EU NEWS

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Union Européenne des Vétérinaires Praticiens – AISBL
Union of European Veterinary Practitioners – AISBL

This month I would like to highlight the increasing prominence of the issue of animal welfare on the European institutional agenda.

First of all, I would like to stress the adoption in the European Parliament's Committee of Inquiry into the protection of animals during transport (ANIT) of the report "on the investigation of alleged contraventions and maladministration in the application of Union law in relation to the protection of animals during transport within and outside the Union". The plenary vote is expected in January 2022. Animal welfare, including during transport, is a day-to-day issue for our profession.

The adoption of this report within the European Parliament and the ongoing evaluation process of the European legislation on Animal welfare are significant elements for our profession and we will keep monitoring closely these topics.

Piotr KWIECIŃSKI, UEVP President

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Latest EU institutional news

Latest developments on the CAP reform

On 2 December 2021, the three texts of the CAP reform (corresponding to the regulation on national strategic plans (NSPs), the regulation on the common market organisation (CMO) and the "horizontal" regulation on the financing of the CAP) were formally adopted by the two co-legislators, namely the European Parliament and the Council. A consolidated version of these three texts is now available, which does not add any major changes to the content of the texts following the vote on the reform by the Parliament. All three texts are due to be published in the Official Journal of the EU on **6 December 2021**, allowing their application from **1 January 2023**.

In parallel, the European Commission will now have to adopt the delegated and implementing acts of the reform (as foreseen by the three CAP texts), while the Member States will have to submit their respective National Strategic Plans (NSPs) by the deadline of **1 January 2022**. The European Commission will then have to approve them during **2022.**

Latest news on antibiotics at EU level

The European Commission launches public consultation until 21 December 2021 on the sales of veterinary antimicrobial medicines used on animals

The European Commission has opened for comments an implementing regulation to define and to lay down a framework for the format of data collected by Member States on the sales of veterinary antimicrobial medicinal products and their use on animals. This draft act is under consultation for a period of 4 weeks, from 23 November to 21 December 2021 (included).

The regulation establishes that the data collected will cover terrestrial animals (live or slaughtered) and farmed fish (at slaughter). For more information on the species or categories of animals covered, see here.

It should be noted that the entry into force of this implementing act is scheduled for the **4th quarter of 2021.**

The European Medicines Agency has published its annual report on the European Surveillance of Veterinary Antimicrobial Consumption (ESVAC)

The European Medicines Agency (EMA) published on 23 November its annual report on the **European Surveillance of Veterinary Antimicrobial Consumption (ESVAC)**. This report provides information on veterinary antimicrobial agent sales in European countries in 2019 and 2020. It also includes a chapter describing changes in veterinary antimicrobial consumption from 2010 to 2020.

According to the report, **European countries have significantly reduced the use of antimicrobials in animals**. Overall sales of veterinary antimicrobials decreased by 43.2% in 2020 compared to 2011, based on data from the 25 countries that provided data for the entire 2011-2020 period. In addition, the decreasing trend for the critically important antibiotics has also been noted. This is the case for sales of third- and fourth- generation cephalosporins, which have fallen by 33%, polymyxins by 76%, fluoroquinolones by 13% and other quinolones by 85%.

As a reminder, the Agency launched the European Surveillance of Veterinary Antimicrobial Consumption (ESVAC) project in September 2009, in response to a request from the European Commission to develop a harmonized approach to the collection and reporting of data on the use of antimicrobial agents in animals from 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 3 to 4 November 2021.

The Committee adopted one positive opinion for a marketing authorisation application for **CircoMax**, a new vaccine for the active immunization of pigs against Porcine Circovirus type 2 (PCV2).

The Committee also adopted a positive opinion for a type II variation application for **Respiporc FLUpan H1N1** concerning the amendment of the product information to allow the use during pregnancy and lactation, and four positive opinions for type II variation applications concerning quality-related changes for **Vaxxitek HVT+IBD**, **Bovela**, **Halagon** and **Credelio**.

The Committee adopted a positive opinion for a grouped type IB variation application for **Oncept IL-2** concerning quality-related changes.

The Committee was informed of the withdrawal of the marketing authorisation for **Coliprotec F4**.

The Committee adopted one scientific advice reports further to a request for initial advice concerning a veterinary pharmaceutical product intended for dogs.

For more information on the Commission's work, see here.

OTHER ISSUES

Latest news on animal health

Publication of a study on the relation between zoonotic pandemics and the livestock sector in response to a request from the ENVI Parliamentary Committee

A study analysing the **relationship between different zoonotic pandemics and the livestock sector** has recently been published by the European Parliament's Policy Department for Economic, Scientific and Quality of Life Policies, at the request of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI).

This study aims to examine the risks of zoonoses posed by the livestock sector (including fur production) by reviewing **the different livestock species and production systems** as well as **previous disease epidemics**. Based on this, the study assessed the EU zoonosis surveillance and control arrangements.

The study concludes with a number of recommendations including better integration of human and animal disease surveillance services, expanded use of syndromic surveillance and changes to the funding of Member States' zoonotic disease programmes under Regulation (EU) 652/2014.

Latest news on animal welfare

The European Parliament's Committee of Inquiry into the Protection of Animals during Transport (ANIT) adopted its report and recommendations

After 18 months of fact-finding, the European Parliament's Committee of Inquiry into the Protection of Animals during Transport (ANIT) adopted its report on Thursday 2 December with a majority of 30 votes in favour, 0 against and 1 abstention, as well as the accompanying recommendations with 24 votes in favour, 1 against and 5 abstentions.

The report concludes that EU provisions in this area are not always respected by Member States and do not fully take into account the different transport needs of animals. These violations include a lack of headroom, water and feed, the shipping of animals being unfit for transport, overcrowding, the use of inappropriate vehicles, transport during extreme temperatures and extended journey times.

MEPs on ANIT committee called on the European Commission and EU countries to step up their efforts to respect animal welfare during transport and to update EU rules, including the use of surveillance cameras in vehicles, the use of appropriate temperatures (between 5ºC and 30ºC), the introduction of a journey time limit (covering all animal species and ages) and a ban on the transport of young animals below the age of 35 days. MEPs also recommend the transport of semen or embryos over breeding stock, and carcasses and meat over animals being moved for slaughter. Finally, in the context of live animal exports, they demand systematic inspections to non-EU countries, focusing on the animals' access to feed and water as well as space and headroom for the animals.

The ANIT report and recommendations are to be submitted to the plenary session in **January 2022**.

EFSA has published a report with 45 recommendations to ensure the welfare of ovine and caprine animals during the slaughter phase

In a report published on 4 November, the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) identified **40 risks to the welfare of ovine and caprine animals during slaughter**.

These risks are mainly related to stunning and bleeding methods, as well as to the lack of skills and/or working conditions of the employees. In order to improve the supervision of these practices, EFSA issued **45 recommendations** associated to specific phases of slaughter process or concerning the process as a whole.

It should be noted that a similar report on cattle welfare was published in November 2020.

In the context of the review of animal welfare legislation (at farm level, during transport and at slaughter) expected by the European Commission for the **4th quarter of 2023**, EFSA also announced the publication of forthcoming opinions on **animal welfare during transport**, including a cross-sectional study (in June 2022) complemented by more specific studies dealing with the **protection of pigs** (in June 2022), **laying hens and poultry** (in December 2022), and finally the **welfare of calves** (in March 2023).

The European Commission organised the 10th meeting of the Expert Group "EU Platform on Animal Welfare"

On 10 November, the 10th meeting of the Expert Group "*EU Platform on Animal Welfare*" took place. Created since 2017 by the European Commission, the objective of the platform is to promote dialogue between policymakers and stakeholders on the issue of animal welfare, in order to enable better implementation of EU rules, development and use of voluntary commitments and finally, the promotion of European standards aimed at enhancing the market value of EU products at global level.

On the occasion of this meeting, topics related to the **sustainable food system framework**, the recent **citizens' initiative** "to end the cage age" and the ongoing **review of EU animal welfare legislation** were, among others, discussed (the recording of the meeting and the presentation materials can be found here).

More specifically, in the context of the **review of animal welfare legislation** scheduled for the **4th quarter of 2023**, the European Commission has indicated to have received almost a thousand responses to its first phase of consultation on the basis of its inception impact assessment (concerning animal transport, farming and slaughter conditions and European animal welfare labelling). A second phase of consultation has also been launched since mid-October and will continue until the end of January. The quality assessment of the existing legislation will be published by **July 2022**, the impact assessment in **early 2023** and the legislative proposal should be made by the **end of 2023**.

Finally, the European Commission also announced the creation of **six sub-working groups**, which are: pigs, poultry, calves/dairy cows, transport, animal welfare labelling, slaughter/killing.

The next meeting of the Platform on Animal Welfare is expected to take place in **June 2022**.

Special session of the European Parliament Intergroup on Animal Welfare and Conservation took place on 16 November

On 16 November, the European Parliament's Intergroup on Animal Welfare and Conservation debated **non-animal research and testing methods** in a special session. The event, co-organised by Eurogroup for Animals and Humane Society International, took place in response to the European Parliament's adoption of a resolution asking on the European Commission to draw up an action plan *"to accelerate the transition to innovation without the use of animals in research, regulatory testing and education*" on 15th September.

At this roundtable, the transition to non-animal research, new technologies and their funding, as well as education and regulatory issues were discussed by the panelists. For more details, see the minutes here.

A report confirms the trend for European companies to increase their sourcing of cage-free eggs

According to the annual Global EggTrack report published on 24 November 2021, European companies continue to make progress in their commitment to source cage-free eggs, despite the supply chain disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Indeed, EggTrack noted an increase in the number of companies reporting their transition to cage-free in Europe, from 83 out of 101 companies in 2020 to 98 out of 116 companies in 2021, which corresponds to almost 84% of the companies tracked and counted. According to the report, the EU's cage-free flock therefore continues to grow, reaching 52% in September 2021 compared to 50.5% in 2020.

The European Commission has responded to a written parliamentary question on post-Brexit trade flows of animal products

On 3 September 2021, Chris MACMANUS (GUE, Ireland) submitted a written parliamentary question to the European Commission seeking further clarification on **the potential impacts of new trade measures on food products between the European Union (EU), the United Kingdom (UK) and Ireland**.

As a reminder, following the entry into force of the UK's withdrawal from the EU on 1 January 2021, some agri-food products are now subject to sanitary or phytosanitary certification and border control requirements when imported into the EU in accordance with EU rules. On the other hand, the implementation of similar requirements for EU products dedicated to the UK market, initially scheduled for 1 April 2021, has however been postponed to 1 October 2021 and more recently to 1 July 2022.

According to the European Commission's response, a **reduction in import flows into the EU from the UK** has been reported, particularly in the first few weeks of 2021. However, the European Commission considers that it is too early to draw conclusions on their long-term impact. Trade can resume once UK companies and traders have familiarised themselves with the new requirements and procedures.

It should also be noted that **under the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland**, Northern Ireland's sanitary or phytosanitary certification rules remain in line with current EU legislation.

Finally, the European Commission is guaranteeing contact with the UK **to ensure clarity on the certification conditions that Member States will have to respect** and thus expect to reduce the negative impacts on trade with the UK.

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