

**Minutes of the meeting of the Expert group
to discuss the exercise of the listing of animal diseases relevant for Union
intervention according to the Animal Health Law**

24 November 2017, Brussels

1. Approval of the agenda

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

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 the absence of the European Council and the European Parliament.

3. List of points discussed

1. Introduction

The Commission presented the outcome of the listing exercise (general considerations and approach were discussed on 17 November) explaining the decisions taken on the criteria laid down in the Animal Health Law (AHL). For the purpose of structuring the discussions, the diseases were referred to the multiple species, bee and amphibians diseases.

2. Presentation on the listing exercise of animal diseases according to the Animal Health Law criteria

Following the criteria of Article 5(3) of the AHL, the Commission was proposing that the following diseases can be considered eligible to be listed for Union intervention: infection with Rinderpest virus, infection with Rift Valley virus, infection with *Brucella abortus*, *B. melitensis* and *B. suis*, rabies, paratuberculosis, bluetongue (serotypes 1-24, excluded 16), infestation with *Echinococcus* spp, anthrax, surra (*Trypanosoma evansi*), Ebola, Japanese encephalitis, West Nile fever, infestation with *Aethina tumida* (small hive beetle), American foulbrood and infestation with *Tropilaelaps* spp. However, epizootic hemorrhagic disease, Q fever and infestation with *Varroa* spp were proposed to not be included on the list of animal diseases at EU level. Due to time constraints the listing of the infestation with *Tropilaelaps* spp and infection with *Batrachochytrium salamandrivorans* were not discussed.

The Commission stressed again the importance of having written feedback and inputs from the Member States by 10 January 2018 in order to best accommodate their technical views.

3. Exchange of views with Member States

In general, experts from Member States agreed on the proposed outcome of the assessment as regards the list of animal diseases. Several experts from Member States expressed their belief that the new legal framework should improve the European animal health status and therefore despite the difficulties and efforts to eradicate and control the disease, paratuberculosis fulfils the criteria to be considered eligible to be listed (as EFSA judged). However some experts from Member States were not in favour of this approach.

As regards infection with *Brucella abortus*, *B. melitensis* and *B. suis*, despite the agreement to list the disease, several experts from Member States raised the question on the future implications in the control programs in pigs due to the lack of effective diagnosis for that animal species. The Commission committed to reconsider this aspect and to discuss it within the working group on categorisation of listed diseases.

Few experts from Member States asked the Commission to evaluate other haemorrhagic diseases (in addition to Ebola) widening the range of diseases with human health repercussions. The Commission insisted that the priority is to adopt the list of animal diseases before summer 2018 and that this list can be supplemented or amended in the future if further needs come out.

On bluetongue the exclusion of serotype 16 from the list of diseases (as assessed by EFSA due to its limited pathogenicity) was not supported by the majority of experts from Member States arguing concerns on its practical difficulties.

Several experts from Member States disagreed on the proposal to exclude epizootic hemorrhagic disease and Q fever for different reasons: the risk of introduction into the EU of EHD since it is an exotic disease and the zoonotic potential of Q fever. Major concerns from several delegations were raised as regards the exclusion of infestation with *Varroa* spp from the list of transmissible diseases: dismantling of all the efforts to combat this pest to date in certain areas of the EU and the need to protect this key sector were noted. The Commission will look again the criteria taking into account comments provided by Member States.

4. Conclusions/recommendations/opinions and next steps

The Commission obtained a favourable feedback from the majority of the diseases presented to be included on the list of transmissible diseases for Union intervention. However further discussions are needed for some diseases.

6. Next meeting

The next meeting will take place on 18 December 2017.