation.

AVEC expressed some concerns regarding the level of knowledge among citizens, preventing them from fully understanding the practical implications of the changes they request to the EU animal welfare legislation, and asked what the Commission is doing in this respect.

IVSA addressed the role of aquaculture in the F2F, and asked how the sustainability of that sector could be ensured.

FESASS stressed the interconnection between animal health and animal welfare, and urged that the animal welfare activities under the F2F must be addressed in a holistic manner, including the possibilities provided by digitalisation.

Similarly, FVE urged for the use of modern technology in the livestock sector, and called on the actions under F2F to be more innovative.

EPO-OFI agreed with FESASS on the need for a holistic approach, and asked about the role of pets and ornamental fish in the animal welfare activities under the F2F.

In reply to the questions and issues raised, the Commission clarified that any legislative proposal will be preceded by a proper impact assessment, where the consequences of different options will be clearly and publicly explained. The Commission confirmed that it will take a broad, holistic, innovative and updated approach to the animal welfare activities under the F2F, and that all aspects of sustainability will be considered, supported where relevant by the new EU Strategic Guidelines on Aquaculture. As for specific categories of animals, such as pets and ornamental fish, the Commission recalled the F2F focus on the agri-food chain.

- **European Citizens’ Initiative ‘End the cage age’**

The Commission gave an overview on background and procedural steps for European citizens’ initiatives (ECI) in general and presented the ECI ‘End the cage Age’. Within six months after submission of the signatures, the Commission adopts a communication setting out its legal and political conclusions on the initiative, the actions it intends to take and an envisaged timeline. The ECI ‘End the Cage Age’, submitted to the Commission on 2 October 2020, calls on the Commission to propose legislative act with a view to ban the use of cages for certain farmed animal species and production types.

EFAB asked how to get further information on actions taken in the context of the ECI ‘End the Cage Age’.

AVEC, referring to the communication to be set up by the Commission, considered that science should be a basic part when drawing conclusions on the ECI.

FVE agreed with AVEC, stressing that it would be necessary to look at scientific evidence for solutions.

COGECA explained that EFSA would already follow the scientific approach and offered that for the practical expertise COGECA could provide the necessary experience and practical figures.

FESASS expressed concern on the procedure being not simple from the legal point of view stressing that the Commission had already announced to propose legislation under the F2F. FESASS also highlighted that many farmers were willing to change but that they needed a realistic perspective on the market.

In response to the questions and interventions, the Commission explained that the communication will include the legal and political conclusions of the Commission on the ECI as required by the ECI-Regulation (EU) 2019/788; the Regulation does not refer to science. The communication will also include the actions that the Commission intends to take, if any, but no drafts of such action. These drafts, if the Commission so decides, will be developed in accordance with agreed procedures including consideration of available science and practical expertise. Information on the ECI is available on the dedicated website of the public register of ECI, which also includes a link to the website of the ECI 'End the Cage Age'.

## **6. Certificates – State of play (SANTE G3)**

The Commission presented an update on the state of play of three draft Implementing Regulations establishing certificates for intracommunity trade and entry into the Union of consignments of live animals and goods. Various comments were received concerning using terminology between draft acts on certificates and legal acts establishing requirements, lack of availability legal acts to which references are made, that coherence between legal acts during drafting stage should be ensured and inform that comment will be submitted either directly to the Commission or via web portal "HAVE YOUR SAY".

In reply to comments raised, the Commission provided some clarification and also invited stakeholders to send in written comments which will be evaluated by technical Units and draft certificates amended if necessary.

In reply to a question from EPO/OFI, the Commission confirmed the criteria under which the certificates which are set out in SANTE/7090/2020 should apply to ornamental aquatic animals.

**All of the presentations may be found at the following link:**

**[https://ec.europa.eu/food/animals/health/advisory\\_committees/presentations\\_en#20201029](https://ec.europa.eu/food/animals/health/advisory_committees/presentations_en#20201029)**

## **7. Any other business/next meeting**

The AOB item which was raised by EPO and OFI on biodiversity/Animal Health Law was discussed under the Animal Health Law agenda item, and the Commission highlighted the relevant elements of the Animal Health Law which positively support biodiversity.

No date as yet for the next meeting of the Advisory Committee. However, it was indicated that the intention is to have a meeting in March/April, subject to Covid restrictions. Members of the Advisory Committee will be informed as soon as possible on the proposed date for this meeting.

## **8. List of participants**

**9.**

<i>Stakeholder Organisation</i>
<b>AEPM</b> <b>Association européenne de producteurs de mollusques</b>
<b>ANIMALHEALTH EUROPE</b>
<b>AVEC</b> <b>Association of Poultry Processors and Poultry Trade in the EU</b>

<b>CEFIC</b> European Chemical Industry Council
<b>CELCAA</b> European Liaison Committee for Agriculture and agri-food trade
<b>CLITRAVI</b> Centre de liaison des industries transformatrices de viande de l'UE
<b>COGECA</b> European agri-cooperatives
<b>COPA</b> European Farmers
Compassion in World Farming
<b>DIAGNOSTICS FOR ANIMALS</b>
<b>EAZA</b> European Association of Zoos and Aquaria
<b>ECDC</b> European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control
<b>ECSLA</b> European Cold Storage and Logistics Association
<b>EDA</b> European Dairy Association
<b>ELO</b> European Landowners Organisation
<b>EPBA</b> European Professional Beekeepers Association
<b>EFFAB</b> European Forum of Farm Animal Breeders
<b>EFPRA</b> European Fat Processors & Renderers Association
<b>EGGVP</b> European Group for Generic Veterinary Products
<b>ERPA</b> European Rural Poultry Association
<b>EUCOLAIT</b> European Association of Dairy Trade
<b>EFFAB</b> European Forum of Farm Animal Breeders

<b>FACEnetwork</b> <b>Farmhouse and Artisan Cheese and dairy producers</b>
<b>FEAP</b> <b>Federation of European Aquaculture Producers</b>
<b>FEFAC</b> <b>Fédération Européenne des Fabricants d'aliments Composés</b>
<b>FESASS</b> <b>Fédération européenne pour la santé animale et la sécurité sanitaire</b>
<b>FIAH</b> <b>Fédération internationale des autorités hippiques de courses au galop</b>
<b>FSE</b> <b>Food Supplements Europe</b>
<b>FVE</b> <b>Federation of Veterinarians of Europe</b>
<b>IFOAM EU Group</b> <b>International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements EU Regional Group</b>
<b>IPATA</b> <b>International Pet and Animal Transportation Association</b>
<b>IVSA</b> <b>International Veterinary Students Association</b>
<b>OFI</b> <b>Ornamental Fish International</b>
<b>OIE</b> <b>World Organisation for Animal Health</b>
<b>PAN Europe</b> <b>Pesticide Action Network Europe</b>
<b>SLOW FOOD (NA)</b>
<b>UECBV</b> <b>European Livestock and Meat Trading Union</b>
<b>VIER PFOTEN</b>

**Members of TROIKA – Germany**