



This month, in response to animal disease pandemics across the European Union, the European Commission has taken several exceptional measures to attempt to limit the spread of these diseases, including avian influenza, African swine fever and sheep and goat pox, as well as has adopted support measures for certain states (in particular Italy) to compensate for the economic impact of these health crises on their markets.

Another priority of the European Commission has been to pursue its preparatory work on the revision of animal welfare legislation, expected in the third quarter of 2023. In this context, a first working document (not yet officially published) suggests a real commitment on its side, both in terms of breeding, transport and slaughter conditions and animal welfare labelling.

Certain proposals for provisions on the prohibition of practices deemed "cruel" or "inappropriate" are therefore to be expected, and will have to be paid particular attention by our profession.

Piotr KWIECIŃSKI, UEVP President

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PRIORITY ISSUES

Update on 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 18th to 20th April 2023.

The Committee adopted a positive opinion for a variation requiring assessment for **Gumbohatch** – a live avian infectious bursal disease vaccine - concerning amendment of the indication by adding its use in future layer chickens.

The Committee adopted several positive opinions for a variation requiring assessment for **Vaxxitek HVT+IBD**, **Prevexxion RN+HVT+IBD** and **Prevexxion RN** concerning updated of the approved marketing authorisation dossier of each vaccine.

The Committee adopted several positive opinions for variations requiring assessment concerning quality-related changes for **Melovem**, **Purevax RCPCh**, **Purevax RCP FeLV**, **Purevax RCP** and **Purevax RCPCh FeLV**.

The Committee adopted several positive opinions for variations requiring assessment to align the product information with version 9.0 of the QRD template for **Cerenia**, **Contacera**, **Onsior** and **Proteq West Nile**.

The Committee adopted [a positive opinion](#) recommending the extrapolation of maximum residue limits for radoxanide to milk in bovine and ovine species. The Committee recommended that the maximum residue limits in bovine tissues and milk be extrapolated to all ruminants except ovine.

The Committee adopted two scientific advice reports to requests for initial advice concerning a biological product and a pharmaceutical product, both indicated for dogs.

The Committee classified one immunological product for turkeys, one Musculo-skeletal system product for horses and one alimentary tract and metabolism product for dogs as intended for a limited market and eligible for authorisation under Regulation [2019/6](#).

The Committee adopted a recommendation for changes to the product information sections on special precautions for use, for **Neptra** as the outcome of signal management activities.

The Committee endorsed a survey about the review of the list of substances which are essential for the treatment of equine species, in accordance with [Regulation 2019/6](#).

Latest news on antimicrobial resistance at EU level

Publication of a report on antimicrobial resistance by ECDC and WHO

On April 14th, the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) released a joint [report](#) with the World Health Organization (WHO) on "*Antimicrobial Resistance Surveillance in Europe - 2023*" based on data from 2021.

The report notes several developments in the situation:

- **Antimicrobial resistance is higher in southern and eastern Europe**, with differences mainly in resistance to third generation cephalosporins and carbapenems.

- An overall increase in resistance to 3rd generation carbapenems and cephalosporins in *Klebsiella pneumoniae* compared to *Escherichia coli*, with **33% of countries seeing an increase of more than 25% in Klebsiella pneumoniae resistance.**
- An increasing trend of *Acinetobacter* resistance to carbapenems, difficult to eradicate once endemic, **requires the reinforcement of control measures against this phenomenon.**
- In 2021, national data reporting to the [EARS-NET](#) and [CAESAR](#) surveillance networks was better than in 2020. **However, 16% of countries report local data collection without a standardized approach.**

Finally, a positive observation has been made in the majority of countries with national action, control and prevention plans, although there is still a significant need for funding of actions to ensure their effectiveness. **Thus, ECDC and WHO call for a strengthening of measures and funding to improve the quality, quantity and comparability of surveillance data.** *“High-level support and robust funding for comprehensive programmes and interventions on IPC, antimicrobial stewardship and surveillance are still inadequate. It is clear that commitment at the highest-level of government is crucial to advance the AMR agenda”.*

Latest news on animal health

Publication by the European Commission of an implementing act allowing exceptional measures to be put in place to support the Italian egg and poultry meat market following the avian influenza outbreak

On 18th April, the European Commission published an [implementing act](#) on **exceptional market support measures for the egg and poultry meat sectors in Italy.**

This implementing act mentions that following the request presented by Italy, the European Union undertakes to participate in the co-financing *“up to 50% of the expenditure incurred by Italy to support the egg and poultry meat markets, which have been seriously affected”* by the avian influenza epidemic at the end of 2021.

Note that the total budget is limited to a maximum of 27.2 million euros and can only be allocated to farms that have been subject to animal health measures in the areas affected by the outbreak between October and December 2021.

Finally, the text specifies the details of the maximum amount of co-financing for the eligible sectors: chickens, laying hens, ducks, turkeys, and guinea fowl.

Update on special control measures for avian influenza outbreaks in Europe

The European Commission has updated, by two implementing regulations published on [17th April](#) and [3rd May 2023](#), the establishment of the special control measures for the avian influenza.

These measures amend the Annex to Implementing Decision [2021/641](#) on emergency measures due to outbreaks of highly pathogenic avian influenza in certain Member States.

The [decision](#) of 17th April 2023 refers to outbreaks of avian influenza in the **region of Central Bohemia in the Czech Republic, in the regions of Veneto and Tuscany in Italy, in the counties of Bács-Kiskun and Nógrád in Hungary, in the Wielkopolska voivodship in Poland and in the region of Veliko Tarnovo in Bulgaria.** Therefore, the implementing decision modifies the protection and surveillance zones of Decision 2021/641 for the Czech Republic, Italy, Hungary and Poland., as well as the introduction of new zones for Bulgaria and Slovakia.

The [decision](#) of 3rd May 2023 refers to outbreaks of avian influenza in **the region of Central Bohemia in the Czech Republic, in the municipality of Sønderborg in Denmark, in the Länder of Baden-Württemberg and Saxony-**

Anhalt in Germany, in the regions of Emilia-Romagna, Lombardy and Veneto in Italy, in the counties of Bács-Kiskun and Csongrád-Csanád in Hungary and in the Wielkopolska voivodship in Poland. Therefore, the implementing decision modifies the protection and surveillance zones of Decision 2021/641 for the Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Italy, Hungary and Poland. In addition, new restricted zones are included for Italy.

Update on special control measures for African swine fever in Europe

The European Commission has updated, by two implementing regulations published on [20th](#) and [27th](#) April 2023, the establishment of the special control measures for the African swine fever, in accordance with implementing decision [2023/594](#).

In addition, several outbreaks of African Swine Fever **have occurred in feral pigs in Poland, Italy and Lithuania, and one outbreak has occurred in pigs kept in Poland.**

- An outbreak of African swine fever has been observed in a feral pig in **the region of Opole, Poland**, in a restricted zone I which is now a restricted zone II.
- Several outbreaks of African swine fever have been observed in feral pigs in the **Wielkopolskie and Mazowieckie regions of Poland** in Restricted Zone II in the vicinity of Restricted Zone I. The latter become restricted zones II.
- An outbreak of African swine fever has been observed in a feral pig in **the Liguria region** of Italy, in a Restricted Zone I, which is now a Restricted Zone II.
- Several outbreaks of African swine fever in feral pigs have been observed **in the Piemonte region of Italy** in a restricted zone II in the vicinity of restricted zone I. The latter becomes a restricted zone II.
- Several outbreaks of African swine fever in feral pigs have been observed in **Marijampolė County, Lithuania**, in a restricted zone I, which is now a restricted zone II.
- An outbreak of African swine fever has been observed in pigs kept in **the Dolnośląskie region of Poland** in a restricted zone II, which now becomes a restricted zone III.

The second implementing decision of 27th April 2023 also amends the restricted zones in accordance with decision 2023/594 to take account these developments:

- An outbreak of African swine fever has been observed in a feral pig in **the Dienvidkurzemes region of Latvia** in a restricted zone II in proximity of a restricted zone I. The latter become restricted zones II.

On the contrary, in view of the effectiveness of African swine fever control measures in feral pigs in Poland, certain areas in the **Mazowieckie, Podkarpackie and Małopolskie regions** listed as Restricted Zone II become Restricted Zone I. In addition, certain areas in **the Podkarpackie region** listed as restricted zone I are withdrawn from the list in the Annex to implementing [Decision 2023/594](#).

Update on special control measures for sheep pox and goat pox in Europe

The European Commission published two implementing decisions on emergency measures for sheep pox and goat pox on April [20th](#) and [28th](#) 2023 amending the implementing decision [2022/2333](#).

According to the implementing decision of April 20th:

- The occurrence of two outbreaks of sheep pox and goat pox in premises keeping sheep and/or goats in **the region of Castilla-La Mancha in Spain**. The decision [2022/2333](#) is therefore amended to adjust the surveillance and restricted zones in the region.
- Given the current outbreak situation, therefore *“movements of sheep and goats kept in the protection or surveillance zones should only be allowed to a slaughterhouse for immediate slaughter within the same protection or surveillance zone as the establishment of origin or to a slaughterhouse located in the*

further restricted zone, as near as possible to the establishment of origin, when it is not possible to slaughter the animals in the same protection or surveillance zone as the establishment of origin”.

Furthermore, according to the implementing decision of April 28th:

- A new outbreak of sheep pox and goat pox in premises where sheep and/or goats are **kept in the Castilla-La Mancha region in the province of Ciudad Real**, within the established protection zone. The [decision 2022/2333](#) is therefore amended to adjust the surveillance and restricted zones in the region.

Vote in the European Parliament’s Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development (AGRI) on the report on the proposal for a regulation on the labelling of organic pet food

On 25th April, the European Parliament’s Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development (AGRI) adopted its position on the [proposal](#) for a regulation on **the labelling of organic petfood**, by 47 votes in favour, 0 against and 1 abstention, based on the [amended report](#) by Martin HAUSLING (Greens/EFA, Germany).

As a reminder, the objective of the European Commission’s proposal **is to adapt the labelling rules for organic pet food intended for retail sale**. Among the measures proposed is the obligation to use the “*organic production*” logo for pre-packaged pet food. The original text also states that pet food can be labelled as such if at least 95% by weight of its agricultural ingredients are of organic origin.

The report adopted by the AGRI Committee includes amendments to the European Commission’s proposal, including:

- The introduction of a **specific label for food products from hunting and fishing**.
- The introduction of a **six-month transitional period** during which the current stock of organic pet food could be sold without adding the new mandatory EU organic logo to their packaging, in order to avoid waste of products and packaging materials.
- The possibility, under certain conditions, **of referring to organic production in the sales description and in the list of ingredients**.

The report will be submitted to a vote during the **plenary session from May 8th to 11th**. Once adopted, the report will represent the official position of the European Parliament in the inter-institutional negotiations between the European Parliament, the Council and the European Commission.

OTHER ISSUES

Latest news on animal welfare

Impact assessment of the European Commission on the revision of animal welfare legislation

On 20th April, the first elements of **the European Commission's Impact Assessment for the revision of animal welfare legislation were leaked**. Note that this is therefore a working document, which is not definitive. The document outlines 18 measures to improve livestock welfare, divided into 4 categories of measures corresponding to the four proposals for regulations envisaged:

- Breeding conditions
- Transport conditions
- Slaughter conditions
- Animal welfare labelling

Among the measures in the impact assessment, the following relevant elements can be noted:

- **Phasing out cage systems for laying hens, pullets, calves, ducks, geese and quail, broiler breeders and layer breeders.** However, the document also mentions the economic costs of production that this measure should cause for farmers. Transition periods could therefore be foreseen, and mitigation measures could be envisaged, especially according to the size of the farm.
- **Prohibiting practices considered as mutilation, such as beak trimming for poultry, castration and tail docking for pigs and tail docking for dogs.** Transitional periods could also be foreseen under this provision. A ban on the dehorning of dairy cows is currently considered by the European Commission within five years.
- **Banning the crushing of male chicks.** The working document refers to "*citizens' concern*" as the justification for this measure. Two transition periods are envisaged: 5 years for brown eggs and 10 years for white eggs.
- **Banning slaughter techniques considered cruel** such as waterbaths and CO2 for pigs and poultry, as well as provisions to the ban on the stunning of farmed fish.
- **Increasing the space available for all animal species to encourage the "*natural behaviour*" of animals.** To achieve this, the working document mentions a transition period of 10 years.
- **Setting a limit on transport times.** The possibility of banning the export of live animals to third countries seems not to have been retained in the upcoming impact assessment because of the potential negative economic consequences. However, the provision on transport time limit proposed is twice 21 hours with 24 hours rest between and a break every 10 hours. For slaughter animals the proposed limit is 9 hours. In addition, specific limits are set for un-weaned calves. Finally, animals must have continuous access to water and temperature ranges could be set.
- **The creation of a voluntary animal welfare label** to better inform consumers about farm animals. The recommended label could have several levels. The impact assessment mentions in particular that a mandatory label would be more effective, but that a voluntary option is preferred by more stakeholders.
- **All of the (above) obligations will have to be reciprocal** while being compatible with World Trade Organisation (WTO) rules. Indeed, the impact assessment mentions a possible negative consequence of the legislative revision with increased imports. Therefore, after a transitional period of 10 years, reciprocity measures should be introduced for certain measures, notably on animal spacing, mutilation, chick slaughter and cage farming.

As a reminder, the European Commission is expected to present its draft revision in the third quarter of 2023.

In a [press release](#) of 20th April, the NGO Eurogroup for Animals welcomes the analysis, including the above measures, but also emphasises the upcoming work on the European Commission's proposal. According to the director of the NGO Reineke HAMELEERS « *This is a very good start and reflects the decades of citizens*

campaigning and scientific evidence produced in the EU. In light of the results of the Impact Assessment, the EC must seize this once-in-a-generation opportunity and come forward with strong legislation that effectively improves the welfare of animals in Europe and globally. Ambitious legislation will benefit animals, citizens and farmers alike ».

Publication of an analysis of farm animal transport conditions by the Court of Auditors of the European Union

On 17th April, the European Court of Auditors published a [document](#) analysing the conditions of transport of farm animals.

After identifying a series of **challenges and shortcomings in the current legislation, particularly at the level of Member State controls**, the Court proposes several paths for improvement, including:

- **« Identifying alternatives to live animal transport**», for example, by favouring the transport of meat, by bringing the slaughterhouses closer together and by developing mobile slaughterhouses.
- **« Providing better information to consumers to help them make informed choices »**. The document highlights the multiplication of labelling systems, which can lead to confusion.
- **« Promoting structural changes to move towards a more sustainable food supply chain**», including through financial incentives.
- **« Assigning monetary value to animal suffering and taking account of this in the cost of transport and in the price of meat »**. The report mentions the possibility of developing a fee method for animal suffering as an incentive for companies.
- **« Obtaining a comprehensive centralised overview of animal transport, monitoring the conditions of live animals during transport, and promoting logistical optimisation »**. The Court encourages the development of a European computerized system to record the journeys of live animals. Furthermore, according to the Court, digital tools could improve animal transport from a logistical point of view but also in terms of animal welfare, in particular through the use of cameras and sensors.

This document could serve as a basis for reflection in the context of the future [revision](#) of animal welfare regulations. As a reminder, the revision of the animal welfare regulation is expected for the **3rd quarter of 2023**.

Publication in the Official Journal of the European Union of a delegated act on animal welfare during maritime transport

On 24th April, a [delegated act](#) regarding rules for the performance of official controls to verify compliance with animal welfare requirements for the transport of animals by livestock vessels of the European Commission entered into force.

As a reminder, this delegated act was adopted by the European Commission on 17th February 2023 along with an [implementing act](#) to complement the [Regulation](#) on the protection of animals during transport.

The implementing act, published in the Official Journal on 20th February 2023, provides for the **creation of a common electronic database by the European Maritime Agency (EMSA)** as well as the **implementation of the obligation of having a control to be carried out by an official veterinarian on livestock vessels on their first journey**.

On the other hand, the delegated act addresses the **performance of official controls to verify compliance with animal welfare requirements for the transport of animals by livestock vessels**. More specifically, with regard to:

- **The inspections of vessels** “*Inspectors from the competent authorities that carry out inspections on livestock vessels are mostly official veterinarians*”.

- **But also the loading and unloading of animals** *“The competent authorities at exit points at seaports should also perform a physical inspection after loading the animals on the livestock vessel to verify that the distribution of the animals in the pens is in line with the space allowances”.*

Publication of two draft delegated acts of the European Commission on the marketing of poultry meat

On 21st April, the European Commission published **two proposals for delegated acts on the marketing standards for poultry meat and two associated consultations to gather feedback from stakeholders.**

The first [delegated act](#), which complements the [Regulation](#) establishing a common organisation of the markets in agricultural products, proposes to introduce **the possibility for Member States to create indications according to farming methods to be displayed on labels.** These indications are in addition to the list established in the legislative proposal of indications that can be put on the product as *“free range”* or *“tradition free range”*. Note that these indications will be controlled by the national authorities.

In addition to this, the legislative proposal focuses on several points, which are:

- Definition and classification
- Presentation of carcasses
- Denomination
- Temperature of frozen poultry meat
- Cooling methods
- Maximum amount of water in the meat

The [consultation](#) is open until **19th May 2023.**

The second proposed [delegated act](#), and the associated [consultation, concerns](#) the implementing rules for the Regulation establishing a **common organisation of the markets in agricultural products.** This consultation is also open until **19th May 2023.**

Publication of a report on statistics on the use of animals for scientific purposes by the European Commission

On 30th March 2023, the European Commission published an [internal working document](#) *“Summary Report on the statistics on the use of animals for scientific purposes in the Member States of the European Union and Norway in 2020”.*

According to the report, just over 8 million animals were used for scientific purposes in 2020, a decrease of 7.5% compared to 2019. However, the report states that the comparison has been made more complex due to the Covid 19 pandemic.

The main reasons for the use of animals are as follows:

- For research purposes (almost 72%)
- To comply with regulatory requirements (17 %)
- For “routine production” (5%)

The report also mentions the **increasing use of new animal species** for scientific purposes such as cats, horses, and donkeys.

Finally, it should be noted that the Member States that used the most animals for scientific purposes were: Germany, France, Spain, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands, Sweden and Denmark.

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