



The COVID-19 confinement rules are easing in Belgium and in other European member states and the activities of the European institutions are thus no longer mainly dictated by this extraordinary situation. As a matter of fact, subject such as animal welfare and antimicrobial resistance (AMR) are coming back onto the European political agenda.

The UEVP welcomes the launching of a committee of inquiry on live transport of animals by the European Parliament, which is an important issue concerning animal welfare. We hope that this initiative will underline issues that will be taken into account in the revision process of the European animal transport regulation.

The UEVP would also like to take the opportunity of the publication of council conclusions concerning the European Court of Auditors’ AMR report to remind its commitment in the fight against AMR.

Piotr KWIECIŃSKI, UEVP President

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PRIORITY ISSUES

Latest news on antimicrobial resistance at EU level

Council conclusion on the special report of the European Court of Auditors concerning AMR

On 26 June 2020, the European Council published a [conclusion document](#) concerning the European Court of Auditors' [Special Report](#) No 21/2019: "Addressing antimicrobial resistance: progress in the animal sector, but this health threat remains a challenge for the EU".

These conclusions mainly acknowledge the seriousness of the AMR issue in the animal sector and the commitment of the European commission in the fight against this particular issue.

It also calls the Commission and the Member states to continue to cooperate on the implementation of the One Health Action Plan against AMR and on the improvement of the quality of the surveillance data collected.

Finally, it calls on the Commission to continue to promote the prudent use of antimicrobial as well as the support to the research and development of new antimicrobials and alternative treatments.

Translated EMA's infographic on categorization of antimicrobials

On 11 June 2020, the European Medicine Agency (EMA) published the translated version of its infographic concerning the categorization of antimicrobials for use in animals.

As a reminder, the EMA published, in December 2019, a [scientific advice](#) **categorising prescribed antibiotics for animal care**.

This document levels antibiotics by consideration of both the need to use them in animal medicine and the potential risk that their use in animals could cause to public health through the possible development of antimicrobial resistance.

The [infographic](#) resuming this document is now available in 22 languages: [\[Bulgarian\]](#), [\[Croatian\]](#), [\[Czech\]](#), [\[Danish\]](#), [\[Dutch\]](#), [\[Estonian\]](#), [\[Finnish\]](#), [\[French\]](#), [\[German\]](#), [\[Greek\]](#), [\[Hungarian\]](#), [\[Italian\]](#), [\[Latvian\]](#), [\[Lithuanian\]](#), [\[Maltese\]](#), [\[Polish\]](#), [\[Portuguese\]](#), [\[Romanian\]](#), [\[Slovak\]](#), [\[Slovene\]](#), [\[Spanish\]](#), [\[Swedish\]](#).

Latest news about animal disease

EFSA scientific report on risk assessment for the Influenza D virus

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) has published during the month of June a [scientific report](#) on the risk assessment for influenza D virus (IDV) in Europe. This study was conducted in cooperation with partner institutes representing six Member States (Belgium, France, Italy, Luxembourg, The Netherlands and Sweden).

The main outcome of the report shows *"that the available antigen and genome test systems allow reliable influenza D diagnostic in partners' laboratories, while for a few of the applied antibody testing methods adjustments are recommended"*.

The document also calls on further studies to be conducted in order to entirely comprehend the risks of IDV for animal and human health in Europe.

Interactive infographic on zoonoses

On 15 June 2020, the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) published an [online interactive infographic](#) giving insight on how animal diseases can affect humans.

The object is divided in four parts that cover the infection from animal to human through food, contact with animals and bites from insects.

The last part gives advice on how to reduce the risk of infection.

Latest news on the Common Agricultural Policy

Transition period & the end of the Croatian presidency

Transition period

The negotiators from the Council, the Commission and the European Parliament (EP) have developed, on 30 June 2020, an **informal agreement** on the duration of the transition period from the current Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) to the next CAP (post 2020).

As a reminder, the Commission wanted to have a 1-year long period of transition while the other lawmakers wanted to see a 2-year long period implemented.

After long talks, the negotiators have found a **common understanding on a two-year period** where the rules of the current CAP will apply before the next CAP program starts. This new program will thus be launched in 2023.

End of the Croatian presidency

The Croatian Presidency of the Council of the EU has published its [progress report](#) on the negotiations on the post-2020 CAP reform. As a reminder, Croatia's Presidency has ended on 30 June, after 6 months in office. Since 1 July, Germany is taking over until 31 December 2020.

Croatia notes that work on CAP reform has been complicated by the COVID-19 pandemic and that most meetings have been cancelled. Nevertheless, some progress has been possible thanks to a written working method. However, the lack of political agreement on the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) 2021-2027 had a significant impact on the progress of the negotiations.

The consolidated working version of the three post-2020 CAP texts were also published.

- [Strategic plan \(+ annex\)](#)
- [Common organisation of the markets](#)
- [Horizontal regulation](#)

EMA 2019 annual report

On 15 June 2020, the European Medicine Agency (EMA) published its annual activity [report](#) for the year 2019.

The report is divided in two parts.

1. Key achievements in 2019

The chapter develops notably the evaluation and monitoring of veterinary medicines for 2019 as well as the new EU legislation applicable to veterinary medicines (new Veterinary Medicines Regulation - [Regulation \(EU\) 2019/6](#)).

It also draws attention on the development of the regulatory science strategy to 2025.

2. Key figures in 2019

This second chapter concentrates on key statistical figures about EMA's activities (human and veterinary) and its regulatory procedures. Recent years observed trends and changes are also studied.

Decisions of the Committee for Medicinal Products for Veterinary Use (CVMP)

The Committee for Medicinal Products for Veterinary Use (CVMP) held a [meeting](#) from 16 to 18 June 2020.

The Committee adopted by consensus a positive opinion for Bluevac BTV8 to add the strains BTV1 and BTV4 into the vaccine for a type IB variation application for Stronghold Plus and Felisecto Plus.

The Committee adopted the idea of a 3 months public consultation for the draft strategy on antimicrobial for the period 2021-2025. Proposed actions gravitate around the responsible use of antimicrobial, the protection of both human and animal health from AMR and the support to the development of new antimicrobial and alternatives.

The CVMP adopted scientific recommendations for implementing measures under Article 57(4) of [Regulation \(EU\) 2019/6](#) on veterinary medicinal products regarding the format of the data to be collected on antimicrobial medicinal products used in animals.

OTHER ISSUES

'Illegal Pet Trade: Game Over': event report and recommendations

The NGO Eurogroup for Animals published a report following the event 'Illegal Pet Trade: Game Over' after presenting it to the European Commissioner for Health and Food Safety Stella Kyriakides. As a reminder, the NGO Eurogroup for Animals, in collaboration with the Croatian Presidency of the Council of the European Union, organised an online event entitled 'Illegal Pet Trade: Game Over' on 21 April.

The event focused on the theme of illegal trade in dogs and cats, relevant EU legislation and different national practices.

After a general introduction, four different discussion panels were offered to the participants:

- *Pets & identification and registration*
- *Pets and consumers*
- *Pets and online platforms*
- *Organized crime and tax evasion*

The report makes the following recommendations.

Recommendations concerning the identification and registration of pets

In this report, concrete recommendations are made regarding the identification and registration of pets. In particular, Eurogroup for Animals calls on European decision-makers to:

- Promote the implementation of existing EU legislation through updated digital tools and training for competent authorities.
- Establish cooperation and exchange of information between Member States at European level, in particular through the work of the European Platform for Animal Welfare.
- Launch an impact assessment (by the European Commission) before the entry into force of [the Animal Health Act](#) on the added value of a harmonised European system for the identification and registration of pet animals in which Member States' databases would be connected and interoperable before the end of 2024.

Eurogroup for Animals also calls on the Member States to:

- ensure that registration databases only contain reliable and verified information about the animal and the owner;
- Extend the obligation to register pets in secure and up-to-date databases;
- Explore the possibility of using digital tools such as alert systems to inform owners about their responsibilities regarding the registration and vaccination of their pets.

Other recommendations in the report

- To enable consumers to be better informed about the different actors in the pet sales chain.
- The report stresses that it would be of prime importance for consumers to have access to a system in which breeders must be registered before they can undertake any advertising, sale or trade.
- The establishment of an interconnected system of European databases containing data and metadata on the pet trade could provide useful information for law enforcement and stakeholders interested in the development of the pet trade.
- Adoption of a delegated act of the Animal Health Act (Regulation 2016/429) concerning pet breeders and introducing licences and harmonised standards in the Member States.

Possible restoration of a simple identification system for certain caprine animals

An [amending delegated regulation](#) related to the publication of a [delegated regulation \(2019/2035\)](#) supplementing [Regulation 2016/429](#) concerning the rules relating to establishments keeping terrestrial animals and hatcheries as well as to the traceability of certain kept terrestrial animals and hatching eggs is currently subject to negotiations in the European Commission.

As a reminder, Delegated Regulation (EU) 2019/2035 contains a controversial disposition that abolishes the electronic loopback exemption for goats less than a year old intended for a slaughterhouse of the same country. This disposition was said to reduce the welfare of the young goats and to increase the costs for the breeders at the same time.

The amending delegated regulation in question restores the possibility to use an identification system with a simple classic ear loop for goats less than a year old intended for a slaughterhouse of the same country.

Campaign for mandatory cat identification and registration in the Netherlands

A certain number of Dutch animal welfare organisations, municipalities and veterinarians, led by the NGO 'Dierenbescherming', are campaigning for the mandatory identification and registration of cats in the Netherlands.

This campaign comes in the context of the 2021 parliamentary elections in that country. The organisations are thus asking members of the Dutch Parliament to introduce this disposition in their party programmes.

The campaign notably insists on the fact that micro-chipping "*can help reduce the number of stray cats, reduce abandonment of cats, help with reunification and, above all, reduce unnecessary animal suffering*". A [petition](#) is available for actors wanting to participate in this campaign.

Establishment by the European Parliament of a committee of inquiry on live transport of animals

The European Parliament (EP) [approved](#) the creation of a committee of inquiry on live transport of animals.

This initiative was agreed on during the EP plenary session of 19 June 2020 by 605 out of 689 Members of the European Parliament (MEP). The call for this setting up of the committee was originally submitted in 2018 by 183 MEPs but was first rejected by the Conference of Presidents who thought that an Implementation Report was more appropriate to deal with the matter of live animal transport.

The said [report](#) was approved in February 2019 and suggested the creation of a committee of inquiry; this idea was then approved by the conference of Presidents on 11 June 2020.

This Committee will study the Commission's alleged inaction in the face of the regulatory failures regularly observed with regard to the conditions of transport of animals in the Union and abroad. In other words, the implementation and enforcement of the [Transport Regulation \(1/2005\)](#) in the European Union (EU) and in third countries will be looked into.

According to MEP **Thomas WAITZ** (Austria-Green/EFA), this initiative is an important step for the improvement of animal welfare; he added that *“The EU governments and the Conservatives in the European Parliament can no longer look away from the horror and animal cruelty on European roads. The current EU regulation is outdated and lacks in all areas: implementation, controls and consequences for breaching the EU regulation”*.

The European farmers association **COPA-COGECA** declared that animal welfare during transport is a *“complex issue”* that *“cannot be solved by simply banning it or by imposing a limit on transport time”*.

Finally, the director of the European Policy Office of the NGO FOUR PAWS, **Pierre SULTANA**, affirmed that the decision was a *“clear sign for member states and the Commission to do more to avoid animal suffering and enforce EU regulation”*.

Creation of a new European reference centre for ruminant and equines

On 15 June 2020, during the seventh meeting of the European Union (EU) platform on Animal Welfare, the European Commissioner for Health and Food Safety, **Stella KYRIAKIDES**, declared that a reference centre for ruminant and equines was going to be established by the Commission.

Reference centres act as initiatives aiming at improving the enforcement of the EU animal welfare legislation. They provide coordinated assistance and technical support to Member-States performing official controls on animal welfare. These centres also disseminate good practices and research findings, they organise training courses notably for national competent authorities and they carry out studies on animal welfare.

As a reminder, in 2017, an ‘Own Initiative’ sub-group of the EU Animal Welfare Platform was established; this group wrote two sets of guidelines for the keeping, care, training and use of [horses](#) and for the keeping, care, training and use of [donkeys and donkey hybrids](#). It was declared, during this seventh meeting of the EU platform, that the document related to donkeys and donkey hybrid *“should be promoted by all Platform members in order to improve the welfare of donkeys and donkey hybrids in the EU”*.

The Chief Veterinary Advisor for The Donkey Sanctuary in Europe and Chair of the Eurogroup for Animals’ Working Group on Equines, **Joe COLLINS**, declared that *“We are delighted that the Commission has taken this step and recognises the importance of addressing the welfare gaps that blight the equine sector. Our job now is to ensure that the new centre lives up to expectations and fully utilises these two sets of guidelines. We will certainly do our utmost to ensure that this happens”*.

Staff movements within the Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety (DG SANTE)

Mrs. **Eva Maria ZAMORA ESCRIBANO**, currently head of the G2 Unit in charge of animal health and welfare, leaves her post to take over the lead of the E5 Unit in charge of Animal Nutrition and Veterinary Medicines. The latter therefore replaces **Mr. Christian SIEBERT** who currently holds this E5 Unit position.

The next person to head the G2 unit is not yet known. The actual acting head of unit is now the deputy head of the G2 Unit, **Dr. Alf-Eckbert FÜSSEL**.

Publication of European guidelines on the welfare of fish

On 24 June 2020, the European Union (EU) Platform on Animal Welfare has published a [document](#) identifying best practices guidelines concerning the welfare of fish in aquaculture as well as concerning water quality.

This 20-page report distinguishes common threats in fish farms and develop guidelines on subject such as transport, pH levels in water, the presence of dead fishes in the tanks, etc.

This report was developed by a group of different Member-states officials (Greece, Spain, Italy, Germany, Denmark, and Norway) plus participants from civil society groups, the aquaculture sector, and various experts.

Welfare of pig at slaughter

In the context of a series of updates on welfare of animals at slaughter requested by the European Commission, the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) has published a [scientific opinion](#) containing 30 identified hazards concerning the welfare of pigs at slaughter.

The hazards encountered are, according to the EFSA, related to the lack of training of personnel and the incompatibility of CO2 stunning; EFSA's recommendations are thus partly focused on that issue.

Other report of this kind for other species (cattle and other species) will be published throughout the coming year. The findings of these documents will help the European Commission in its dialogue with the World Organisation on Animal Health (OIE) on animal welfare at slaughter issues.

EFSA's public consultation on nitrate and nitrite in feed

On 16 June 2020, the European Food and Safety Authority (EFSA) published a [public consultation](#) on a draft scientific opinion on the risk assessment of nitrate and nitrite in animal feed.

The report develops estimations of dietary nitrate and nitrite exposure faced by animals (farms and companion) from feed and an assessment of the animal health risks related to this exposure.

This consultation is open until **27 July 2020**.

EPRS report on trade and biodiversity

On 5 June 2020, the European Parliament Research Service (EPRS) published an [in-depth analysis](#) on the impact of international trade on European Union (EU) biodiversity.

This report first develops the link between economics and biodiversity as well as the direct and indirect impacts of international trade on biodiversity.

It then explores solutions in trade policies to undertake '*trade-related biodiversity issues*'.

The report ends with a series of recommendations such as:

- Focusing on non-tariff measures (NTM) in order to limit, for example, the introduction of invasive species. Nevertheless, these NTMs should be, according to the report, consistent with the rules from the World Trade Organisation (WTO).
- Making environmental clauses in trade deals less numerous but more binding.
- Making environmental clauses enforceable by creating them in a way where there are quantifiable, transparent and automatic.
- Making the EU count on the help of the Chief Trade Enforcement Officer, a role established by the EU Green Deal.
- Making the EU continue its mission of awareness raising among stakeholders.

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