



This month, I would like to highlight the on-going discussions on the draft Commission delegated regulation on “Criteria for the designation of antimicrobials to be reserved for the treatment of certain infections in humans”.

As explained below, a resolution to object to this delegated regulation is to be voted on in the European Parliament. The Delegated Act is based on the “One Health” approach, therefore we encourage European institutions to support this act, as drafted by the European Commission.

UEVP was active during the drafting of this act and now encourages its members to be active on national levels in supporting the Delegated Act as a complete and science-based approach to AMR.

Piotr KWIECIŃSKI, UEVP President

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PRIORITY ISSUES

Latest EU institutional news

Slovenia takes over the Council's presidency and presents its priorities

Slovenia took over the presidency of the Council – which represents EU Member States at the European level, and which is co-legislator with the European Parliament and the European Commission – from 1 July and until 31 December 2021.

Slovenia published its legislative and political [programme](#) for the upcoming six months, which includes topics of interests for veterinarians:

- on digitalisation in the veterinary sector, in order to *“raise awareness of the possibilities offered by new information technology in terms of using data collected in each area of veterinary medicine and food safety to improve risk analysis and optimise official supervision”*;
- on animal health, and particularly *“aspects of biosafety in connection with measures to prevent the introduction and spread of animal diseases”*.

Latest developments on the Farm to Fork and Biodiversity strategies

Farm to Fork strategy

Discussions are continuing on the European Parliament's draft report on the European Commission's [Farm to Fork strategy](#).

The parliamentary committees jointly responsible for the draft report - the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development (AGRI) and the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI) - are expected to vote on the text at the beginning of September 2021, prior to a vote in plenary session expected in October 2021.

Once voted in plenary, the report will represent the European Parliament's position on the Farm to Fork strategy but will not be legally binding. Only legislation subsequently proposed and voted on will be binding.

Biodiversity strategy

The draft parliamentary report on the European Commission's [Biodiversity Strategy](#) was adopted in the European Parliament plenary session of 9 June 2021 (515 votes in favour, 90 against and 86 abstentions).

The [final version](#) of the report as adopted makes reference to the protection of animal welfare and in particular:

- Encourages the European Commission to revise [Regulation 396/2005](#) on maximum residue levels of pesticides to include animal health and environmental risks *“as criteria for the legislation”*;
- Considers it *“essential”* to *“transform”* EU agriculture *“to make it sustainable, ensure high animal welfare standards”* and *“minimise”* the use of antibiotic treatments;
- Calls on the European Commission to use the regulatory dialogues provided for in free trade agreements to promote high EU sanitary and phytosanitary and animal welfare standards *“to reduce the risk of future epidemics and pandemics”*.

It should be noted that this report presents the European Parliament's political position on the Commission's Biodiversity Strategy and is not legally binding in itself.

Latest developments on the CAP reform

At the end of June 2021, the Council, the Commission and the European Parliament reached an agreement on the main remaining blocking points on the three texts of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) reform.

The agreements reached concern in particular the definition of eco-schemes, the definition of an active farmer, the remuneration of “small farmers”, crop rotation, the share of non-productive land, coupled payments, the targeting of aid, the aid allocated to young farmers, the internal convergence of aid, the “green” measures of the second pillar, the definition of agri-environmental and climatic measures, the “social” dimension of the CAP, the crisis reserve, and the compatibility of the CAP with the [Green Deal](#).

The political agreement must now be translated into law and then formally adopted by the Council and the European Parliament.

Latest news on antibiotics at EU level

The European Commission presented to the European Parliament its delegated act defining the criteria for the designation of antimicrobials to be reserved for the treatment of certain infections in humans

The European Commission represented by Sabine JUELICHER (Director of the Directorate for Food Safety and Feed, and Innovation in the Commission's DG SANTE) [presented](#) its [delegated regulation](#) (and its [annex](#)), which defines the criteria for the designation of antimicrobials to be reserved for the treatment of certain infections in humans, to the European Parliament's Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI Committee) on 28 June 2021.

Members of the European Parliament's (MEPs) interventions at this meeting mainly focused on the third criterion of the delegated act, namely that of "*non-essential need for animal health*".

Following Sabine JUELICHER's presentation of the delegated act, MEP Martin HÄUSLING (Greens/EFA, Germany), rapporteur of the text, raised an objection. He had the opportunity to express his views on the matter. In this context, he pointed out that the list of criteria provided for in the delegated act lacks clarity and includes criteria that are too vague. He also denounced the routine use of antibiotics in livestock farming.

The European Commission also clarified that the third criterion of the delegated act referred to serious life-threatening infections. The Commission tried to reassure MEPs by explaining that the application of the third criterion was very limited and in line with the "*One Health*" principle. In addition, it explained that if a substance is to be included in the reserved list of antimicrobials for one species, it cannot be used for other species under any circumstances and specified that it is not envisaged that antimicrobials will be used routinely.

Following this discussion in the European Parliament, a [motion for a resolution](#) objecting to the European Commission's delegated act has been adopted on 13 July in the ENVI Committee of the European Parliament. It now has to be voted on in the plenary session of the European Parliament on 26 September 2021 at the latest in order to be definitively adopted.

Publication of an inter-agency report on the use of antibiotics in animals

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), the European Medicines Agency (EMA) and the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) recently published a [joint report](#) on integrated analysis of antimicrobial agent consumption and occurrence of antimicrobial resistance in bacteria from humans and food-producing animals (JIACRA).

This report adopts a “*One Health*” approach and presents data on antibiotic consumption and development of antimicrobial resistance in Europe for 2016-2018.

Among the findings of the report, the analysis indicates that:

- Further interventions to reduce antimicrobial consumption will have a beneficial impact on the occurrence of antimicrobial resistance, which underlines the need to promote prudent use of antimicrobial agents and infection control and prevention in both humans and food-producing animals;
- The high levels of antimicrobial consumption and antimicrobial resistance still being reported in bacterial isolates from both food-producing animals and humans from several countries show that these interventions should be reinforced.

Publication by EFSA of a scientific opinion on AMR and the food production environment

On 17 June 2021, the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) published a [scientific opinion](#) on antimicrobial resistance (AMR) and the food production environment. In this document, EFSA identifies which bacteria and genes resist to antimicrobials, the main causes of it and makes recommendations to control those effects.

According to its scientific expertise, fecal fertilizers, irrigation, and water are the most important sources of AMR in plant food and aquaculture. Feed, humans, water, air, dust, soil, wildlife, rodents, arthropods, and equipment are the potential main sources for AMR in terrestrial animal production.

To reduce the emergence and spread of AMR in food production environments, EFSA recommends the following measures:

- Reducing the microbial contamination in fecal fertilizers, water, and feed;
- Implementing good hygiene practices;
- Targeting priority research fields such as increasing the study of the role played by the environment in AMR which will help implementing the [action plan](#) “One Health against antimicrobial resistance”.

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 15 to 17 June 2021.

The Committee adopted positive opinions for marketing authorizations applications for Tessie which concerns short-term alleviation of situational anxiety and for Fatrovax RHD concerning the vaccine against rabbit haemorrhagic disease (RHDV and RHDV2) and for Strangvac which is a new vaccine targeted 8-months-old horses to reduce the iStreptococcus equi infection.

The Committee adopted positive opinions concerning quality-related changes for type II variation applications for Baycox Iron, Eryseng and Eryseng Parvo, Locatim, Porcilis ColClos and for a type IB variation application for BTPPUR.

The Committee decided to change the summary of product characteristics for Bravecto spot-on. It also reviewed the PSURs for several products: Prevomax, Vectra Felis, Aservo, EquiHaler, Credelio, Equilis Te, Evicto, Halagon, HorStem, Isemid, Nasym, Neptra, Nobivac Myxo RHD Plus, Sedadex, Stelfonta, Stronghold, Syvazul BTV, Ubac, Ypozane, Zactran.

The Committee revised the [Guideline](#) on the summary of products characteristics (SPC) for veterinary medicinal products containing antimicrobial substances. The changes consider the comments received during a public consultation which took place between the 27 April 2018 and 31 of August 2019. The revised guideline will entry into force on 28 January 2022.

EMA's report on its support for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises developing and marketing medicines for human or veterinary use

The European Medicines Agency (EMA) published on 28 June 2021 a [report](#) featuring EMA's support for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) which develop and market medicines for human or veterinary use in the European Union.

The report, which covers the period from 2016 to 2020, indicates among others, that in the veterinary area 14 medicines received a positive opinion by EMA. Almost half of these had received scientific advice from EMA and 6 out of the 14 were veterinary medicines for minor use / minor species (MUMS).

OTHER ISSUES

Latest news on animal health

Publication by EFSA of a study on the risk of introduction and spread of swine fever

In a [study](#) published on 9 June 2021, the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) considers that the risk of introduction and spread of African swine fever (ASF) is high. However, the lack of harmonised EU-wide data on pig farms means that these results should be interpreted with caution, according to EFSA.

To reduce the risk of introduction and spread of ASF, EFSA made several recommendations:

- Installation of solid or double fences in already infected areas to reduce the risk of spread by 50%;
- Carrying out independent assessments to improve biosecurity practices on farms;
- Following a case-by-case approach to allow derogations from the current restrictions.

Latest news on the initiative to ban on-farm cages

Following the European Citizens' Initiative (ECI) on the end of cage farming, the European Parliament – meeting in plenary session in Strasbourg – adopted on 10 June 2021 its resolution on the subject by 558 votes to 37, with 85 abstentions.

Drafted by the Chairman of the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development (AGRI Committee), Norbert LINS (EPP, Germany), the [resolution](#) on “*the end of cage age*” proposes to revise the [1998 directive](#) on the protection of animals kept for farming purposes, to abolish cages by 2027 and to put an end to the force-feeding of geese and ducks for foie gras production.

It should be noted that in the introductory articles, the resolution mentions the role of veterinarians in protecting animal welfare. Reference is made to the “*high level of investment by farmers in improving animal welfare*”, which has been “*developed jointly by farmers, veterinarians, scientists and non-governmental organisations*”.

During the debate in the European Parliament on the resolution, French MEPs Eric Andrieu (S&D), Jérémy Decerle (Renew), and Benoît Biteau (Greens/EFA), called on the European Commission to apply these animal welfare standards to imports.

The European Commission responded to the ECI on 30 June 2021 by publishing a [communication](#) and specifying its future initiatives on the subject. In its reply, the Commission plans to present a legislative proposal by the end of 2023 to prohibit cages for a number of farm animals, namely animals already covered by legislation - laying hens, sows and calves – as well as other animals mentioned in the ECI – rabbits, pullets, layer breeders, broiler breeders, quail, ducks and geese.

The European Commission will launch a public consultation by early 2022, before presenting its legislative proposal. Following its adoption, the proposed legislation is expected to enter into force from 2027.

European Parliament Committee of Inquiry on the Protection of Animals during Transport presents its draft report

The rapporteurs of the European Parliament's Committee of Inquiry into the Protection of Animals during Transport (ANIT) - Daniel Buda (EPP, Romania) and Isabel Carvalhais (S&D, Portugal) - presented the ANIT Committee's [draft report](#) on 16 June 2021.

Established on 19 June 2020 in the European Parliament, the ANIT Committee investigates the protection of animals during transport by conducting public hearings of experts and gathering information from stakeholders. Its last public hearing, held on 31 May, focused on the transport of species such as poultry and rabbits. It was concluded that [Regulation 1/2005](#) on the protection of animals during transport does not sufficiently protect these species.

The draft report refers to the role of veterinarians in relation to the transport of animals by sea as well as the transport of live animals to third countries and states that 'good practice' includes '*the presence of a veterinarian during the maritime leg of the journey to assist in the event of sick or injured animals on board ship*', as well as '*the presence of a qualified veterinarian at the time of loading for long journeys to third countries*'.

It should be noted that the reception of the draft report was not unanimous among MEPs. Some MEPs from the Green and Radical Left groups, such as Thomas Waitz (Greens/EFA, Austria) or the Vice-President of the ANIT Committee Anja Hazekamp (GUE, The Netherlands) expressed their disappointment with the content of the

conclusions. They felt that certain aspects of animal transport had not been considered, such as the ban on the transport of unweaned animals.

Following the presentation of the ANIT Committee's draft report, MEPs of the committee have the opportunity to make amendments before voting on the draft report.

Publications of research papers by the European Parliament to support the work of the Committee of Inquiry on the Protection of Animals during Transport

In the context of the European Parliament's Committee of Inquiry on the Protection of Animals during Transport (ANIT Committee)'s work, the European Parliament Research Service has recently published papers focusing on [sanctions for infringements](#), [training of personnel and enforcement agents](#) as well as the [use and dissemination in Member States of guidelines](#) on the protection of animals during transport.

The analyses provided by these papers are based on the results of a questionnaire sent out by ANIT Committee to Member States.

Veterinarians' roles on the protection of animals during transport are highlighted in these 3 papers, including before departure as well as the guidelines available to them to realise their mission.

The Council encourages the European Commission to change the legislation on animal welfare during transport

In its [conclusions](#) on animal welfare during maritime long distances transport to third countries of 28 June 2021, the Council asks the European Commission to come forward with a proposal to enhance animal welfare during transport.

The following elements are highlighted, among others, by the Council's draft conclusions:

- The presence of a veterinarian during the journey of the livestock vessels is recommended in order to verify the implementation of the relevant animal health and welfare standards;
- The European Commission is invited to underline the important role of the sea transporter, including the obligation to provide information before the trip;
- There is a need to improve and standardise the process of authorisation of sea carriers and certification of ships (requested documentation, technical requirements of the ship, etc.).

In addition, the draft conclusions encourage the Commission to submit a proposal for a revised regulation on animal welfare during transport, *"if possible, sooner than indicated in the Farm to Fork [Strategy](#)"*, namely in the fourth quarter of 2023.

In addition, during the Agricultural Council meeting of 28 June – gathering ministers of Agriculture of EU Member States – Germany, the Netherlands and Luxembourg presented a [joint declaration](#) calling for a ban on the long-distance land and sea transport of animals to third countries.

In this declaration, the three countries highlighted among others, the following points:

- the impossibility of guaranteeing good transport conditions, including concerns about extreme temperatures;
- the difficulty of monitoring compliance with EU rules outside the EU, since most of the time, *"problems are not reported to the state of origin and the possibilities of intervention are very limited"*;
- the need for a shift from transporting live animals, to a trade in meat and carcasses, as well as genetic material.

According to these three Member States, this EU-wide ban of long-distance transports of livestock to third countries by road and by sea should be implemented in the upcoming revision of the [2005 regulation](#) on the protection of animals during transport, expected in the fourth quarter of 2023.

Publication of the European Parliament’s draft implementation report about on-farm animal welfare and amendments of the draft opinion report

The European Parliament’s Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development (AGRI Committee) has published its [draft implementation report](#) about on-farm animal welfare on 22 June 2021, which focusses on the implementation of EU legislation on the welfare of food-producing animals.

This draft report draws on the conclusions of the European Parliament Research Service [study](#) on “*Animal welfare on the farm – ex-post evaluation of EU legislation: prospects for animal welfare labelling at EU level*” published in June 2021.

This study presents the results of the implementation of EU legislation and in particular its relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, coherence and EU added value. It also assesses the animal welfare labelling schemes in place in the EU in terms of their design, regulatory status and operation. The prospects for the possible introduction of animal welfare labelling at EU level are also analysed. It should be noted that the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe was among the stakeholders interviewed for this research project.

The conclusions of the AGRI Committee’s draft report asks the European Commission to update the European legislations on the protection of animals kept for farming purposes, laying hens, chickens kept for meat production, calves, and pigs, in a way to “*make them more effective with a view not to tightening the rules up but to providing greater clarity and going into greater detail, and thus ensuring that the Member States read and interpret them in a more uniform manner*”.

Veterinarians’ roles are also underlined, namely:

- the need for amendments to the veterinary rules covering pig farms to take account of progress in the field of piglet castration;
- the fact that the Commission should ensure the availability in the various Member States of a harmonised EU list of the available products and protocols for the use of pain-killers and anaesthesia for piglet castration, and enable the short-term storage of medicines on farms and to allow veterinarians to leave them there.

In addition, the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI Committee) of the European Parliament released its [amendments](#) on its [draft opinion](#) on the implementation report about on-farm animal welfare.

The amendments insist, among others, on the following points:

- The “*positive association between good animal welfare and reduced antibiotic use in animals*” that are “*well cared for and appropriately housed, are less prone to diseases and infections requiring less antibiotics and other veterinary medicines*”;
- The need to “*move away from the intensification of livestock production towards a more extensive model that priorities the animals health and welfare instead of relying on the routine use of antimicrobials or other hazardous chemicals*”;
- The importance to reduce “*reliance on the excessive use of veterinary medications*”;
- The need for a “*harmonised coherent*” food labelling methodology that fully integrates animal welfare and provide “*transparent information*” on the animal’s quality of life from birth, including live transport and slaughter as well as “*farming production methods that clearly and concisely indicate the use of*

GMOs, antibiotics, pesticides and veterinary medicines in animal production” in order to promote fair competition and empower consumers to make informed and sustainable food choices;

- Calls on the Commission to increase the number of “*independent, unannounced spot inspections by the Food and Veterinary Office (FVO)*” focused on animal welfare and the transport of animals.

It should be noted that the ENVI Committee will vote on the tabled amendment on its draft opinion in the upcoming weeks. The AGRI Committee – which is the parliamentary committee responsible on this topic – will also vote on its draft report in the coming weeks. Once voted, this report will represent the official position of the European Parliament on this topic but will not have legal binding effects.

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