



At European level, the fight against antimicrobial resistance remains a priority, in which our profession can play a decisive role.

In particular, this month the European Commission published the results of the public consultation on legislation to ban growth-promoting antibiotics in imports. At the same time, a survey requested by the European Commission on antimicrobial resistance - including veterinary medicines - provides evidence and data that will enable the European Commission to take action in this area.

Finally, in the field of animal welfare, a number of statements have emerged on key issues within the European institutions and among European stakeholders, concerning animal transport, the preparatory work of the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) for the future legislation on animal welfare as well as the supervision of the use of animals for scientific purposes.

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](#) on 17th and 18th January 2023.

The Committee adopted several positive opinions for variation requiring assessment concerning quality-related changes for **Suvaxyn Circo+MH RTU, Galliprant, Bovela, Advocate** and **Nobivac Myxo-RHD Plus**.

The Committee adopted a positive opinion for a variation requiring assessment for **Purevax RC** to align the product information application with version (9.0) of the QRD template.

The Committee adopted four scientific advice reports further to requests for initial advice concerning two pharmaceutical products and two biological products. The respective target species are swine (one product), dogs (one product) and cattle (two products).

Following three requests for limited market classification and eligibility, the Committee classified:

- One immunological product for captive squirrel monkeys and one for horses as intended for a limited market and eligible for authorisation.
- A nervous system product for horses as intended for a limited market and not eligible for authorisation

The Committee adopted a [draft revised guideline](#) on quality, safety and efficacy of veterinary medicinal products specifically designed for phage therapy (and submitted for a 4-month period of public consultation). This guideline has been developed to address the regulatory, technical and scientific basis of phage therapy veterinary medicinal products where a variable composition of the final product is expected.

The Committee adopted the guideline on the application of [Regulation 2019/6](#) on the classification of veterinary medicinal products and, more precisely on prescription status. The comments received during the consultation procedure have been considered for the revision of the guideline. This guideline has been developed to elaborate on the scientific criteria and to provide assessors and stakeholders with clear guidance for its consistent and predictable application.

The Committee adopted the procedural advice for vaccine platform technology master file (vPTMF) certification.

The Committee elected J. Mount as vice-chair of the Pharmacovigilance Working Party for a 3-year mandate. The Committee adopted the forthcoming work plans for 2023 for the CVMP Working Parties on of the Immunological and Safety Working groups.

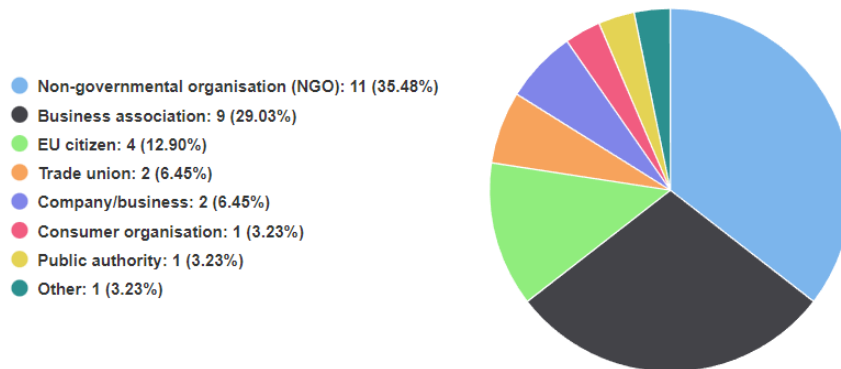
Latest news on antimicrobial resistance at EU level

Outcome of the public consultation on the European Commission's draft delegated act on the prohibition of growth-promoting antibiotics in imports

The European Commission has published its [draft delegated act](#) to **ban the use of growth-promoting antibiotics in imported animal products (also applying to antibiotics for human use)**, the public consultation on which ended on 3rd January. The text is now open for comments from any third country wishing to do so, **until 6th February**.

The [public consultation](#) received **31 responses from stakeholders**, including those of the **FVE** (which you can read [here](#)) as well as [Eurogroup for Animals](#), [AnimalHealthEurope](#), [BEUC](#), [EPHA](#) and [Copa Cogeca](#). The distribution of respondents is as follows:

By category of respondent



As the delegated act has direct effects on international trade and exports from certain countries to the EU, the European Commission also notified the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in early December.

Once all the contributions have been collected and analysed, the finalised text will be submitted to a vote by the group of national experts in charge of the dossier. As a reminder, if the act is adopted, the European Parliament and the Council will have 2 months to raise any objections. If they have no objections, these new rules will only apply 24 months after the entry into force of the text establishing the model certificate. Indeed, this text will have to be accompanied by an implementing act to establish a list of third countries whose legislation in this area is equivalent to that of the EU.

Publication of a survey on antimicrobial resistance

On the 26th of January, the Publications Office of the European Union published an [Eurobarometer](#) on **antimicrobial resistance (AMR)**.

As a reminder, the European Commission has defined measures since 2017 to tackle antimicrobial resistance as part of the “One Health” approach, which recognises the interconnectedness of health between people, animals, plants and their shared environment, and thus aims to establish European guidelines on the prudent use of antimicrobials in human and veterinary medicine.

The knowledge, attitudes and behaviour of the public are of vital importance for setting up effective EU policies to help ensure prudent use of antimicrobials. Therefore, the European Commission has undertaken a series of surveys among citizens to monitor their levels of knowledge and usage of antibiotics. The first survey, undertaken for **the Directorate-General for Health and Consumers**, was conducted in 2009. The current survey represents the fourth in the series.

Mandated by the European Commission's Directorate-General for Health and Consumers, this survey was carried out by the [Kantar Public Brussels network](#) in the 27 EU Member States between 21 February and 21 March 2022. Almost **26,500 respondents** from different social and demographic groups were interviewed.

This study examines the relationship of EU citizens to antibiotic use, their knowledge of the subject and their involvement in the fight against antimicrobial resistance, as well as the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the use of, need for and access to antibiotics.

The study mentions in particular a **substantial decrease in the proportion of Europeans taking antibiotics** in the previous 12 months, now at its lowest level since 2009 (40% in 2009, 32% in 2018, and 23% in 2022).

A part of the survey is also dedicated to the use of antibiotics in agriculture and the environment with a focus on two issues: **the treatment of sick animals with antibiotics and the ban on the use of antibiotics in the EU to stimulate farm growth**. According to the study, around two thirds (64%) of respondents agree that sick animals should be treated with antibiotics if this is the most appropriate treatment, while close to a third (31%) disagree. The survey finally shows that the majority of Europeans (58%) do not know that the use of antibiotics to stimulate growth in farm animals is banned in the EU.

Publication of the latest draft agenda for the meetings of the College of European Commissioners and announcement of upcoming initiatives

The European Commission has published its new draft [agenda for the weekly meetings](#) of the College of Commissioners, which was published on 13th January. In this document, the European Commission details the indicative dates on which it wishes to publish its various initiatives. Amongst these, in the context of animal health and welfare, the Council's recommendations to strengthen EU action to **combat antimicrobial resistance** in the context of a single approach to health will be presented by 14th March. It should be noted that only initiatives proposed in the first part of 2023 can be adopted before the end of the mandate of the European Parliament and the Commission (May 2024).

Latest news on animal health

Publication of a scientific opinion with recommendations for better monitoring of zoonotic pathogens in wildlife by EFSA

On 12th January, the published [a scientific opinion](#) on the monitoring and early detection of zoonotic diseases in the wildlife.

EFSA's opinion contains recommendations and technical specifications based on the ten priority zoonotic pathogens that the Agency has identified, including *highly pathogenic avian influenza*, *swine influenza*, *West Nile disease*, *tick-borne encephalitis*, *echinococcosis*, *Crimean-Congo haemorrhagic fever*, *hepatitis E*, *Lyme disease*, *Q fever* and *Rift Valley fever*.

EFSA's proposals include, among others:

- General recommendations for the first steps towards sustainable surveillance of zoonotic diseases in wildlife in the EU;
- Specific surveillance recommendations for risk-based early detection of pathogens in key wildlife groups;
- A framework for the integration of animal disease surveillance components (wildlife, domestic, environment) for early detection.

Publication of recommendations to tackle the crisis in the pig industry by EU pigmeat think-tank

On 18th January, the [European Pigmeat Reflection Group](#) delivered its [report](#) to the European Commission, including recommendations to support the sustainability of the sector.

In response to the crisis in the pig industry caused by a combination of factors such as the spread of swine fever, reduced exports to China and rising input costs, the European Commission set up a European pigmeat Reflection Group in March 2022, composed of stakeholders and national experts.

Among the recommendations, the reflection group encourages:

On animal welfare:

- The promotion of European standards in the framework of free trade agreements

On pigmeat production:

- An increase in sectoral aid under the new CAP for farmers who have been weakened by the difficulties encountered by the sector, particularly due to the increase in African swine fever epidemics
- The development of a framework for manure management and support for local biogas solutions based on manure, residues and livestock waste.

Note that its recommendations may be taken into account by the European Commission in the preparation of its proposal for the revision of animal welfare legislation, expected in **autumn 2023**.

OTHER ISSUES

Latest news on animal welfare

Publication of an information note on the review of animal transport legislation by several delegations

On the 17th of January, Portugal presented an [information note](#) co-signed by several countries (France, Greece, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Spain) supporting **a revision of EU rules on animal welfare but rejecting a ban on the transport of live animals to third countries**, which was presented at the Agriculture Council on 30th January.

In this note, the Member States support the need to revise legislation, including the legislation on maritime transport to third countries recently adopted under the Portuguese Presidency. In particular, the Member States call for a redefinition of the responsibilities and authorisations of transporters and operators regarding animal welfare and environmental protection (such as the conditions of the means of transport, the space allocated, harmonisation of driver training, improved planning and contingency plans, etc.).

According to them, **the aim would be first to facilitate the uniform application of controls and the enforcement of these measures**. To this end, Member States request that the revision be based on sound technical and scientific knowledge and that it builds on Member States' experience and good practice in the implementation and enforcement of legislation. Furthermore, the revision of the legislation would also **facilitate intra-Community trade and export of live animals under high welfare conditions**. These Member States recall and underline that animal transport is an essential part of food production.

Following this publication, the [FOUR PAWS](#) organisation regretted, in a [press release](#) published on 19th January, that this document contains nothing *"to remedy the shortcomings of long-distance animal transport by road and sea"*.

However, a revised version of the [information note](#) was published on the 26th of January with some changes: the co-signature of Cyprus and Hungary as well as the clarification of a need for a standardised functioning of the European animal sector production for the single market. It is also explained that the lack of a cold chain capacity in many developing countries is a recognised limiting factor to the import and distribution of meat and products of animal origin. There was also a focus on the increasing international focus on improvement in animal welfare.

After the note was published, and in response to requests from its member states, the European Parliament's Intergroup on Animal Welfare sent an [open letter](#) to the European Commissioner for Health and Food Safety Stella KYRIAKIDES, asking her to consider the [recommendations](#) of the Committee of Inquiry on the Protection of Animals during Transport (ANIT), and to ensure that the proposal, which is expected in October 2023, remains focused on alleviating the suffering of millions of animals due to long distance transports.

Animal transport on the agenda of the Agriculture Council on the 30th of January

At the Agriculture Council on 30th January, the majority of EU agriculture ministers were **against a ban on the transport of farm animals over long distances or to third countries**. Some ministers – from Spain, France and Portugal – called for the development of alternative solutions, such as the transport of meat or genetic products. However, various ministers also protested **against a ban on the transport of live animals**, including those from Ireland, Romania, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Poland, Latvia and Estonia.

Also, German Agriculture Minister Cem ÖZDEMİR called for the implementation of the [latest recommendations](#) of the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), including maximum and minimum temperatures for the transport of animals and transport times.

Following this, the EU Commissioner for Health and Food Safety, Stella KYRIAKIDES explained that animal transport is a key part of the revision process and high priority for the Commission. She added that proposals will be based on updated scientific opinion and evidence, and that when certain practices were not working, the rules must be changed. Farmers will be supported in their transition to new systems, but animal welfare must be guaranteed, she stated.

These statements led to numerous reactions from NGOs. In its [statement](#), FOUR PAWS welcomed the European Commission's position *“We now expect the Commission to deliver an ambitious proposal later this year, to deliver on the will of citizens and to spare the needless suffering of millions of animals in the process.”* The association also criticised the fact that some states are still pushing for the transport of live animals.

EUROGROUP FOR ANIMALS's CEO Reineke HAMELEERS [commented](#) *“Several Member States are backing citizens in their demands for the animals: cruel transport practices need to stop, specifically live export, as we have witnessed far too many tragedies at sea and on the road. It was good to hear even “opposing” Member States mentioning a trade in meat and carcasses, as this is the only way forward. And it was important to hear that the Commissioner was firm in her defence of the revision”.*

Launch of a call for information on the protection of animals used for scientific purposes by the European Commission

Based on a request from the European Commission, which mandates the Scientific Committee on Health, Environmental and Emerging Risks (SCHEER) to formulate a scientific opinion for a revision of the [EU Directive](#) on the standards of accommodation and care, and killing methods for animals bred, supplied or used in scientific procedures (Annexes III and IV), a [call for information](#) is launched until 27th February 2023 **on the protection of animals used for scientific purposes**.

Stakeholders are invited to share scientific information on:

- Standards of accommodation and care to safeguard the welfare of zebrafish when kept in captivity for scientific purposes;
- Methods of killing appropriate for animal bred, supplied or used in scientific procedures;
- Housing requirements to maintain the welfare of European starling (*Sturnus vulgaris L.*), House sparrows (*Passer domesticus*), great tit (*Parus major*) and blue tit (*Cyanistes caeruleus*) kept in captivity for scientific purposes.

Statement by some Member States on sustainability criteria in the EU-Australia Free Trade Agreement on beef, sheep and sugar

France, supported by 7 other delegations, has [called](#) on the European Commission **to integrate sustainability criteria into the free trade agreement between the EU and Australia on beef, sheep and sugar**. To this end, the European Commission is urged to make **the tariff preferences to be granted to Australia on agricultural products conditional on sustainability criteria**.

This request is based notably on the [EU's 2021 trade policy review](#), the [action plan](#) to strengthen compliance with environmental commitments in trade agreements adopted in June 2022 and the [free trade agreement](#) concluded with New Zealand last summer, explained France.

The next round of negotiations with Australia is scheduled for February in Canberra, then continued in Brussels, where the negotiation will focus on sensitive products.

Calendar of forthcoming EFSA publications in the context of the review of animal welfare legislation announced

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) has indicated its timeframe for its work to provide the scientific basis for the European Commission's proposal to review animal welfare legislation.

Indeed, the next [two information meetings](#) are scheduled for:

- 28 March: which will focus on the welfare of laying hens and broilers, adopted in December 2022 by EFSA but not published until the end of February
- 23 May: which will address the welfare of calves, dairy cows, ducks, geese and quails, for which a report will be adopted in March.

In addition, during an exchange of views in the European Parliament's Agriculture and Rural Development Committee on 31st January, EFSA presented its recommendations on pig farming and animal transport.

The Swedish Presidency of the Council of the EU - which runs until the end of the first half of the year— was also present at the exchange of views and announced a [conference](#) on the subject on 29 and 30 June in Uppsala. It will focus on “*strategic points*” of the revision, said the Swedish Minister for Rural Affairs, Peter KULLGREN.

As a reminder, the European Commission's proposal to review animal welfare legislation is expected in the **3rd quarter of 2023**.

Joint letter from Member States in support of wolf conservation in Europe

In a [letter](#) sent to Environment Commissioner Virginijus Sinkevičius on the 31st of January and initiated by the Slovak government, 12 Member states (Slovakia, Germany, Austria, Spain, Ireland, Bulgaria, Greece, Cyprus, Luxembourg, Portugal, Romania and Slovenia) asked the European Commission to defend the legislative tools for the preservation of the wolf in Europe.

“We believe that the European Commission will continue to take the same responsible approach to the protection of rare species as it has done up to now, while at the same time promoting the implementation of instruments and policies that will make it possible to not only compensate, fairly and without unnecessary administrative burdens, for the potential damage caused, in particular, to livestock, but also those that will contribute to their strengthening and growth”, they stated.

This mobilization comes in response to the European Parliament's [resolution](#) of the 24th of November 2022 on the protection of livestock farming and large carnivores in Europe, which called for a weakening of the protection of wolves.

As a reminder, the wolf is protected in the EU through the [directive](#) on the Conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora, but also, at the international level, by the Bern [Convention](#) on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats.

With the support of



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