



*This month, several reports have been published that are important for our profession. These include an EFSA report on antimicrobial resistance in zoonotic bacteria in humans, animals and food as well as a European Commission report on the compliance of feed, animal health and animal welfare legislation.*

*In parallel, the European Commission continues its work on animal welfare, both in the analysis of the contributions obtained during its public consultation and in the elements gathered in the study on animal welfare labelling, which we will continue to follow closely.*

*I would like to thank all practitioners for their permanent help provided to our Ukrainian colleagues. Your aid shown in many forms is an excellent example of solidarity shown by our profession. We all hope for the peace soon, but until this happens Ukrainian vets but also animals suffering from warfare will need our continuous help. Anyone who wishes to provide practical aid is welcome to visit: <http://vetsforukraine.com>*

**Piotr KWIECIŃSKI, UEVP President**

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# PRIORITY ISSUES

## Latest EU institutional news

### Latest developments on the CAP reform

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As part of the ongoing discussions to approve the National Strategic Plans (NSP) of the Member States, the European Commission sent **letters of observations to several countries on their respective NSPs on 31 March**. These are the 19 countries mentioned below: Austria, Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden.

As a reminder, as part of the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), all Member States were required to submit their respective NSPs to the European Commission by January 2022. Some countries were delayed in submitting their plans but the situation has been regularised. **The objective now is to find a compromise and to achieve a finalised version of the NSPs before 2023, the date on which the CAP reform is applicable.**

It should be noted that these comment letters have not yet been published, but should be in three weeks, the period given by the European Commission to the Member States to take notice of the comments transmitted.

However, in general, the European Commission is asking all Member States to **review their respective NSPs in the context of the war in Ukraine**. Member States now have **until the end of April 2022** to send their first reactions to the European Commission.

### The European Commission has published its Communication on the safety and resilience of food systems

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On 23 March, the European Commission presented its action plan to *“safeguard food security and strengthen the resilience of food systems”* to anticipate the impacts of the war in Ukraine. *“The EU must help fill the production gap to cope with the shortage of wheat”* and other products caused by the war in Ukraine, said European Commission Executive Vice-President Valdis DOMBROVSKIS at the [press conference](#).

Indeed, this communication from the European Commission, composed of short and medium term actions, aims to anticipate disruptions related to food imports into the European Union - in the face of rising commodity prices and input costs such as energy and fertilisers. For the European Commission, the challenge is to address the need to increase agricultural production capacity while ensuring that ambitious environmental objectives, including those included in the Farm to Fork strategy, are maintained.

Among the main measures of the action plan there are:

- An **“exceptional and temporary” derogation from the rules on greening, allowing the cultivation of fallow land in 2022;**
- Support for producers most affected by the consequences of the war in Ukraine with a **budget of €500 million;**
- **Flexibility on current feed import requirements;**
- An **increase in advances on direct payments** and area-related rural development measures;
- **Private storage aid for the pig sector.**

In parallel, within the European Parliament, the main political groups (EPP, S&D, Renew and ECR) agreed on a [joint resolution](#) on *“the need for an urgent EU action plan to ensure food security in view of the Russian invasion of Ukraine”*, which was put to the vote in plenary session on 24 March. This [resolution](#) aligns with the position of the European Commission and encourages the measures outlined. It should be noted that this resolution (not legally binding) represents the political position of the European Parliament.

Finally, the Heads of State and Government, who were meeting in Brussels on 24 and 25 March, also put food security as a priority issue on the agenda. The [conclusions of the European Council](#), which are driven by political impulses, inform the European institutions about the will and commitment of the Member States in their future actions.

## **Update on EMA activities**

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

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The Committee for Medicinal Products for Veterinary Use (CVMP) held a [meeting](#) from 15<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> March 2022.

The Committee adopted a positive opinions for an application for a variation requiring assessment concerning quality related changes for **Coliprotec F4/F18**.

The Committee adopted a positive opinion for a type II variation application for **Advocate** concerning the addition of a new therapeutic indication for the treatment of the lungworm (*Troglostrongylus brevior* (adults)) in cats.

The Committee adopted six positive opinions for a type II variation applications concerning quality-related changes for: **BTVPUR** (grouped), **Cepedex**, **Inflacam**, **Rheumocam** (grouped, worksharing procedure), **Porcilis ColiClos**, **ProteqFlu-Te** (grouped) and **Recocam**.

The Committee adopted three scientific advice reports further to requests for initial advice concern two pharmaceutical products and one biological product, all indicated for dogs.

Following three requests for limited market classifications and eligibility, the CVMP classified a immunological product for Atlantic salmon, a alimentary tract and metabolism product for horses, as well as nervous system product for horses as intended Article 23 under [Regulation 2019/6](#).

Regarding pharmacovigilance, the Committee reviewed the Periodic Safety Update Reports (PSURs) for **Clevor**, **Cytopoint**, **Forceris**, **Leucogen & Nobivac LeuFel**, **Procox**, and **Veraflox** and concluded that no further action was required. The Committee reviewed the Periodic Safety Update Reports (PSURs) for **Mhyosphere PCV ID** and concluded that changes to its product information were required. In addition, the Committee adopted a revised version of the questions and answers on describing adverse events in the product information and adopted two veterinary signal assessment reports to be used by marketing authorisation holders to report signals detected in the EU pharmacovigilance database.

The Committee adopted a [concept paper](#) on the **elaboration of guidance** for the application of Article 34 of [Regulation 2019/6](#) on veterinary medicinal products, for a 1-month period of public consultation.

Finally, the Committee elected Dr. Marie-Hélène SABINOTTO as Veterinary vice-chair of the Joint CHMP/CVMP Quality Working Party (QWP) for a 3-year mandate.

## **Latest news on antibiotics at EU Level**

### **EFSA has published a report on antimicrobial resistance in zoonotic bacteria in humans, animals and food**

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On 29 March, the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) published a [summary report](#) on antimicrobial resistance in zoonotic bacteria in humans, animals and food for the period 2019-2020, which was co-written by the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC).

According to the report, *Salmonella* and *Campylobacter* continue to show high levels of antibiotic resistance. Indeed, high resistance to the *quinolone/fluoroquinolone* class of antibiotics, commonly used to treat certain types of bacterial infection in humans, has been observed in both bacteria.

It is important to note that *Campylobacteriosis* was the most reported zoonosis in the EU in 2020 and the most frequently reported cause of foodborne disease.

However, despite increasing trends of resistance against certain antibiotics, simultaneous resistance to two critically important antibiotics remains low for *E. coli*, *Salmonella* and *Campylobacter* in bacteria from both humans and food-producing animals.

Furthermore, in more than half of the European Union countries, a statistically significant decreasing trend in the prevalence of extended-spectrum  $\beta$ -lactamase (ESBL)-producing *E. coli* bacteria was observed in food-producing animals. This is an important finding because some particular strains of ESBL-producing *E. coli* bacteria are responsible for serious infections in humans.

Finally, resistance to *Carbapenem* remains extremely rare in *E. coli* and *Salmonella* bacteria from food-producing animals. *Carbapenems* are a class of last resort antibiotics and any finding of resistance to these antibiotics in zoonotic bacteria are concerning.

### **Fight against antimicrobial resistance: Publication of a report on good practices in the field of human, animal and environmental health**

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The European network engaged in the fight against antimicrobial resistance, the AMR Stakeholders Network, has published a [report](#) on good practices in the field of human, animal and environmental health, aiming to raise the visibility of antimicrobial resistance on the European political agenda and to propose innovative concrete solutions and actions.

After outlining and developing several initiatives, the [report](#) concludes with the following remarks and recommendations:

- The implementation of the European “*One Health*” approach seems to be still in its initial stages.
- In practice, the development and implementation of good practice in the field of human and animal health care is better understood and used than in the environmental aspect (including plants and the agri-food sector).
- Interdisciplinary and intersectoral collaboration seems to be required.

### **Latest news on animal health**

#### **The European Commission has published a report on the compliance of feed, animal health and animal welfare legislation**

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On 28 March, the European Commission published a [report](#) on the **overall functioning of official controls carried out in the Member States to ensure**, among other, compliance with **feed legislation** as well as **animal health and welfare regulations** during the period 2019-2020.

While national authorities are required to carry out official controls on the compliance of the level of health protection against risks, the European Commission services monitor EU countries in the implementation of these controls and enforcement activities.

The European Commission's checks indicate that EU countries have generally put in place the necessary systems to control and ensure that companies comply with EU requirements and to take action in case of non-compliance.

In some countries, the checks revealed weaknesses in the official control systems, indicating that there is still potential for improvement. In these cases, the European Commission has issued recommendations for corrective measures to Member States. Countries are then required to take the necessary steps to address these recommendations, in accordance with [Regulation 2017/625](#), by including them in action plans.

Over the period 2019-2020, the European Commission has therefore made a total of 527 recommendations, including animal health (with 80 recommendations), animal welfare (57 recommendations), animal by-products (33 recommendations), feed safety (32 recommendations), veterinary medicinal products and residues (26 recommendations) and animal import controls (13 recommendations).

The animal health audits focused on disease prevention, epidemic response and readiness. The information obtained on African swine fever and highly pathogenic avian influenza contributed to the development of a number of European Commission strategies and policy documents on the management of these diseases.

Finally, it was noticed that most of the European Union countries have difficulties in demonstrating their level of compliance or the evolution of compliance in terms of animal welfare, due to the lack of specific targets and/or the lack of defined indicators to monitor. As a reminder, the European Commission has announced a [review](#) of EU animal welfare legislation, which is **expected to be adopted in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2023**.

### **Exchange of views: The European Parliament's Intergroup on Animal Welfare and Conservation held a debate on the animal and human health implications of avian influenza**

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On 24<sup>th</sup> March, the European Parliament's Intergroup on Animal Welfare and Conservation organised a [conference](#) on *"The threat of the Avian Influenza to animal and human health"*.

Faced with the spread of avian influenza and its implications for the poultry sector in terms of economics, health and animal welfare, several speakers were invited to participate in the exchange of views, including Dr Iulia DELIA COHEN, representing the European Commission's Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety (DG SANTE).

The speaker [explained](#) the European legislation in force in the field of animal health, and went back over a [scientific opinion](#) published in 2017 by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) concerning avian influenza, allowing the evolution of the measures taken to reduce the number of cases and achieve the health objectives set to be put into perspective.

### **Answer of the European Commission to a written parliamentary question concerning the respect of the dosage of veterinary medicines**

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Following the [written parliamentary question](#) concerning the obligation to respect the information on the dosage of veterinary medicines, put forward by MEP Pernille WEISS (EPP/Denmark), the European Commission has given its [answer](#).

The European Commission confirms that veterinary medicines must be used in accordance with the terms of their marketing authorisation. The specific cases in which this obligation may be waived are described in [Regulation 2019/6](#) on veterinary medicinal products.

The European Commission also points out that if, on the basis of experience, the instructions given in the summary of product characteristics appear to be outdated or inappropriate, then national competent authorities have mechanisms to request their revision and possible updating. Indeed, marketing authorisation holders have the obligation to ensure that the summaries of product characteristics are updated in line with current scientific knowledge, in accordance with Article 58 of the [Regulation](#).

In the case of antimicrobials, the European Commission would like to recall that a growing body of evidence shows that the use of antimicrobials, even at low doses (or so-called "sub-therapeutic" doses), is not a viable option as it promotes antimicrobial resistance. While combating antimicrobial resistance more effectively in a harmonised and safe way is, for the European Commission, a way to enable animals to receive more appropriate treatment.

## Debate on banning the veterinary use of Colistin

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On 4 April, the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE) published a [statement](#) in favour of preserving the use of *Colistin* in veterinary medicine. According to the federation, this antimicrobial is necessary for the preservation of animal health in order to treat diseases and protect the welfare of animals. In addition, they say, sales of *Colistin* for veterinary use are declining and the prevalence of resistance in animals remains low.

However, *Colistin* is not included in the European Medicines Agency (EMA) [opinion](#) (dated 16 February) on the **list of antimicrobials or groups of antimicrobials reserved for the treatment of certain infections in humans**, as required by [Regulation 2019/6](#) on veterinary medicines.

Faced with the argument of a possible transfer of resistance factors to humans via the food chain - considered as a potential cause of antimicrobial resistance - the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE) considers that the lack of data does not allow to estimate the extent of the transfer of resistance from animals, and therefore believes that the current scientific data does not require the banning of *Colistin* use in animals.

As a reminder, the publication of the European Medicines Agency (EMA) opinion is a key and necessary step towards the finalisation of **the delegated act by the European Commission to establish control measures for antibiotic growth promoters** (as set out in Article 118 of the [Regulation](#) concerning animals or products of animal origin imported into the Union).

## OTHER ISSUES

### Latest news on animal welfare

#### The European Commission has published a summary report on the public consultation on animal welfare

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Following the [public consultation](#) launched by the European Commission on the review of EU animal welfare legislation - which closed on 21 January 2022 - the European Commission has published [a report](#) which summarises the type of stakeholder contributions received.

As a reminder, the European Commission intends to make a proposal for a [revision](#) of the current animal welfare legislation, which is expected in the **4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2023**.

Therefore, the contributions revealed some points of consensus, including :

- **Animal welfare at farm level:** 89% of respondents felt that rules should be introduced covering new species, particularly dairy cows, beef cattle, cats and dogs. Regarding the phasing out of cages, 93% said that the maximum transition period allowed should be 5 years for the following animals: pigs, laying hens, calves, rabbits, pullets, ducks and geese.
- **Animal welfare during transport:** 95% of respondents called for the introduction of maximum journey times (including transport) and 94% advocated an end to the export of live animals to third countries.

Note that the [public consultation](#) received a high number of responses (over 59,000), mostly from European citizens (and non-Europeans to a lesser extent). The main contributors were Germany (23%), France (15%) and Poland (10%).

## **The European Commission has published its report on the study on animal welfare labelling**

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In February 2022, the European Commission published a [report](#) led (by ICF consultancy firm) on a **study on animal welfare labelling**, with the aim to assist the European Commission to gather evidence that could support potential initiatives on animal welfare labelling in the European Union. The study was conducted between April 2021 and February 2022.

This has involved collecting qualitative and quantitative **data on the consumers' awareness of animal welfare standards and demand for information**. Indeed, the information gathered showed the low level of awareness regarding the conditions in which farmed animals are kept and treated among European consumers. While consumer statements indicated more willingness to pay than their actual purchasing behaviour for animal welfare compared to a standard product, the majority of consumers stated that they were not willing to pay more for a high welfare product that they currently pay for organic products.

**Data was also collected on the existing labelling schemes in the EU Member States that include animal welfare claims, as well as their design, operation and impacts.** The report aimed to analyse the extent to which current labelling schemes on animal welfare respond to the consumer demand, contribute to add value to the food chain and to improve the welfare of animals. The study concludes that the existence of multiple animal welfare labelling schemes contributes to consumer confusion. Furthermore, consumers said that they would have more confidence in labelling schemes owned and managed by NGOs and EU public authorities than if they were managed by national public authorities and food operators. However, according to the study, consumers mentioned that they would probably respond positively to any future labelling initiative that covers more than one animal species (e.g. poultry, beef, pigs), different systems of production (e.g. free-range, organic), and dimensions that extend beyond life on the farm (e.g. on-farm conditions, and humane slaughter). Consumers also mentioned being interested in receiving information on other sustainability issues in addition to animal welfare, such as the use of antibiotic, biodiversity, fair remuneration and carbon footprint.

The study also presents **best practices based on the experience gained by those schemes**.

## **War in Ukraine: several European veterinary associations mobilise in favour of non-commercial free movement of companion animals and equines within the European Union and better access to veterinary cares**

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In the context of the war in Ukraine, the European Commission has recommended to all Member States to facilitate the process for the non-commercial movement of pets (which includes cats, dogs and ferrets) on the territory of the European Union, by applying exemptions from Article 32 of [Regulation 576/2013](#) due to exceptional circumstances.

Several Member States have taken the decision to temporarily remove restrictions on the movement of pets. These include: Poland, Latvia, Hungary, Romania, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Italy, Germany, Belgium, Finland, Ireland, Denmark, the Netherlands, Sweden, Estonia and Croatia.

However, in practice, the safe evacuation of pets and equines from Ukraine remains a challenge. In response to this, a letter jointly signed by the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe ([FVE](#)), [Eurogroup for Animals](#), and [FOUR PAWS](#) was sent to the European Commission on 29 March 2022.

The purpose of this [letter](#) is to request additional support to facilitate the free movement of pets and equines, including the following measures:

- To develop recommended harmonised import protocols for the different types of animals applicable in all EU Member States to avoid confusion.
- To remove all non-risk related administrative obstacles to the import of animals from Ukraine (e.g. additional customs and VAT charges)

- To work collectively to make the safe import of animals possible through the establishment of quarantine facilities (e.g. for animals from shelters, and logistics centres in border countries to ensure supply)
- To provide access to animal feed and veterinary care under the EU Civil Protection Mechanism.

Finally, [the letter](#) also calls on the European Commission to initiate the organisation of a special meeting to coordinate efforts and help the people and animals of Ukraine.

In addition, a **programme was launched** entitled [Vets for Ukrainian Pets](#), which was initiated by the animal charity [Humane Society International](#) and is supported by the Federation of European Veterinary Associations for Pets ([FECAVA](#)) and the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe ([FVE](#)). The aim is to provide Ukrainian refugees who have fled with their pets with access to free veterinary services (up to 250 euros per pet with a limit of five pets per veterinarian) in 38 European countries.

This includes diagnosis and treatment of serious infections, medicines with prescriptions, standard preventive care such as vaccinations as well as the certification and licensing requirements needed to allow the free movement of animals within the EU (including microchip implantation/registration and official documentation).

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