EU NEWS

June 2022

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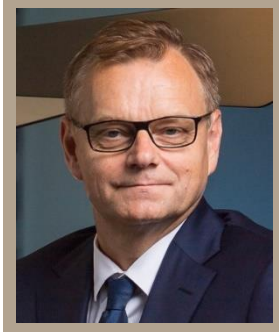

At the end of June, MEPs rejected the objection to the European Commission's implementing act providing for a list of antimicrobials or groups of antimicrobials reserved for the treatment of certain infections in humans supporting thus the European Commission's proposal. This represents an important milestone for our profession.

Furthermore, discussions on mirror clauses continues and set an encouraging tone for the future as most of the Member States recently recognised the need to transition to sustainable food systems, and prioritised animal welfare as a standard that could be applied to imports.

In parallel, the European Commission announced to be working on a draft legislation to allow Member States to use animal vaccination for major epidemics (including avian influenza), while calling for continued information sharing by national health authorities to increase knowledge in this area. The aim is to act as quickly as possible to reduce the spread of epidemics.

Finally, new steps for animal welfare have been taken in the context of the debate on corporate sustainable governance and the EU-New Zealand Free Trade Agreement.

Piotr KWIECIŃSKI, UEVP President

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PRIORITY ISSUES

Latest EU institutional news

Latest developments on the CAP reform

While the reform on the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) is applicable from 1 January 2023, Member States of the European Union are respectively finalizing their National Strategic Plans (NSP).

These NSPs aim at implementing aspects of the reform at national level, and their finalisation is realised between Member States and the European Commission.

These discussions should be the last steps before the start of the reform's implementation across Member States.

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 14 to 15 June 2022.

During this meeting, the Committee elected its new Vice-Chair, Dr Frida Hasslung Wikström, for a 3-year mandate.

In addition, the Committee adopted by consensus several positive opinions for a grouped variation requiring assessment for Circovac (adjuvanted inactivated vaccine against porcine circovirus type 2); Nobilis IB 4-91 (avian infectious bronchitis vaccine (live, attenuated)); Credelio (lotilaner) to align the product information with version 9.0 of the QRD template.

The Committee also adopted by consensus positive opinions for variations requiring assessment concerning quality-related changes for Onsior, Suprelorin, Loxicom and Felpreva.

The Committee adopted three scientific advices to requests for initial advice, which concern immunological and pharmaceutical products, with as targets cattle, goats, pigs and sheep (one product), dairy cows (one product) and salmon.

The Committee adopted a guideline on data requirements for veterinary medicinal products intended to reduce the risk of transmission of vector-borne pathogens in dogs and cats. It will come into effect on 1 January 2023.

The Committee also adopted a revised guideline on requirements for the production and control of immunological veterinary medicinal products. The revised guideline will come into effect on 16 December 2022.

Latest news on mirror clauses at EU Level

Ongoing discussions on reciprocity of EU health and environmental standards to imported agricultural and agri-food products in trade

Following the publication of the European Commission's report on reciprocity of standards in trade on 3 June 2022, discussions were held in the Special Committee on Agriculture (SCA) on 7 June 2022 and at the Agriculture and Fisheries Council (AGRIFISH) on 13 June 2022 on this subject.

As a reminder, this (non-legally binding) report outlines the existing European and international regulations on the use of antibiotics in animals, as well as the European Commission's ambitions in this respect, in the trade treaties currently under discussion and in the future. Note that the existing measures mentioned include Regulation 2019/6 on veterinary medicinal products, and several international trade agreements.

During the last AGRIFISH Council on 13 June, most of the Member States recognised the need to transition to sustainable food systems, and many prioritised animal welfare as a standard that could be applied to imports in the future.

On the occasion of the 12th Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organisation, which took place from 12 to 17 June, the French Presidency of the Council of the EU also asked delegations to give their views on the reciprocity of European standards in order to identify priority areas of action, the type of measures to be put in place (multilateral, bilateral or autonomous measures) and a possible follow-up of the actions planned by the European Commission. However, no formal conclusions were published on this subject. The issue will now be dealt with under the Czech Presidency.

At the same time, focus turns to the European Commission, which will propose to extend the application of EU animal welfare standards to imports in the next review of EU animal welfare rules. The revision of the legislation is expected by the end of 2023.

Latest news on antibiotics at EU Level

Vote of the objection to the European Commission's implementing act on antimicrobials or groups of antimicrobials reserved for the treatment of certain infections in humans by the European Parliament

At the plenary session of the European Parliament on 23 June, MEPs rejected the objection to the European Commission's implementing act providing for a list of antimicrobials or groups of antimicrobials reserved for the treatment of certain infections in humans. This vote follows the adoption of the proposal for objection, in the Environment Committee (ENVI) of the European Parliament. The objection was initially proposed by the following MEPs : Martin HAUSLING (Greens/EFA, Germany), Anja HAZECAMP (The Left, The Netherlands), Tiemo WOLKEN (S&D, Germany) and Nicolae STEFANUTA (RE, Romania).

This implementing act is based on the objectives and content of the delegated act establishing the criteria for designation of reserve antimicrobials and approved by the European Parliament in plenary session in October 2021, and this decision is taken under Regulation 2019/6, which is intended to contribute to the EU's 'One Health' Action Plan against antimicrobial resistance and the Farm to Fork strategy of the European Commission.

The results of the vote were: 280 votes in favour of rejecting the objection, 269 votes in favour of approving the objection, 46 abstentions.

The rejection of the objection was largely supported by the EPP, ECR, ID and Non-attached groups. As far as the Renew Europe group is concerned, MEPs were divided. Finally, as expected, the Greens/EFA, S&D and Left/EU groups voted in favour of the objection, without reaching a majority.

Following the rejection of the objection, the European Commission's proposal is maintained.

It should be noted that six months after the adoption of the implementing regulation, the medicinal products listed in the annex to the act may no longer be included in veterinary medicinal products or offered for use in animal feed.

In practice, it means that veterinary medicinal products containing these antimicrobials or groups of antimicrobials will no longer be eligible for authorisation to be placed on the European market. In addition, marketing authorisations for such medicinal products already on the market will no longer be valid.

Publication of an academic research on antibiotic resistance

According to a study published on 28 June 2022 by researchers of the Department of Veterinary Medicine, University of Cambridge (United Kingdom), a highly antibiotic-resistant strain (CC398) of the superbug MRSA – methicillin resistant Staphylococcus aureus – has emerged in livestock in the last 50 years, probably due to widespread antibiotic use in pig farming.

The study finds that when livestock-associated MRSA is transmitted to humans, adaptation to the human host outpaces loss of antibiotic resistance. Researchers also indicate that the impact of ongoing reductions in antibiotic and zinc oxide use in European farms on livestock-associated MRSA will be slow to be realised.

Latest news on animal health

Support from the European Commission for a harmonised regulatory framework for animal vaccination

During an exchange of views in Parliament's Agriculture and Rural Development Committee (AGRI) on 13 June, the European Commission's representative from the Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety (DG SANTE), Francisco REVIRIEGO GORDEJO, called for increased use of vaccination in the European Union.

On the animal health aspect, the European Commission also announced that it is working on draft legislation to allow Member States to use vaccination for major epidemics (including avian influenza), while calling for continued information sharing by national health authorities to increase knowledge in this area.

In addition, the European Commission representative confirmed that, in high-risk areas, free-range poultry farming should be strictly confined. He also pointed to the presence of *"outbreaks in areas with a high density of foie gras ducks"*.

Therefore, biosecurity measures are, according to him, a good solution to implement, even if "*in France and Hungary, it would be necessary to change the farming model and reinforce the level of security*" he explains.

In parallel, at the Council of EU Agriculture Ministers - which took place on the same day - the majority of Member States welcomed the European Commission's efforts to support the scientific research needed for the future commercialisation of a vaccine against swine fever. The management of feral pig populations will also be on the agenda of a *'high level ministerial'* meeting scheduled for 27 September under the future Czech Presidency of the Council.

The latest review published by EFSA warns of an epidemic situation caused by the highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) virus.

On 30 June, the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) published its latest review of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) and considers that "*this is the largest number of cases for an epidemic season ever reported*".

Around 5,300 detections of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) virus were reported in poultry, captive and wild birds in 36 EU/EEA countries and the UK during the 2021-2022 epidemic season. The persistence of HPAI (H5) virus in wild birds indicates that it may have become endemic in wild bird populations in Europe.

In total, this led to the culling of 46 million birds in affected establishments. More than half of poultry outbreaks in Europe were due to secondary spread, from infected poultry to other poultry farms.

EFSA concludes its review by stating that "*the current 2021-2022 HPAI epidemic season is still ongoing, with cases in poultry and wild birds reported up to June 2022*".

OTHER ISSUES

Latest news on animal welfare

Response from the European Commission on financial support for livestock farmers to improve animal welfare

Following the parliamentary written question of 3 May 2022 by MEP Atidzhe ALIEVA-VELI (RE, Bulgaria) concerning *'support for livestock farmers in making the investments needed to meet animal welfare requirements'*, the European Commission published its official response on 22 June.

In its response, the European Commission recalls the European measures put in place to reward and encourage good animal breeding practices among producers via the Common Agricultural Policy funding.

In addition, the European Commission highlights the ongoing review of EU animal welfare legislation, which conclusion is scheduled to be published by the end of 2023.

The revision of the EU's Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) now includes animal welfare in its scope

The EU's Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD), initially adopted in 2014, defines how companies should report on all extra-financial activities, including on the impact their business has on sustainability. In April 2021, the European Commission put forward a proposal to review this text, notably to extend the scope to all large companies and introduce more detailed and EU-wide reporting requirements, but the initial proposal missed out on animal welfare.

On 21 June 2022, following the negotiations in the trilogues, the Parliament and the Council reached a provisional political agreement to extend the scope to include animal welfare, highlighting the inherent links between animal welfare and sustainability. Under the negotiated text, companies will now have to report on the impact of their activities on animal welfare. This piece of legislation therefore represents a new step for animal welfare in the context of the debate on corporate sustainable governance. The full text of the agreed version of the CSRD has not yet been made public.

Conclusion on the negotiations for the Free Trade Agreement between the European Union and New Zealand including an animal welfare-based condition in the tariff quota for New Zealand beef

Negotiations for a Free Trade Agreement between the European Union and New Zealand started in June 2018. On 30 June 2022, the negotiations for the Trade Agreement were concluded.

The deal includes an animal welfare-based condition in the tariff rate quota opened for New Zealand beef. Opinions varies on the matter, for instance Eurogroup for animal "*strongly welcomes*" the introduction of this condition in tariff-rate while the European agricultural federations Copa-Cogeca "*regret*" the tariff quotas granted on New Zealand's exports of beef, sheep and dairy products which they consider "*too large*".

For now, details around the provision on animal welfare are unknown, the negotiated draft texts should be published shortly. The European Commission will then submit the agreement for signature and conclusion to the Council. Once adopted by the Council, the EU and New Zealand will have the possibility to sign the agreement. Following the signature, the text will be transmitted to the European Parliament for consent. Once New Zealand ratifies it, the agreement will enter in force.

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info@euralia.eu