



Animal welfare is in the centre of the discussions regarding the future of the European agricultural policy for the years to come. Indeed, the inclusion of animal welfare provisions as an ecoscheme is a key point of the ongoing triologue negotiations on the revised common agricultural policy as well as one of the priorities to be implemented in the framework of the Farm to fork and Biodiversity strategies.

UEVP renews its commitment in favour of animal welfare and will keep closely monitoring these negotiations while highlighting that veterinary practitioners will be essential for their implementation.

Piotr KWIECIŃSKI, UEVP President

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PRIORITY ISSUES

Latest EU institutional news

Latest developments on the Farm to Fork strategy

The [joint draft report](#) of the two rapporteurs Anja Hazekamp (GUE/NGL, Netherlands) for the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI Committee) and Herbert Dorfmann (EPP, Italy) for the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development (AGRI Committee) on the [Farm to fork strategy](#) has been published on 13 January 2021 and mentions the importance to improve animal welfare.

Impact assessments will be realized on the propositions and objectives presented in the Farm to Fork strategy. Some will be presented as legislative proposals in order to become legally binding.

This draft report is now being discussed and amended by MEPs from the ENVI and AGRI committees.

On 25 January 2021, an [exchange of views](#) took place with Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) from the AGRI Committee and the ENVI Committee of the Parliament concerning their joint [draft report](#) on the European Commission's Farm to fork strategy.

As a reminder, one of the 2030 targets of this strategy is to reduce the sale of antimicrobials for farmed animals and in aquaculture by 50%. This strategy also aims at improving animal welfare.

During the exchange of view of January 25, MEPs discussed their respective positions on the Farm to fork strategy, including concerning animal welfare. Among the positions expressed on this topic, the following MEPs took part in the discussion:

- Anja Hazekamp (GUE/NGL, Netherlands) – rapporteur of the joint draft report within the ENVI Committee – called for reducing intensive livestock farming;
- Tilly Metz (Greens/EFA, Luxembourg) – Chair of the Committee of Inquiry on the Protection of Animals during Transport (ANIT Committee) – said that animal welfare was barely mentioned in the joint draft report, and that measures to improve animal welfare should be included in the national strategic plans (as part of the reformed Common agricultural Policy).

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.

The vote on this joint draft report in the two Committees of the European Parliament is expected in April 2021.

Update on the Biodiversity strategy

On last December 11, 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](#) was presented by its rapporteur César Luena (S&D, Spain).

Among the findings and recommendations highlighted in this report, the following elements are included:

- the decline of pollinators is condemned, and a review of the European Commission's [European Pollinator Initiative of June 2018](#) is called for;
- the targets set by the European Commission to reduce the use of the most dangerous and chemical pesticides by 50%, the use of fertilisers by at least 20% and nutrient losses by at least 50% by 2030 must be made binding.

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.

In addition, on 14 December 2020, MEP Isabel Carvalhais (S&D, Portugal), rapporteur for opinion in the European Parliament's Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development (AGRI) presented her draft opinion to the ENVI Committee's own-initiative report. In particular, she stresses the importance of pollinator conservation and natural biological control of harmful organisms.

A vote on the [draft opinion](#) is scheduled to take place in the AGRI Committee on 4 March 2021.

Latest developments on the CAP's reform

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

On 14 January 2021, the European Commission published a [list](#) of potential farming practices that eco-schemes could support under the future CAP. This list – which includes among others organic farming, pesticide management, agroecology and animal welfare – aims to facilitate the ongoing negotiations between the European Parliament and the Council on strategic plans for the CAP.

As a reminder, Member States will need to implement the future CAP with respective national strategic plans. These plans should explain how each EU country will use CAP instruments to achieve the CAP objectives, while taking into account Green Deal objectives, including the [Farm to fork](#) and [Biodiversity](#) Commission's strategies.

Portugal, which took over the presidency of the Council from January 2021 for 6 months, aims at reaching a final agreement on the CAP reform by June of this year.

Latest news on antibiotics at EU level

Parliamentary question on the consumption of antibiotics

On 8 January 2021, Olivier Chastel (RE, Belgium) submitted a parliamentary [question](#) for written answer to the European Commission. In his question, the Member of the European Parliament asks how the EU4Health program will help reduce the consumption of antibiotics both for humans and animals.

As a reminder, tackling antimicrobial resistance through the "One health" approach is one of the WHO's priorities.

The European Commission will answer the written question in the following weeks.

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

The Committee for Medicinal Products for Veterinary Use (CVMP) held a [meeting](#) from 19 to 20 January 2021.

The Committee adopted a positive opinion for a type II variation application Exzolt (fluralaner) to inform about the product's effect on mite-induced stress and animal welfare.

The Committee adopted a positive opinion for type II variation applications for Cytopoint (grouped), Eravac, Gumbohatch, Melosus, Meloxoral, Nobilis IB Primo QX (grouped), Nobilis IB 4-91 (grouped), Varromed (grouped) concerning quality-related changes.

The Committee adopted a scientific advice report for a pharmaceutical product targeting the following species: cattle, sheep, horses, pigs, dogs and cats.

The Committee adopted the CVMP strategy on antimicrobials for 2021 – 2025. It relies on the implementation of those provisions in [Regulation \(EU\) 2019/6](#) which takes forward the EU's One Health Action Plan against antimicrobial resistance (AMR). The strategy will be published on the Agency's website.

EMA's publication on its key recommendation in 2020 regarding veterinary medicines

The European Medicines Agency (EMA) issued an [overview of its key recommendations in 2020](#) which gathers the authorization and safety monitoring of veterinary medicines issued by the agency in 2020 :

The main points highlighted in the document are the following :

- 20 medicines were recommended for marketing authorization
- 13 of them contain a new active substance
- 10 out the 20 are vaccines.

The main species concerned by these medicines are pigs, cattle, sheep and chickens.

OTHER ISSUES

Latest news on the Veterinary profession

The European Parliament adopts a resolution to strengthen the free movement of services

On 20 January 2021, the European Parliament adopted in plenary session a [report](#) entitled “*Strengthening the single market: the future of free movement of services*” by a large majority (462 votes in favour, 120 against and 108 abstentions).

Now adopted, this resolution - whose rapporteur is Morten Løkkegaard (RE, Denmark) - is not legally binding but represents the position of the European Parliament on this topic.

The resolution refers in particular to the removal of obstacles to the single market and the facilitation of procedures, and also refers to the situation of the regulated professions in these terms:

- *« unjustified regulatory restrictions on service providers and obstacles to access to regulated professions continue to create barriers that deprive citizens of jobs, consumers of choices, and entrepreneurs, especially SMEs, microenterprises and the self-employed, of opportunities » ;*
- *“the specific status that regulated professions have within the single market and their role in protecting the public interest; highlights that this specific status should not be used to maintain unjustified national monopolies in service provision”.*

On 17 March 2021, the European Commission plans to present a report on the role of the single market.

Latest news on animal health

EFSA adopts a new guidance on the renewal of the authorization of feed additives

The European Food Safety Authority (Efsa) adopted on 7 January 2021 a [new guidance on the renewal of the authorization of feed additives](#). As a reminder, the first drafts endorsed by the FEEDAP (EFSA’s expert Panel on Additives and Products or Substances used in Animal Feed) are from 2019 and its implementation is planned for 27 March 2021.

Feed additives are valid for a ten-year period, their renewal is compulsory in order to show that the additives remain safe for target species, consumers, users and the environment. In the 14-pages guidance, Efsa aims to assist the applicant to the renewal of the authorization of feed additives for use in animal nutrition. The evaluation of the renewal request has been simplified and focuses on the safety of the product (except changes in its fabrication process or in the condition of the authorization).

Exchange of views in the European Parliament concerning the legislation on animal welfare during transport

On 1st of February 2021, the Committee of Inquiry on the Protection of Animals during Transport (ANIT Committee) of the European Parliament held a hearing about the implementation of [regulation 1/2005](#) on the protection of animal during transport.

During this exchange of views, some of the opinions expressed by Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) were as follows:

- Carmen Avram (S&D, Romania) highlighted the misapplication of the current European legislation;
- Anja Hazekamp (GUE/NGL, Netherlands) – President of the European Parliament's Intergroup on Animal Welfare and Vice-Chair of the ANIT Committee – denounced the fact that transporters are allowed to transport animals over long distances without any resting or feeding of the animals;
- Peter Lundgren (ECR, Sweden) underlined the need for retaliatory measures by the competent authorities in case of infringements of the regulation.

Some experts, including veterinarians, also participated in the discussion. Håkan Henrikson, veterinarian and head of Trade and Industry at the Swedish Board of Agriculture, explained the importance that inspections are systematically carried out before and after transport. Alexander Rabitsch, Austrian veterinarian, and former animal welfare inspector, said that veterinarians, should be obliged to carry out checks on lorries.

The head of unit “Official controls” at the Directorate General for Health and food safety at the European Commission, Peter Bokor, also participated in the meeting. He indicated that the Commission has “*limited resources, both in terms of systems development and auditing*” on this topic.

As a reminder, the ANIT Committee was set up last June 2020 and is expected to present a report by June 2021 concerning 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.

Parliamentary question on the Commission’s guides to good and better practices for animal transport

On 28 October 2020, 17 Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) submitted a [question](#) for written answer to the European Commission about the effective use and fallout of its guides to good and better practices for animal transport.

Several representatives of the fight for animal welfare took part in the question such as Anja Hazekamp (GUE/NGL, Netherlands) - President of the European Parliament’s Intergroup on Animal Welfare -, Sirpa Pietikäinen (EPP, Finland) - Honorary president of the European Parliament’s Intergroup on Animal Welfare - and other MEPs signatories of the mobilization commitment concerning animal welfare.

On 20 January 2021, the Commission explained in its [reply](#) that the guides were spread on social media and during specific events as well as in EU Member States and in non-EU countries and are also available on their own specific website. It also pointed out that the fallout of the guides should be considered from a broadened perspective of all the Commission’s actions to improve the current legislation on animal transport and animal welfare in general.

Eurogroup for Animals presents propositions to improve animal welfare during transport

On 27 January 2021, the European non-governmental organisation Eurogroup for Animals published a [white paper](#) on the revision of [regulation 1/2005](#) on the protection of animals during transport.

Among the recommendations of the report, the organisation underlines the following elements:

- different standards should be included in the law depending on the species;
- the transport of unweaned animals should be prohibited and the transport of pregnant animals limited;
- a ban should be applied on exports of live animals to third countries;
- clearer definitions are needed to leave no room for interpretation to operators;
- establishing a “*centralised and harmonised monitoring and reporting system*” including animals being transported (species and numbers, animal welfare status, journey route).

Commissioner for Agriculture, Janusz Wojciechowski, has been invited to speak during an online seminar on this report on 27 January 2021. During the event, he recalled that the revision of the 2005 regulation was scheduled for 2023. This revision will take into account the [evaluation](#) of the legislation launched in May 2020 by the European Commission.

Parliamentary question about on-farm slaughter

On 10 November 2020, Marlene Mortler (EPP, Germany) submitted a priority [question](#) for written answer to the European Commission. The MEP Marlene Mortler draws her concern about an amendment of [regulation 853/2004](#) which provides the implementation of a minimum threshold in both the number of animal species and the number of animals slaughtered. She assesses that this amendment is in contradiction with the [Green Deal](#) and the [Farm to Fork strategy](#). She asks how the on-farm slaughter can be maintained in the respect of quality standards and animal welfare.

On 8 January 2021, the European Commission explained in its [reply](#) that there are no limits concerning the on-farm full slaughter. On the contrary, there are new possibilities to slaughter at the farm (stunning and bleeding). According to the European Commission, the revision of [regulation 853/2004](#) is not in contradiction with the Farm to Fork strategy or the Green Deal objectives. Indeed, it limits the number of slaughtered animals for hygienic and timely transport conditions and it strengthens the regionality of the food supply. Moreover, the EU legislation about the welfare of farmed animals will be revised in the perspective of the improvement of the sustainability of the entire agri-food system.

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info@euralia.eu