



*While Belgium and the European institutions are experimenting a second lockdown, UEVP would like to emphasise the importance of the question of antibiotic resistance for the veterinarian profession.*

*The support of the Member States towards the goal of the Farm to Fork Strategy to reduce by 50% in 2030 the sales of antimicrobials for farmed animals and in aquaculture is a clear signal to tackle this issue.*

*UEVP will closely follow the preliminary work of the European institutions on this difficult topic supporting the one health approach.*

**Piotr KWIECIŃSKI, UEVP President**

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# PRIORITY ISSUES

## Latest EU institutional news

### The Council's conclusions on the strategies Farm to fork and Biodiversity

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On 19 October 2020, the Council of the European Union adopted its [conclusions](#) on the [Farm to Fork strategy](#), which was presented on 20 May 2020. In addition, the Council also adopted its [conclusions](#) on the European Commission's [Biodiversity strategy](#).

These conclusions represent the positioning of Member states as part of the Council on the propositions of the European Commission.

In particular, the Council's recommendations refer several times to the reduction of antimicrobials and underline that:

- animal health and welfare are a precondition for sustainable livestock production, and animal health is a precondition for a reduced need for antimicrobials;
- the recently adopted regulations on [veterinary medicinal products](#) and [medicated feed](#) provide measures that will help fight more effectively the global threat of antimicrobial resistance in a One Health approach;
- the importance of global cooperation in the fight against antimicrobial resistance.

As a reminder, the Farm to Fork strategy aims at reducing by 50% the sales of antimicrobials for farmed animals and in aquaculture by 2030.

Animal Health Europe welcomed the Council's conclusions, stressing the importance of conducting comprehensive impact assessments of the various targets before further political or regulatory decisions are taken. It also underlined that targets should be based on the latest advancements and should take both regional and species differences into account.

The European Parliament should adopt its position on the Farm to Fork strategy in the upcoming months.

### Positioning of the European Parliament and the Council on the CAP reform

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The Council [adopted](#) its positioning on the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) reform on 21 October 2020. In comparison to the European Commission's proposal, the Council decided to let Member States choose, in their CAP Strategic Plan, whether they would like to pursue one or several objectives, including promoting, developing and implementing methods of animal welfare standards.

The European Parliament's positioning was [adopted](#) during its plenary session at the end of October 2020.

The main points still to be decided between the Council, the Parliament, and the European Commission during the trilogues include the following topics:

- The definition of an active farmer, which has been clarified in particular by the European Parliament;
- The integration of a social aspect in the conditionality of direct payments, also added by the European Parliament, as well as the topic of animal welfare in the conditionality of direct payments;
- The conditions for setting up eco-schemes: their compulsory nature has been validated by the Member States, however, concerning the budget which will be dedicated to eco-schemes, the European

Parliament plans to dedicate 30% of the first pillar for them, whereas the compromise reached by the Member States concerns 20% of the first pillar.

- The European Parliament also proposes to devote 35% of the second pillar budget to measures in favour of the environment.
- The establishment of a market observatory with an alert mechanism introduced by the European Parliament in the proposal for a CMO Regulation.

As a reminder, the new CAP should enter into force on 1 January 2023. The negotiations on this topic should last until March 2021.

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

### **New EMA's report on the use of antibiotics**

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On 21 October 2020, the European Medicines Agency (EMA) published its [annual report](#) on the European Surveillance of Veterinary Antimicrobial Consumption (ESVAC). The ESVAC report presents data from 30 countries from the European Economic Area and Switzerland.

The main findings of the report are the following:

- European countries continue to reduce the use of antibiotics in animals: the overall sales of veterinary antibiotics in European countries dropped by more than 34% between 2011 and 2018.
- The total sales of certain veterinary antimicrobial agents belonging to antibiotic classes that are considered critically important in human medicine noticeably decreased between 2011 and 2018. These classes include antibiotics used to treat serious infections in humans caused by bacteria resistant to most other antibiotic treatments.
- Sales of third- and fourth- generation cephalosporins dropped by 24%, polymyxins dropped by 70%, fluoroquinolones decreased by 4% and sales of other quinolones dropped by 74%.

According to the [Antimicrobial Advice ad hoc Expert Group \(AMEG\) categorisation](#), the use of these antibiotics in animals should be restricted to mitigate the risk to public health.

Animal health Europe welcomes the results of the report, saying that they *“support reducing the need for antibiotics, but the impacts should be closely monitored. For example, that this does not negatively impact animal welfare on those farms who have already put in place many preventive measures and already dramatically reduced their use of antibiotics”*. They also *“strongly discourage the promotion of ‘raised without antibiotics’ policies or labels, as antibiotics should always be allowed for vets to treat bacterial infections in animals”*.

## **Latest news about animal health**

### **The European Commission refuses to postpone the Animal health law's entry into force**

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On 19 October 2020, during the Council meeting on “Agriculture”, several EU Member states [demanded](#) to postpone the entry into force of the [new rules](#) on animal health by one year, given the impact of COVID-19. The application of this legislation is due on the 21 April 2021.

These Member states include Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, France, Italy, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, and Spain.

However, the European Commission refused to postpone the entry into force of this legislation. According to the commissioner for health and food safety, Stella Kyriakides, postponing would lead to “*delaying measures requested by stakeholders and delaying the application of other rules*”.

### **Last updates about the African swine fever**

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On 27 October 2020, a presentation on the state of play of the African swine fever by a representative of the Directorate-General for health and food safety (DG SANTE) of the European Commission [took place](#) in the Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development (AGRI) of the European Parliament.

The following points were underlined by the European Commission’s representative:

- The disease affects the whole of Eurasia and is currently affecting twelve Member states of the European Union with a lot of heterogeneity : only wild boars are affected in Germany and Hungary for instance, whereas in other countries it can affect both wild boars and large farms, such as in Bulgaria.
- Update about the recent contaminations in Europe: in Germany, 91 cases were reported (85 in the south of the country and 6 in the north), whereas the African swine fever is disappearing in Belgium.
- The main challenges remaining are the following: maintaining the farms’ sustainability, by proposing clear measures for small farms; presenting recommendations to people travelling in order to avoid spreading the disease.

Some Members of the European Parliament also expressed their concern on this situation. For instance, Martin Häusling (Greens/ALE, Germany) explained that “*the situation is dramatic in Germany, since farmers have to slaughter many animals*”. He also asked for crisis management measures.

As a reminder, the [last decision](#) taken by the European Commission to slow down the transmission of the disease and which updates the affected areas was taken on 29 October 2020.

This topic was also addressed through a parliamentary question by three Members of the European Parliament. On 8 October 2020, MEPs Jarosław Kalinowski (PPE, Poland), Krzysztof Hetman (PPE, Poland), Adam Jarubas (PPE, Poland) submitted a [priority question](#) for written answer to the European Commission, asking to amend the provisions on the establishment and revocation of African Swine Fever (ASF) risk areas. According to these MEPs, the designation of long-standing risk areas (also called blue zones), is not justified since farmers whose farms have not been affected by an outbreak are suffering important losses.

The answer of the European Commission is expected in the upcoming weeks.

### **Increase of the avian influenza epizootic risk**

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The French Ministry of Agriculture announced on 25 October 2020 that the avian influenza epizootic risk increases from “*negligible*” to “*moderate*” in France. This situation is explained by the presence of this disease in several countries in Europe and next to Europe.

According to the French [decree](#), this “*highly pathogenic avian influenza H5*” is present in Russia and Kazakhstan and a case has been discovered in wild birds in the Netherlands.

For these reasons, to avoid the transmission of the disease on the French territory, the state has announced new prevention measures.

## **The ENVI Committee of the European Parliament warns the European Commission on the impact of plant protection products on bees**

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On 21 October 2020, in a letter addressed to the European Commission, the president of the Environment Committee (ENVI) of the European Parliament, Pascal Canfin, (RE, France), reminded the concerns of some Members of the European Parliament concerning the impact of plant protection products on bees.

According to Pascal Canfin, “*significant mortality due to pesticide exposure could be included in the natural mortality rate in the colonies*”. He also stressed that the revision of the [2013 guidelines](#) “*must not lead to a lower level of protection for bees*” than the one set out in the 2013 document.

On 28 October 2020, the European food safety agency (EFSA), received a mandate from the European Commission in order to check whether all the emergency authorisations granted in 2020 for the use of neonicotinoids, particularly for sugar beet, were justified. If EFSA would conclude that certain derogations were excessive, the European Commission could prohibit to resort to such derogations by Member states.

### **Update on the 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 6 to 7 October 2020.

The Committee adopted 5 positive opinions for CircoMax Myco from Zoetis Belgium SA, Enteroporc Coli AC from IDT Biologika GmbH, Nobivac DP Plus from Intervet International B.V., Vectormune FP ILT from Ceva-Phylaxia Co. Ltd. and Rextolide (*tulathromycin*) from Dechra Regulatory B.V. concerning marketing authorisation applications.

The Committee adopted a positive opinion for a type II variation application for Innovax-ND-IBD to extend the duration of immunity for the protection against certain diseases.

The Committee adopted a positive opinion for a grouped type II variation application for Arti-Cell Forte concerning quality-related changes.

The Committee agreed to include dipropylene glycol, 1,2-benzisothiazol-3(2H)-one and polydimethylsiloxane, hydroxy-terminated as new entries in the list of substances considered as not falling within the scope of [Regulation \(EC\) No 470/2009](#) under the heading of excipients. The document will be published on the Agency’s website.

## OTHER ISSUES

### Latest news about animal welfare

#### **The European Commission and the Council agree that EU law on animal transport to third countries can be improved**

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On 16 October 2020, the Committee of Inquiry on the Protection of Animals during Transport (ANIT) held its first meeting. This meeting enabled an exchange of views with Claire Bury, Deputy Director General for Food Safety of the European Commission.

Claire Bury considered that the [regulation](#) (1/2005) on the protection of animals during transport has made it possible to guarantee a “high” level of compliance with European rules when transport takes place within the EU. Nevertheless, Claire Bury admitted that “*improvements are needed, particularly with regard to the export of animals to third countries, especially during the warmer summer period*”.

In addition, the German minister of Agriculture, representing the German presidency of the Council, Julia Klöckner, was [heard](#) by the ANIT Committee on 29 October 2020. Concerning exports of live animals to third countries, she said they should not be allowed “*if there are no guarantees*” of good transport conditions. Julia Klöckner stressed the importance to revise the 2005 EU regulation and to put in place “*harmonised rules and evaluation criteria at European level so that everyone can act in a coordinated manner*”. She suggested to draw inspiration from the example of Germany, which has developed an “*IT tool*” gathering information on transport conditions in third countries.

As a reminder, Julia Klöckner would like to create a European label on animal welfare, which would include transport conditions. She aims at reaching a compromise on this topic at the Council meeting in December 2020.

#### **The commissioner for health and food safety considers including Farm to Fork’s objectives regarding animal welfare in trade agreements**

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On 3 November 2020, the commissioner for health and food safety, Stella Kyriakides, said that she would like to include Farm to Fork standards regarding animal welfare in trade agreements in order to protect consumers.

Stella Kyriakides wanted to allay fears about possible distortions of competition with third countries that do not apply the same standards.

#### **The European Commission confirmed that the European Citizen initiative demanding ban on cages for farmed animals has received enough support**

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On 2 October 2020, the European Commission announced that the European citizen’s initiative called ‘[End the Cage Age](#)’ gathered 1,4 million signatures. The initiative also passed the required threshold in 18 European Union Member States.

The European commissioner in charge of health and food safety, Stella Kyriakides, gave a [speech](#) in front of the organizers of this initiative on 30 October 2020. She reminded that the European Commission is currently [evaluating](#) the 2012-2015 Animal Welfare Strategy and has started a ‘[Fitness Check](#)’ of the EU animal welfare rules to propose new legislation in the coming years.

The commissioner also stressed that “any potential legislative measures will be based on a wealth of knowledge and opinion, such as EFSA’s scientific analysis; the evaluation of the Animal Welfare Strategy; the ‘Fitness Check’; and crucially, the information provided in the context of the ‘End the Cage Age’ initiative”.

### Latest updates about the Veterinary profession

#### A survey on the Veterinary profession to assess the impact of the pandemic

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In partnership with the WSAVA (World Small Animal Veterinary Association), the FECAVA (Federation of European Companion Animal Veterinary Associations) invites veterinarians to participate in the “[Vet Survey 2020](#)”.

This survey has been developed to gather key information about how the covid-19 pandemic has affected veterinarians, including on their practices, as well as their outlook on the future within the industry.

### Latest updates about animal identification

#### Two parliamentary questions on animal identification addressed to the European Commission

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On 17 July 2020, Members of the European Parliament Krzysztof Jurgiel (ECR, Poland) and Elżbieta Kruk (ECR, Poland) submitted a [parliamentary question](#) for written answer to the European Commission about animal identification. On 3 September 2020, and Elżbieta Kruk (ECR, Poland) submitted another [parliamentary question](#) about the illegal trade in dogs and cats in the European Union.

In separate answers, the European Commission replied to these questions in October 2020. It mainly refers to the existing European legislation, indicating the **new provisions to enter into force from 21 April 2021, in accordance with the [Animal Health Law](#)**:

- compulsory registration of dog and cat breeding establishments, whether or not the dogs and cats are intended to be moved to another EU Member State;
- compulsory registration of carriers transporting dogs and cats between Member States;
- approval requirement for shelters and assembly centers from which dogs and cats have to be moved to another Member State.

In its reply, the European Commission also reminded that EU Member States agreed to set up a network of national contact points aimed at exchanging information between Member States on cases of non-compliances through the administrative assistance and cooperation (AAC) mechanism provided for by [Regulation \(EU\) 2017/625](#).

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