



As the restrictions in majority of countries are slowly being lifted, we look back at our work from pre-pandemic times, hoping that we will return to our regular professional activities soon.

If teleworking is still the rule for most of the staff of the European institutions, some very important step towards the adoption of a European response to the crises have been taken by the European decision makers in the past few weeks. Indeed, the European Commission presented its new proposal for the Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027, the long-term budget of the European Union, which includes a 750 billion euros recovery plan to respond to the consequences of the crisis. The European head of states and the European Parliament still have to adopt this proposal.

Moreover, the European Commission also presented on 20 May 2020 its Farm to Fork strategy which will impact our daily work as it foresees a 50% reduction in the sales of antimicrobials used in animal breeding and aquaculture by 2030. We will closely monitor the implementation of this measure in the upcoming months while the daily work of the European institutions slowly begins to come back to normal.

Piotr KWIECIŃSKI, UEVP President

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PRIORITY ISSUES

Latest news about COVID-19

European Commission Q&A on COVID-19 and animals

On 18 May 2020, The European Commission published an 8-pages [Q&A document](#) entitled “COVID-19 and farmed and domestic animals”.

The document counters the idea that pets can play a role of spreading agent of the virus and gives advices concerning the efficient cooperation between public authorities and veterinary authorities.

The Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE), with support of the Federation of Companion Animal Veterinary Associations (FECAVA), participated in the drafting of this document.

Covid-19, animals and the trade in wildlife

On 29 April 2020, **Staci McLennan**, the Director of the European Union (EU) bureau of the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) wrote an [article](#) in the official magazine of the European Parliament (EP) on the relation between the world and animals and the implications of this relation regarding pandemics.

McLennan notably points out the fact that public authorities have made the mistake of treating the issues of environment, public health, animal health and animal welfare as different issues. Furthermore, she insists on the idea that the control of wildlife trafficking is thus more than just a question of animal welfare as it can have impacts on health, economy or national security.

She calls the EU to focus as much on the control of imported wild animals as it does on the control of farm animals and to “*develop clear policies that regulate wildlife trade, based on criteria to safeguard biodiversity, public health and safety as well as animal health and welfare*”; these policies should be, according to the IFAW, “*complemented with vigorous enforcement and meaningful penalties that stigmatise wildlife consumption and thus support demand reduction efforts*”.

In the same vein, the Research Service of the EP (EPRS) published, on 4 May 2020, a [document](#) on wildlife trade and its implication with pandemics.

This 6-pages document focusses on the fact that most emerging infectious diseases come from wild animals. The report also presents the European regulations regarding trade in wildlife and the health risks associated with wildlife traffic.

European Medicine Agency communication on the availability of veterinary medicines during the health crisis

On 30 April 2020, the European Medicine Agency (EMA) published in cooperation with the Heads of Medicines Agencies (HMA), a [Q&A document](#) concerning the possible flexibility of regulatory rules on veterinary medicines. The idea behind this document is to ensure the availability of veterinary medicines in this time of crisis.

The Q&A states that regulatory flexibility is possible concerning marketing authorisation procedures and safety monitoring as well as regarding good manufacturing practice for veterinary medicines and inspections of manufacturing facilities.

It is possible that this document evolves with regard to the development of the situation. More regulatory information on the impact of COVID-19 on veterinary medicines can be found on this [EMA page](#).

Position statements of Eurogroup for Animals concerning various issues on animals during the COVID-19 crisis.

On 20 May 2020, the NGO Eurogroup for Animals participated in an event organised by the Intergroup on the welfare & conservation of animals of the European Parliament (EP) on the issue of the role of non-animal approaches in COVID-19-related research.

The NGO welcomes the initiative of the Intergroup to send a letter containing the event's recommendations to the European Commissioners **Mariya Gabriel** in charge of Research and Innovation and **Stella Kyriakides** in charge of Health and Food Safety. These recommendations gravitate around alternatives to animal-based experimentations such as the use of human cell culture models to study COVID-19 and lung disease.

In the framework of this event, the NGO advocates for the creation of a set of criteria for calls aiming at improving the effectiveness of EU research investments and reducing the impact on animals. Finally, the organisation claims that it will create a working group on the subject of the use of animals in science in order to influence the European Commission in these subjects

On 25 May 2020, Eurogroup for Animals published recommendations to the European Union concerning the management of stray cats and dogs in Europe during the health crisis.

The main recommendations gravitated around:

- The fighting of misinformation concerning the fear that pets could transmit the virus to humans.
- The continuing of neutering programmes.
- The development of feeding programmes now that most sources of food for stray animals are not present anymore.
- The construction of multi-stakeholder dialogue between public authorities at different levels, shelters and veterinarians.

Prolongation of the flexibility in official controls

As a reminder, on 30 March 2020, the European Commission adopted a [regulation](#) giving Member States flexibility in the official controls carried out on the agri-food chain (animals, plants, food, and feed) in the context of the coronavirus crisis.

These measures, that were supposed to last until 1st June 2020 will now, after the publication of a [regulation](#) by the European Commission, apply until 1st August 2020.

Latest news about the EU Green Deal

The European commission publishes its "farm to fork" strategy and its biodiversity strategy

On **20 May 2020**, the European Commission published two strategies that had been scheduled for publication since the presentation of the Green deal ([text](#) + [annex](#)) on 11 December 2019.

- [The "Farm to Fork" strategy](#)
- [The biodiversity strategy](#).

It should be noted that the publication of these two strategies has been postponed several times due to the health crisis. **The European Commission has indeed adapted the content of these two strategies following the COVID-19 crisis** and new objectives have emerged, particularly around the issue of European food sovereignty. **The contents of the two strategies are linked.**

The "Farm to Fork" (F2F) strategy

This strategy is part of the Green deal wanted by the European Commission to respond to two main imperatives:

- achieving zero net greenhouse gas emissions by 2050
- succeed in decoupling economic growth from resource use.

The European Commission explains that the **health crisis has demonstrated the need for the European Union to put in place an effective food system** that would become a global benchmark. The F2F strategy is the action plan of the European Commission for the coming months and years that will enable the European Union to achieve the following objectives:

- **promote the transition to a sustainable food system** that ensures food security and access to healthy diets
- **Reducing the environmental and climate footprint of the EU food system**
- **strengthen the resilience of the food system** by protecting the health of citizens and **securing the livelihoods of economic operators.**

To achieve these objectives, the European Commission proposes the **following concrete actions**:

- a **50% reduction in pesticide use by 2030**
- a **reduction of at least 20% in fertilizer use by reducing nutrient loss by at least 50% by 2030**
- a **50% reduction in the sales of antimicrobials used in animal breeding and aquaculture by 2030.**
- Stricter requirements on the **use of antibiotics for imported animal origin products.**
- the revision of existing **animal welfare legislation** such as **animal transport and slaughter**
- an **improvement in food labelling** to promote healthy and sustainable food with a possibility of an **animal welfare label.**
- the setting of **binding limits on food wastage** by 2023
- an allocation of **€10 billion under the European Union's Horizon Europe research and innovation programme for the period 2021-2027 to food, bioeconomy, natural resources, agriculture, fisheries, aquaculture and the environment** that will contribute to **reducing the use of antimicrobials.**

The timetable of the translation into legislative proposals foreseen in the action plan is presented in an annex to the strategy. While the **post-2020 CAP** (which will probably enter into force in 2023) will be an **important legislative vehicle** for the implementation of the strategy's objectives, **several other legislative proposals are announced**:

- A proposal for a **harmonised mandatory front-of-pack nutrition labelling** to enable consumers to make health conscious food choices by the end of 2022
- A proposal for a **revision of the feed additives regulation to reduce the environmental impact of livestock farming for the last quarter of 2021**
- An evaluation and revision of **the existing animal welfare legislation, including on animal transport and slaughter of animals** for the end of 2023.

An evaluation of the implementation of the strategy by the European Commission is foreseen by mid-2023 at the latest.

The Biodiversity Strategy for 2030

On 20 May 2020, the European Commission published its [biodiversity strategy](#) for 2030. This strategy was also developed in the context of the European [Green Deal](#) and its content is linked to the actions proposed by the F2F strategy. The main field of action of this initiative focuses on the protection of Europe's ecosystems.

The strategy includes 3 transversal objectives and a series of measures deriving from them:

- **Protecting and restoring nature in the European Union**

The measures within this first objective revolve around two main ideas: the transformation of at least 30% of European land and seas into protected areas and the development of a nature restoration plan.

More specifically, this restoration plan includes a series of measures, some of which are also outlined in the F2F strategy. These measures include the following:

- the **revision of the European [Pollinator Initiative](#)**
- **the use of 25% of European agricultural land for organic farming** (also foreseen in the F2F strategy)
- **the transformation of 10% of the agricultural area into highly diversified landscapes**
- **reducing fertiliser use by at least 20% by reducing nutrient loss by at least 50% by 2030** (also foreseen in the F2F strategy)
- The restoration of **25,000 km of rivers into free-flowing rivers by 2030**
- A 50% reduction of **Red List species threatened by invasive alien species**.

- **Improving biodiversity governance**

This objective focuses on improving the quality and means of biodiversity governance. In this respect, the European Commission will notably ensure that Member States properly implement the strategy's commitments at national level.

There are also plans to evaluate and potentially revise the Environmental [Crime Directive](#) and to create a movement bringing together economic actors for biodiversity.

It should be noted that, in the context of the [Regulation](#) on the establishment of a framework to promote sustainable investment, the delegated act establishing a common classification of economic activities contributing to the protection and restoration of biodiversity and ecosystems will be developed under the aegis of this strategy.

- **Supporting a global and ambitious biodiversity agenda**

This last objective aims to bring the EU biodiversity ambitions to international negotiations. This part of the strategy intends, for example, to negotiate an ambitious agreement on biodiversity at the 5th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD COP15) and to better assess the impact of trade agreements on biodiversity.

Next steps

In the coming weeks, the European Parliament's ENVI Committee will take a position on the European Commission's proposal via an **own-initiative report on the "Farm to fork" strategy**. This report should be drafted by **Anja HAZEKAMP** (GUE/NGL, Netherlands) for the **GUE/NGL group**, the shadow rapporteur for the Renew Europe group should be Swedish MEP **Frederik FEDERLEY**.

The European Parliament's ENVI committee will also prepare an own-initiative report to position itself on the **biodiversity strategy** in the coming weeks. The rapporteur for the text is expected to be **Cesar LUENA** (S&D, Spain).

Latest news on antimicrobial resistance at EU level

Revised joint statements from the FVE, the AVMA and the CVMA.

On 30 April 2020, the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE), the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) and the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA) have published two revised position papers on [animal welfare](#) and on [AMR](#).

The animal welfare paper acknowledges the sentience of animals and the role of veterinarians in the advocacy for animal welfare at individual and community levels.

The AMR paper promotes the responsible use of antimicrobials and the coordinated “One Health” approach and recognizes the duty of veterinarians to advocate for further research and innovation on this subject.

Update on the EMA activities

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

The Committee for Medicinal Products for Veterinary Use (CVMP) held a [meeting](#) from 18 to 20 May 2020.

The Committee adopted by consensus a positive opinion for Prevexxion RN+HVT+IBD and Prevexxion RN. The Committee adopted by consensus positive opinions for type II variation application to add a new therapeutic indication for Aivlosin (tylvalosin) 625 mg/g granules for use in drinking water for pigs.

The Committee adopted two scientific reports on new veterinary medicinal product for urinary system disorder in cats and on a new immunological veterinary medicinal product for cattle.

The CVMP adopted two other scientific advices with recommendations for implementing measures under Article 77(6) of [Regulation](#) (EU) 2019/6 on good pharmacovigilance practice and on pharmacovigilance system master files for veterinary medicinal products.

OTHER ISSUES

Latest updates on animal welfare at EU level

Animal welfare dedicated chapter in new EU-Mexico trade deal

On 28 April 2020, the European Union signed a renewed trade agreement with Mexico.

An important provision of this renewed deal was to improve the liberalisation in the trade of agricultural products; nevertheless, one of the chapters of the agreement focuses on animal welfare and AMR.

The important points laid out in this chapter are:

- The recognition of the sentience of animals
- The call for cooperation to improve animal welfare and animal protection
- The call for cooperation to better implement the animal welfare standards of the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE).

Publication of the Directorate-General for health and food safety of the European Commission on the protection of animals at the time of killing after Brexit

On 12 May 2020, the Directorate-General for health and food safety of the European Commission (DG SANTE) published a [notice to stakeholders](#) concerning the rules of animal slaughter in the context of Brexit.

This document develops the legal situation protection of animals at the time of killing at the end of the Brexit transition period.

It informs stakeholders that Brexit will have consequences in:

- **Certificates of competences:** these certificates will not be valid anymore in the European Union if delivered by the United Kingdom competent authorities.
- **Slaughterhouse operators:** the imported meat from the UK will have to comply with the animal welfare rules of Article 12 of [Regulation](#) (EC) No 1099/2009. The slaughterhouses will have to comply to Chapter III of that Regulation.

The second part of the document explains the post transition period rules relating to Northern Ireland.

As a reminder, the Brexit transition period should end on 31 December 2020.

Netherlands bans export of live animal outside of the European Union

On 25 May 2020, Carole Schouten, the Dutch Minister of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality, announced that, the live export of animals to countries outside of the European Union (EU) will be ban if a control post, that are usually used as resting places, is needed.

This decision became applicable on 26 May 2020 and is a result of a lack of information from exporters and Russia concerning the assurance that the EU's legislative provisions on animal welfare during transport (specially in these resting places) is complied with until final destination and the 2015 [verdict](#) of the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) on live animal transport

As a matter of fact, this verdict forces Member states to refuse to issue export certificates if there is no assurance that [EU regulation 1/2005](#) on animal welfare will be complied with during all the journey.

DG SANTE's report on animal welfare during sea transport

The Directorate General for Health and Food Safety (DG SANTE) published, at the beginning of May, a [report](#) on the transport of live animals by sea.

This report reveals numerous lacks of compliance with the EU animal [transport regulation](#).

The reports states that Member-states don't allocate enough attention, time or money to the control of this issue. National competent authorities seem to approve the transport even though the documents are not appropriate or without considering the weather conditions.

Furthermore, the report states that *"there is high pressure on veterinary officials at EU exit ports to allow loadings as they are subject to intense pressure from exporters to approve shipments (including the threat of potential legal action if an export is stopped or delayed) and they have little, if any, support from their hierarchy to refuse a loading"*.

Latest news on animal medicines

EURL ECVAM report on non-animal-derived antibodies

The EU Reference Laboratory for alternatives to animal testing (EURL ECVAM) and the Joint Research Centre of the European Union (JRC) have published, on May 12, a recommendation [report](#) on the use of non-animal-derived antibodies.

The document helps stakeholders from the research field to better comprehend the use of alternative non animal based methods for the generation of monoclonal and polyclonal antibodies as well as other types of affinity reagents.

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