



Since the summer break, the pace has accelerated at European level. From an animal health perspective, the last few months have been particularly affected by the increase in detected cases of Avian Influenza and African Swine Fever pandemic. For this purpose, the European Commission is trying to take measures for prevention, surveillance and management of new outbreaks.

In addition, in order to draw conclusions from the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, the European Commission and more specifically the Directorate General for Health is being restructured. One of the outcome of this reorganization is the setting up of a dedicated directorate for the “One health” approach.

In parallel, work on improving animal welfare continues at European level, with several studies and recommendations ongoing concerning animal transport conditions, but also pig farming and calf protection. This material will be used to support the next legislation on animal welfare which is expected by the end of 2023, and may have an impact on our profession.

Piotr KWIECIŃSKI, UEVP President

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PRIORITY ISSUES

Latest EU institutional news

Latest developments on the CAP reform

On 31 August, the European Commission [announced](#) that it had approved the National Strategic Plans (NSPs) of seven countries: France, Denmark, Finland, Ireland, Poland, Portugal and Spain. On 13 September, the strategic plans submitted by Austria and Luxembourg were also validated.

As a reminder, in order to receive validation from the European Commission, each NSP is required to fulfil the [ten key objectives of the CAP](#). Thus the plans, once approved, will contribute to the achievement of the EU's climate and environmental objectives, including measures to improve the living conditions of animals.

In addition, several countries submitted a revised versions of their respective NSPs. On 23 September, these were submitted by Croatia, Hungary, Slovenia and Sweden, followed closely by Germany and the Netherlands on 30 September, and finally Estonia on 3 October. The procedure for formal approval of these NSPs remains the same: approximately six weeks are needed for final validation.

Eleven states have not yet submitted the final version of their strategic plans, to be validated by the European Commission before the entry into force of the new CAP on 1st January 2023.

Finally, on 6 September, an [implementing regulation](#) on the evaluation of NSPs under the CAP was published in the Official Journal of the European Union, setting out the criteria to be transmitted to the European Commission by the 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 6 to 8 September 2022.

The Committee adopted four positive opinions for variations requiring assessment to align the product information application with the latest version (9.0) of the QRD template for:

- **Exzolt** (grouped procedure including a change in the pack size and addition of a primary packaging container);
- **Porcilis PCV ID**;
- **Solensia**;
- and **Improvac** (grouped procedure including extension of the inter-dose interval from 4 to 8 weeks and reduction of the minimum age of vaccination accordingly (from 14 to 10 weeks of age) in female pigs).

The Committee adopted eight positive opinions for variation requiring assessment concerning quality-related changes for **Clynav**, **Evicto** (grouped), **Improvac**, **Poulvac E. coli**, **Tulinovet**, **Vaxxitek HVT+IBD**, **Prevexxion RN+HVT+IBD** and **Prevexxion RN**.

The Commission launched two parallel procedures for **Catophos 100 mg/ml + 0.05 mg/ml solution for injection for horses, cattle, dogs and cats** (*Butafosfan, Cyanocobalamin (vitamin B12)*) and **Vey Tosal 100 mg/ml + 0.05 mg/ml solution for injections for horses, cattle, dogs and cats** (*Butafosfan, Cyanocobalamin (vitamin B12)*). The matters were submitted to the Committee by Czechia as the reference Member State in the decentralised procedures, in accordance with [Directive 2001/82/EC](#), due to concerns raised by Germany regarding the granting of a waiver of bioequivalence study requirements for intramuscular and subcutaneous routes of administration.

The Committee adopted a positive opinion recommending the extension of maximum residue limits for praziquantel to fin fish. Furthermore, the CVMP recommended that the “no MRL required” entry established in ovine species be extrapolated to other ruminants except cattle. Also, the Committee agreed to include **mannosylated chitosan** as a new entry in the list of substances considered as not falling within the scope of [Regulation 470/2009](#) under the heading of excipients.

Following two request for limited market classification and eligibility, the Committee classified:

- an immunological product for turkeys as intended for limited market and eligible for authorisation
- an blood and blood forming organs product for horses as intended for limited market but not eligible for authorization

The Committee adopted two scientific advice reports, following requests for initial advice, on two pharmaceutical products covering the following target species: dogs (one product), and mice, rats, hamsters, gerbils, guinea pigs, chinchillas and rabbits (one product).

Latest news on animal health

Publication of EFSA's report of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) detections

According to the [latest update](#) from the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), the detections of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) virus reported in wild and domestic birds from June to September in Europe were “*unprecedented*”.

Between 11 June and 9 September, EFSA reported 788 cases in 16 European countries and the UK, including 56 in poultry, 22 in captive birds, and 710 in wild birds. The unusual persistence of the virus in wild birds continued throughout the summer and reached seabird breeding colonies on the north Atlantic coast, causing massive mortality, particularly in Germany, France, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom.

Highly infected wild birds also posed a continuing risk of infection to domestic birds. During this period, the number of outbreaks in domestic birds was more than five times higher than in the same period the previous year.

On 3 October, EFSA called on Member States to “*rapidly*” implement “*appropriate and sustainable mitigation strategies*”, including biosecurity measures and early detection of HPAI. Medium- and long-term prevention strategies should also be considered in “*densely populated areas and in poultry production systems highly susceptible to avian influenza exposure*”.

New countries listed in the Annex to the Implementing Act on emergency measures due to outbreaks of highly pathogenic avian influenza

On 12 August, the European Commission adopted the amendment to the Annex to [Implementing Decision 2021/641](#) on emergency measures due to outbreaks of highly pathogenic avian influenza in certain Member States.

In order to establish measures to control highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI), this implementing act provides for protection and surveillance zones by the Member States following outbreaks, which are to be listed in the Annex to that implementing decision.

Therefore, France, Germany, the Netherlands and Spain have recently been added to this list. The European Commission has examined the disease control measures taken by the above Member States (except Spain) in collaboration with the national competent authorities, and has been able to ascertain and confirm that the boundaries of these protection and surveillance zones are at a sufficient distance from holdings keeping poultry

or captive birds where recent outbreaks of HPAI have been confirmed. However, the Annex to the Implementing Decision does not currently list any protection and surveillance zones for Spain and needs to be amended as soon as possible.

German requests to the European Commission to increase responsiveness in its management of the African Swine Fever epidemic

On 23 August, the German Ministry of Agriculture, Cem ÖZDEMİR, called on the European Commission to speed up the lifting of restrictions for certain areas affected by African swine fever. The Minister expressed his concern in particular for the region of Lower Saxony which has been affected by the epidemic since early July.

According to the [regional government](#), a 10-kilometre restricted zone was then defined, covering around 300 pig farms and 200,000 animals. The associated restrictions are to be maintained for three months, until 14 October. However, the region of Lower Saxony has asked the European Commission for permission to lift the restriction zone from 3 September, assuring that *“the whole area is now African swine fever free”*.

In a second press release issued on 30 August, the German Ministry of Agriculture indicated that this request to accelerate the lifting of restrictions for the Lower Saxony area was rejected by the European Commission. The refusal was reportedly justified by the European Commission, which considered that the epidemiological situation had deteriorated overall in Germany.

Special measures by the European Commission regarding the cases of African Swine Fever in Lithuania

Following the recent outbreak of swine fever in Lithuania (in Taurages county), and taking into account the current epidemiological situation of African swine fever in the Union, new delimitation zones in the country have been listed within the restricted zones in Annex I of [the implementing Regulation 2021/605](#).

These measures, set out in [Implementing Regulation 2022/1841](#), entered into force on 30 September. Note that the measures are in accordance with the opinion of the Standing Committee on Plants, Animals, Food and Feed.

Reorganisation of the Directorate-General for Health in the European Commission

On 1st October, the European Commission's Directorate-General for Health was [restructured](#), following the repercussions of the Covid-19 pandemic. Among the main changes in the structure is the creation of a "One Health" Directorate, which will include a unit dedicated to antimicrobial resistance.

OTHER ISSUES

Latest news on animal welfare

Event of the Intergroup on the Welfare and Conservation of animals in the European Parliament on the responsible management of cats and dogs

The European Parliament's [Intergroup on Animal Welfare and Conservation](#) organised an event on “*Responsible care of cats and dogs - political guidance for population management*” on 29 September 2022. The event, chaired by MEP Petras AUŠTREVICIUS (RE, Lithuania), was co-organised by [Eurogroup for Animals](#).

As a reminder, the work undertaken by the [Companion Animals Working Group](#) of the Intergroup is to promote the health and welfare of companion animals, including the identification and registration of cats and dogs, trade in companion animals, population management, as well as raising public awareness and promoting best practice in this area.

The aim of this exchange was to present [political guidance](#) on the subject aimed at proposing solutions to the large number of free-roaming cats and dogs in urban and rural areas in Europe, whose health and welfare can be seriously affected when the animals live in poor conditions, and can occasionally lead to the use of what are considered inhumane measures to control the population.

In conclusion, Petras AUSTREVICIUS (RE, Lithuania) addressed the issue of illegal trade in animals, confirming that regulation is forthcoming and that a visit with Interpol is being organised in the coming weeks.

Publication by EFSA of recommendations to improve welfare during transport

On 7 September 2022, the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) published its [scientific opinion](#) to improve the understanding of animal welfare during transport for the following five categories: cattle, livestock pigs, poultry, rabbits and equidae.

Concerning **temperature during transport**, EFSA advises that the temperature inside vehicles should not exceed the upper critical temperature (UCT), which is 25°C for cattle, 32°C for sheep and goats, 25°C for pigs and 25°C for equidae. Note that under the current [Animal Transport Regulations of 2005](#), the temperature inside vehicles should be between 5 and 30 degrees.

Regarding **vehicle accommodation**, there should be sufficient space to allow animals to adjust their posture in response to acceleration and other events during transport. For pigs, small ruminants and cattle, the minimum space allowance depends on the weight of the animal: EFSA counts on average 1.79m² for cattle, 0.43m² for sheep and goats, 0.62m² for pigs and 40cm more than the length and width of the animal for equids. For poultry and rabbits, EFSA advises a sufficiently large space for all transported poultry and rabbits to sit at the same time.

Finally, the ESFA advises that **transport time** should be kept to a minimum to avoid causing too much stress to the animals. The ESFA advises a maximum travel time of 12 hours during which the animals are confined.

This scientific opinion, requested by the European Commission, will support the [future legislative proposal](#) on animal welfare, which is expected to be adopted in the **4th quarter of 2023**. Note that EFSA still has to present 5 recommendations on animal welfare by March 2023, before the European Commission reviews the legislation

Publication of EFSA recommendations to improve the welfare of farmed pigs

On 10 August 2022, the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) published its [scientific opinion](#) on the welfare of pigs on farms.

This document is the first of a series of opinions on animal welfare that will be issued over the coming year, at the request of the European Commission to support its future legislative proposal in the framework of the revision of the animal welfare legislation, which is expected in the **2nd quarter of 2023**.

This opinion provides detailed suggestions for improving the welfare of all categories of farmed pigs.

For this purpose, the experts identified 16 animal welfare 'impacts' that were considered relevant because of their severity, duration and frequency of occurrence. These include restriction of movement, stress due to the number of pigs in the pen, hot or cold temperatures, or prolonged hunger or thirst. Measurable indicators and hazards affecting animal welfare were then described in detail for each parameter.

Thus, the opinion presents the measures that need to be implemented to prevent or correct these hazards and to mitigate the most severe impacts on the welfare of farmed pigs. Note that specific proposals for quantitative and qualitative criteria have been mentioned, in order to address the issues that have been raised in the context of the European Citizens' Initiative "[End the cage age](#)". Other issues discussed included recommendations on tail biting, space allocation, feeding equipment, weaning and mutilation. The EFSA experts also suggest the establishment of indicators that could monitor the level of welfare in pig farms in slaughterhouses.

Call for contributions from EFSA on its draft scientific advice to improve the welfare of calves

On 29 September, the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) launched a call for [public consultation](#) on its draft scientific opinion on the protection of calves. The consultation is open until **4 November**.

The [text](#) focuses on the fattening of young animals, including the effects of accommodation and the impact of feeding (such as iron and fibre restrictions), as well as the impact of separation of the calf from its mother.

The final version of this text is expected to be published in the 1st quarter of 2023, and will be used to support the revision of the EU legislation on animal welfare, which is expected to be adopted in the **4th quarter of 2023**.

Indeed, this topic is part of the [European Commission's roadmap](#) listing EFSA's mandates under the Farm to Fork strategy.

Spain mandates video surveillance in its slaughterhouses

On 23 August, the Spanish Minister of Agriculture announced that Spain had [approved](#) the obligation for all slaughterhouses, including mobile slaughterhouses, to be equipped with video surveillance cameras. These will have to cover all installations where live animals are present, from unloading to killing. Conversely, cameras will not be required in areas where vehicles are waiting to be unloaded. For poultry and pigs, scalding will also have to be filmed. All footage will have to be kept for possible control purposes.

Once the decree is published in the Spanish Official Journal, slaughterhouses will have one year to adapt, and the smaller establishments will have two years. Spain will become the first European country to implement this obligation.

This new measure has been [welcomed](#) by the European animal welfare organisation [Eurogroup for Animals](#).

Collecting signatures for the European Citizens' Initiative "Save Cruelty Free Cosmetics"

In order to fight against animal testing in cosmetics, and more generally in the scientific field, a coalition of European animal protection associations has mobilised, and registered in June 2021, a European citizens' initiative named "[Save Cruelty Free Cosmetics](#)". These organisations include [Cruelty Free Europe](#), [PETA](#) and [Eurogroup for Animals](#).

These organisations call on the European Commission to support and promote the transition to animal-free product safety assessment by taking the following measures:

1. Ensuring and strengthening the ban on animal testing for cosmetics
2. Reforming the EU chemicals regulation
3. Modernise science in the European Union by committing to a legislative proposal to phase out animal testing.

After a strictly one-year signature collection period - which ended on 31 August 2022 - the initiative has collected more than 1,400,000 signatures. Considered an unprecedented milestone, this is the second European Citizens' Initiative on this issue to have passed the one million signature barrier, the first being [Stop Vivisection](#) in 2015.

In this context, MEP Tilly METZ (Greens/EFA, Luxembourg) and chair of the working group on animals in science within the [European Parliament's Intergroup on Animal Welfare and Conservation](#), said that "*this massive mobilisation of citizens proves once again that there is no place for animal testing in the European Union. The results of the European Citizens' Initiative and the European Parliament's resolution pave the way for Europe to adopt an ambitious phase-out plan with clear milestones and achievable targets*".

From now on, if the million signatures have been reached, it must still be verified that they come from at least seven different Member States. If this is the case, the European Commission will have to take the initiative into account and decide whether or not to follow up on it, justifying its position.

With the support of



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