



As discussions continue on how to improve animal welfare at the European level, UEVP welcomes the provisions and amendments on this topic in the draft reports on the Farm to Fork and Biodiversity strategies of the European Parliament.

The specific issue of improving animal welfare during transport is also of major importance, including the role that veterinary practitioners can play in the implementation of revised legislation on this topic.

We will closely monitor the discussions on these issues while promoting the key function of veterinarians regarding animal welfare.

Piotr KWIECIŃSKI, UEVP President

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PRIORITY ISSUES

Latest EU institutional news

Latest developments on the Farm to Fork strategy

Following the publication in January 2021 of the [joint draft report](#) of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI Committee) and the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development (AGRI Committee) on the European Commission's [Farm to fork strategy](#), around 2 300 amendments have been tabled by members of these two committees.

Several of these amendments are about animal welfare and antimicrobial resistance and examples of them are as follows:

- Antimicrobial resistance is recognised as a *“major threat to human health”*;
- Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) are calling for *“improved management of veterinary prevention and promotion of high animal health and welfare standards, including with trading partners, notably on vaccination and prevention of antimicrobial resistance”*;
- MEPs ask the European Commission *“to include an applicable animal health monitoring tool in the framework of the animal health strategy on a scientific basis”*.

As a reminder, one of the 2030 targets of the Farm to Fork strategy is to reduce the sale of antimicrobials for farmed animals and in aquaculture by 50%.

On this draft report, the rapporteurs and shadow rapporteurs will now start negotiations to build compromise amendments incorporating several amendments and supported by a potential majority of MEPs.

The vote on this joint draft report in the two Committees of the European Parliament is expected in April 2021, before a final vote in plenary session of the European Parliament between May and July 2021. Once adopted by the European Parliament, this joint draft report will represent the position of the Parliament on the Farm to fork strategy but will not be a binding act.

Update on the Biodiversity strategy

Following the publication, last December 2020 of the [own-initiative report](#) of the European Parliament's Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI Committee) on the European Commission's [Biodiversity Strategy](#), more than 1 200 amendments have been tabled by ENVI Committee's members.

Several amendments call for improving animal welfare and demand, among others, that *“farmers receive support and training in the transition towards agroecological practices away from monocultures, agriculture dependent on external fossil and chemical input and intensive animal agriculture, and towards sustainable and higher-welfare animal farming practices that can drastically reduce the over-reliance on antimicrobial treatments”*.

On this draft report, the rapporteur and shadow rapporteurs will now start negotiations to build compromise amendments incorporating several amendments and supported by a potential majority of Members of the European Parliament (MEPs).

A vote is expected on this draft report in the ENVI Committee of the Parliament at the end of March 2021. Then, a vote in plenary session of the European Parliament will take place in April 2021. Once adopted by the European

Parliament, this draft report will represent the position of the Parliament on the Biodiversity strategy but will not be a binding act.

Latest developments on the CAP's reform

The new Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) rules which should apply after the transition period in January 2023, are still being negotiated between the European Parliament, the Council and the European Commission in trilogues. These discussions also concern animal welfare provisions to be included in the upcoming CAP.

A series of trilogues should take place in March 2021. The Portuguese Minister of Agriculture Maria do Céu Antunes – leading the negotiations at the Council level until the end of June 2021 – would like the negotiations on CAP reform to end by May 2021. To achieve this objective, the minister wants to organise a joint “*super trilogue*” for the three texts of the CAP reform that are currently negotiated.

This “*super trilogue*” could be held after the Council of Agriculture Ministers scheduled for 22 and 23 March 2021.

Latest news on antibiotics at EU level

Answer to the Parliamentary question on antimicrobial resistance and live animal transport

On 10 December 2020, six Members of the European Parliament from the Greens group submitted a [parliamentary question](#) to the European Commission on antimicrobial use when transporting live animals. They asked whether it has evaluated the impact of live animal transport on antimicrobial use as well as whether the Commission will include antimicrobial resistance in its revision of [Council Regulation \(EC\) 1/2005](#) on the protection of animals during transport.

On 22 February 2021, the Commission explained in its [reply](#) that it has not yet evaluated the incidence of live animals' transport on antimicrobial use and resistance. However, it will ask the EFSA to publish a new scientific advice on this topic. This advice will contribute to the revision of the [Council Regulation \(EC\) 1/2005](#) and aligns with the European Commission's [Farm to fork strategy](#). The revision will apply the “One health” perspective on AMR.

EFSA's guidance for reporting 2020 data about zoonoses, antimicrobial resistance and food-borne outbreaks

On 8 February 2021, EFSA published a technical report entitled “[Zoonoses, antimicrobial resistance and food-borne outbreaks guidance for reporting 2020 data](#)”. This guidance aims at explaining EU Member States and non-Member States how to pass on their data information about antimicrobial resistance, zoonoses, food-borne outbreaks in extensible markup language (XML). For this purpose, a **Data Collection Framework** application has been created by EFSA. It provides data dictionaries explaining the EU legal frameworks. It specifies which data elements should be declared and more particularly the information about the data type, the list of the allowed terms and other business rules or requirements that may apply.

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 17 February 2021.

The Committee adopted a positive opinion for a marketing authorisation application for Credelio Plus, a new antiparasitic product for oral use in dogs with mixed infestations/infections of ticks, fleas, gastrointestinal nematodes, heartworm and/or lungworm.

The Committee adopted a positive opinion for Daxocox for the treatment of pain and inflammation associated with osteoarthritis in dogs.

The Committee adopted a positive opinion for Ultifend ND IBD a new vaccine for the active immunisation of chickens or chicken embryonated eggs to reduce mortality, clinical signs and lesions caused by Newcastle disease virus or by very virulent of infectious bursal disease virus (IBDV) or by classical Marek's disease virus.

The Committee adopted a positive opinion for extensions of the existing authorisation for Emdocam (meloxicam) from Emdoka BVBA.

The Committee adopted a positive opinion for a type II variation application for Equioxx to introduce a new pharmacovigilance system.

The Committee adopted positive opinions for type II variation applications concerning quality-related changes for Aivlosin (grouped), ProteqFlu-Te (grouped), Suvaxyn CSF Marker, Vectormune ND (worksharing procedure with other related nationally authorised products), Zactran.

The Committee adopted a positive opinion for a type IB variation application for Eurican Herpes 205 concerning quality-related changes.

The Committee adopted three draft guidelines which concern the following for non-immunological veterinary medicinal products intended for limited markets:

- The safety and residue data requirements for applications
- The efficacy and target animal safety data requirements for applications
- The data requirements for applications

OTHER ISSUES

Latest news on the Veterinary profession

WSAVA investigates the consequences of the Covid-19 on the veterinary market

On 22 January 2021, the World Small Animal Veterinary Association (WSAVA) published the [first results](#) of its VETSSURVEY which investigates how the global pandemic has impacted the veterinary market. 5000 veterinary professionals from 91 countries answered the survey. The results show that veterinaries have adapted their policies, procedures, and communication channels to fit with the social distancing measures. Despite the situation, the study shows that the number of clients has increased and that the financial impact on clinics has been varied. The strongest growth is to be seen in Australia and in the USA. Otherwise, the situation is approached as pessimistic by most of the veterinaries.

Latest news on animal health

Parliamentary question on animal health legislation

On 20 November 2020, Member of the European Parliament (MEP) Dan-Ștefan Motreanu (EPP, RO) submitted a parliamentary [question](#) for written answer to the European Commission. In his question, he asks about the application of the [Regulation \(EU\) 2016/429](#) (“Animal Health Law”) which is due on 21 April 2021. Given the current context and the long legal process, both at European and national levels, the MEP asks if the Commission will be able to respect the deadlines or will postpone by one year the entry to force of the Animal Health Law.

On 5 February 2021, the European Commission [replied](#) to his question and stated that the above-mentioned regulation which entered into force on 21 April 2016, will apply from 21 April 2021. According to the Commission, the five-years-period has allowed the Member States to prepare new requirements. Furthermore, the Commission recalls that the Regulation does not need any transposition and is then confident that Member States will implement the legislation on time. Finally, the Commission explains that it is against postponing by one year the application of the Animal Health Law and will support public authorities with the regulation’s implementation by providing [Better Training for Safer Food](#).

The European Commission agrees for a transitional period regarding new veterinary certificates

On 4 March 2021, the European Commission reaffirmed that it was not in favor of postponing the application of the [Regulation \(EU\) 2016/429](#) (“Animal Health Law”) which is due on 21 April 2021 during a debate within Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development (AGRI Committee) of the European Parliament.

However, the European Commission announced that transitional measures for a period of six months will be authorized regarding new “veterinary and animal health certificates”. More precisely, the “Animal Health Law” will apply as of 21 April 2021, but the Member States will have the possibility to introduce these new certificates until 20 October 2021.

EFSA makes recommendations to improve the monitoring of SARS-CoV-2 in mink

On 18 February 2021, EFSA and the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) published a [report of recommendations](#) to monitor, prevent and control the spread of the coronavirus in mustelids.

This report answers to the request of the European Commission after the outbreaks of Covid-19 in mink farms across Europe in 2020.

EFSA's publication shows an increase of Avian Influenza in Europe between December 2020 and February 2021

On 26 February 2021, EFSA published a [detailed report](#) on Avian Influenza in Europe and in United-Kingdom between the 8 December 2020 and the 23 February 2021.

According to this report, around 60% of the reported cases concerns domestic poultry. France counts most cases with 442 outbreaks, Germany has 50 poultry outbreaks and Poland 37 ones. EFSA explains the situation by a regional production system which gathers a “high density” of exploitations more particularly intended for fattening. Regarding the contamination from animals to human, EFSA evaluated the infection risk as “very low” but new strains may appear.

EFSA publishes a scientific opinion recommending an “exit strategy” concerning the African Swine Fever

On 3rd March 2021, EFSA released a [scientific opinion](#) which proposes surveillance strategies that should help countries affected by African swine fever to determine when the virus has stopped circulating among their wild boar populations.

The recommended “exit strategy” comprises two phases: a period of routine surveillance of wild boar (the screening phase) followed by a shorter period of intense surveillance (the confirmation phase).

EFSA's opinion gives examples of how to apply the exit strategy to affected areas and makes recommendations on the minimum monitoring periods needed to make the strategy effective.

Latest news on animal welfare

Discussions between European institutions on improving animal welfare during transport

On 25 February 2021, during a hearing in the Committee of Inquiry on the Protection of Animals during Transport (ANIT Committee) of the European Parliament, Portugal's Minister of Agriculture, Maria do Céu Antunes, presented the priorities of the Council's presidency for the coming months. In particular, it committed itself to making progress on the issue of animal welfare during maritime transport.

At the beginning of February 2021, Portugal sent to EU Member States an “exhaustive questionnaire” on exports of live animals to third countries, with a focus on sea transport. On the basis of the shortcomings identified by the Member States, the Portuguese Presidency of the Council will propose opportunities for improvement concerning financing, controls and trainings.

As a reminder, the ANIT Committee was set up last June 2020 and is expected to present a report by September 2021. Its report will deal with the implementation of European law on the protection of animals during transport

and related operations within and outside the Union, with a focus on how EU rules are being implemented by Member states and whether the European Commission is enforcing them properly.

Update on animal identification

European Commission's initiative on horse passport to facilitate identification and registration

The European Commission has launched an [initiative](#) to set out a standard identification document for the transport of horses and other similar animals in the EU. This "equine passport" should provide also further information about the purpose of the animal (used for producing food, breeding or to compete/race).

From 4 February to 4 March 2021, the European Commission has gathered feedbacks on its proposal of implementing regulation which will replace the [Implementing Regulation \(EU\) 2015/262](#).

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