



The German Presidency of the Council decided to make animal welfare one of its priorities and proposed to create an “European animal welfare label”. The UEVP would like to welcome this initiative while highlighting the role played by veterinarians to improve animal welfare across the European Union.

The European institutions are going to tackle the question of animal welfare during transport as well, which is also very important for the members of our association.

We will closely monitor the discussion on these topics while promoting the key function of veterinarians regarding animal welfare promotion and improvement.

Piotr KWIECIŃSKI, UEVP President

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PRIORITY ISSUES

Latest EU institutional news

State of the Union address and priority issues for 2021

On September 16th, the president of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, gave her [first speech](#) on the state of the Union since her appointment in December 2019. Ursula von der Leyen focused her speech on the current health and economic situation in the European Union. She also set out her vision about the future of Europe for the upcoming months.

Among the topics mentioned by Ursula von der Leyen, were included the recovery plan, the Green Deal, Brexit and the health sector.

- **Europe's recovery plan**

Called "[Next Generation EU](#)", the recovery plan will provide 750 billion euros to support Europe's recovery. In her speech, the president of the European Commission explained that this plan will be 30% funded by green bonds and that 37% of the recovery plan will be spent considering the Green Deal's objectives. In addition, investments will be realized in thermal renovation of buildings and in favour of hydrogen technologies.

- **The Green Deal**

Ursula von der Leyen announced an increase of the European Commission's climate ambitions, namely a **55% reduction of Europe greenhouse gas emissions by 2030**, compared to 1990 levels. The current target was a 40% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. According to the president of the European Commission, this increase is due to the ambitious target of carbon neutrality set for 2050.

In addition, Ursula von der Leyen mentioned the importance of the border carbon adjustment mechanism that the European Commission wants to implement. This mechanism aims to establish a carbon price for imports of certain goods from third countries to the European Union, in order to reduce carbon emissions.

- **The future of health in Europe**

In the field of health, Ursula von der Leyen announced the creation of an **agency for biomedical advanced research and development at the European level**, as well as proposed to **reinforce and empower the European Medicines Agency (EMA) and the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC)**.

She also encouraged EU member states to consider strengthening the **EU's competences in the health sector**, which could enable the EU to take stronger decisions in this area.

Ursula von der Leyen also indicated that the European Commission and the Italian Presidency of the G20 will hold a **global health summit in Italy in 2021**.

- **Brexit**

On Brexit, Ursula von der Leyen raised the possibility of a "no deal," leaving the European Union without a deal with the United Kingdom (UK) when it would leave the EU. The President of the European Commission also said that the agreement between the UK and the European Union signed in January 2020 could not be changed unilaterally. As a reminder, a bill has been tabled by British Prime Minister Boris Johnson in the British Parliament, which plans to break free of certain clauses already negotiated in this agreement last January, including the protocol to prevent the return of a border between Ireland and Northern Ireland.

The current budget negotiations

Negotiations between EU institutions to finalize the details of the 2021-2027 Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) and the Recovery Plan have resumed on September 28th.

The aim is to reach an agreement by mid-October 2020 to allow time for national parliaments to ratify the decision on own resources (which unlocks the recovery plan), and to adopt approximately 60 sectoral texts on MFF-related programmes.

The European institutions support different viewpoints about certain issues. For instance, the Council of the European Union does not want to allocate new amounts for certain EU programmes, such as Horizon Europe, Erasmus+ or EU4Health, contrary to the European Parliament's requirements.

As a reminder, on July 21st, 2020, head of States of Member states agreed on a 2021-2027 MFF with 1,074 billion euros including 386,7 billion euros for the Common agricultural policy (CAP) over the period 2021-2027, which corresponds to 336, 4 billion euros in constant euros (down 12% compared to 2014-2020 programming).

In addition, the outcome of the CAP reform also depends on these budget negotiations. Indeed, the European Parliament has set the next steps towards adopting its position on the subject, namely:

- The amendments can be submitted until 14 October;
- The plenary vote is expected to take place the week of 19 October.

Once the European Parliament's position is adopted, the Council, the Commission and the European Parliament will begin inter-institutional negotiations (trilogues) in order to reach a common position. The aim is to conclude the adoption of the MFF and the reform of the CAP before the end of 2020.

Latest news on antimicrobial resistance at EU level

Positioning from Animal health Europe on variation concerning the use of anti-microbials

According to Animal health Europe, the objective to reduce the use of antibiotics in farming should also consider the divergences between both European member states and species. Concerning the variations between species, Animal health Europe highlights the differences between industries which have made important progress such as pork, poultry, and dairy, and others, like beef, which are less integrated industries, with less traceability between the individual steps in this sector.

The association also underlines that important efforts have already been made, both in terms of "rationalising, reducing and replacing anti-microbials".

As a reminder, as part of its [Farm to fork strategy](#), the European Commission plans a 50% reduction in the sale of antimicrobials for farmed animals and in aquaculture by 2030. In November 2019, the European Court of Auditors published a [special report](#), indicating that there has been a 20% decrease of antibiotic use in animals in Europe over an initial five-year reporting period.

In addition, Animal health Europe encourages the development of peer-to-peer communication, which according to this association, would help to reduce the prescription and use of antibiotics. It also underlines that more

efforts need to be made to give farmers the tools to measure their progress and incentivise improvement and insists on the need to digitalise the sector to do so.

It stresses that *“we have to accept that, as an industry, we have to be more transparent, more open, and we have to be able to quantify the progress we are making, what our antimicrobial use is, what our carbon footprint is. We will absolutely have to become more data-aware, more computerized. This will help the sector to connect the dots between animal health and sustainability metrics, including the use of antibiotics, but also in terms of greenhouse gas emissions and water use”*.

Last September 16th, in her [state of the Union address](#), the president of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen explained that one of her priorities for the upcoming months will be artificial intelligence, including about precision farming in agriculture.

Latest news about veterinary pharmaceuticals

The European Parliament’s ambitions to reduce the environmental impact of pharmaceuticals

On September 17th, the European Parliament [adopted](#) a motion for a resolution on a **“Strategic approach to pharmaceuticals in the environment”**. The main points of the resolution are the following:

- It stresses the importance to implement the regulations on [veterinary medicines](#) and [medicated feed](#) in order to reduce the use of antibiotics and evaluate the feasibility of setting up an EU-wide active substance-based review system by 28 January 2022;
- The use of veterinary medicines should decrease without compromising animal health and welfare, and better alternatives should be found;
- It recognised that the licensing process for veterinary medicines includes an environmental safety assessment as part of the authorisation procedure, whereas environmental impacts of pharmaceuticals are not included in the benefit-risk assessment of human medicines;
- It also recognised that a comprehensive monitoring of antibiotics has been developed in farming and suggest developing a similar system for human antibiotics.

As a reminder, the European Commission is expected to publish its [Pharmaceutical Strategy for Europe](#) at the end of 2020. It will include objectives in order to reduce the impact of medicines on the environment and tackle anti-microbial resistance.

Latest news about animal health

Latest initiatives taken by the European institutions to deal with the African swine fever

On September 15th, the German minister for Agriculture announced that five new suspected cases of wild boar have been detected at the Polish border. After the first detected case of African swine fever, China and South Korea suspended pig imports from Germany.

At the end of August 2020, the European Food Safety Authority (Efsa) launched a campaign to raise awareness and help stop the spread of African swine fever in south-east Europe.

The European Commission [updated](#) its implementing decision concerning animal health control measures relating to African swine fever in certain Member States, mentioning the new high-risk areas in the European Union.

Evaluation of the impact of pesticides on bees with the European Parliament

On October 1st 2020, the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI) of the European Parliament [heard](#) the Directorate General for Health and Food Safety (DG SANTE) of the European Commission about the revision of the guidelines to assess the impact of pesticides on bees.

Following the [preliminary report](#) of the European Food Safety Authority (Efsa) of June 2020, the European Commission indicated that most Member states were in favour of a new method to assess the “natural” mortality rate in pollinator colonies. However, according to some Members of the European Parliament, this rate would be higher than the level considered acceptable in a 2013 [guidance document](#).

Experts from Member states are due to meet on October 8th to finalise their decision, in order to review protection levels in 2021. The European Parliament will not vote before the [Regulation](#) on the principles for the evaluation and authorisation of phytopharmaceuticals is amended.

Parliamentary question on Animal health law

On September 8th 2020, six Members of the European Parliament of the Renew group submitted a [parliamentary question](#) for written answer to the European Commission. Jérémy Decerle (Renew, France), Irène Tolleret (Renew, France), Hilde Vautmans (Renew, Belgium), Atidzhe Alieva-Veli (Renew, Bulgaria), Ulrike Müller (Renew, Germany) and Elsi Katainen (Renew, Finland) asked the European Commission to postpone the entry into force of the [Regulation](#) on transmissible animal diseases and amending and repealing certain acts in the area of animal health ('Animal Health Law').

The entry into force of this Regulation was initially set on 21 April 2021. The above-mentioned Members of the European Parliament indicate, however, that most of the delegated acts which should have been taken in April 2019, have not been adopted yet.

The European Commission's answer to this question is expected in the upcoming weeks or months.

Latest news about animal welfare

Discussions on the creation of a European animal welfare label

Ministers of Agriculture from EU Member states met informally from August 30th to September 1st in Coblenz, Germany. The issue of animal welfare was, alongside the Common Agricultural policy (CAP) and labelling, the [topics discussed](#) at this meeting.

The German Presidency of the Council, represented by German Minister of Agriculture Julia Klöckner, [said](#) it wanted to create a "**European animal welfare label**" that would be harmonised at European level and mandatory for all Member states. On this topic, European Commissioner for Agriculture Janusz Wojciechowski indicated that this issue will be discussed as part of the [Farm to fork strategy](#).

As a reminder, in Germany, an animal welfare label is being developed, which will apply first to the pig sector and left at first to the free will of each breeder.

In addition, on September 23rd 2020, during a [meeting](#) of the commission for European affairs at the French Parliament, the head of unit for animal welfare within the Directorate General for health (DG SANTE) at the European Commission Andrea Gavinelli, promoted the introduction of an animal welfare labelling. He also indicated that a study would be launched on this topic.

Member of the European Parliament Jérémy Decerle (Renew, France), is also in charge of a report on animal welfare. Jérémy Decerle is member of the Committee on Agriculture and rural development at the European Parliament, breeder of Charolaise cows in France and former president of the Young Farmers (Jeunes Agriculteurs) in France. His work on this report is expected to start at the beginning of 2021.

European ambitions to improve animal welfare during transport

This issue was raised by German Agriculture Minister of Agriculture Julia Klöckner, at the meeting of Agriculture ministers on August 30th to September 1st in Coblenz, Germany. She said that the rules on animal transport must evolve because they leave "*too much room for interpretation*". On this point, Commissioner for Agriculture Janusz Wojciechowski said the rules "*may need to change*."

In addition, on September 23rd, the Committee of Inquiry on the protection of Animals during transport at the European Parliament elected its bureau. It appointed MEP Tilly Metz (Greens/EFA, Luxembourg) as its Chair. The elected Vice-Chairs are Marlene Mortler (EPP, Germany), Anja Hazekamp (GUE/NGL, Netherlands), Mohammed Chahim (S&D, Netherlands) and Martin Hojsik (Renew, Slovakia).

Latest parliamentary questions on animal welfare

On June 29th 2020, Vice-chair of the Committee on Agriculture and rural development at the European Parliament Francisco Guerreiro (Greens/EFA, Portugal) submitted a [parliamentary question](#) for written answer to the European Commission, on the enforcement of the prohibition of the routine tail-docking of pigs.

In its [reply](#), on September 14th 2020, the European Commission [referred](#) to the [objectives](#) of the Farm to fork strategy, as well as the current [evaluation](#) of the animal welfare strategy, expected to be completed by the end of 2020.

In addition, on June 30th 2020, Member of the European Parliament Elżbieta Kruk (ECR, Poland) [asked](#) the European Commission whether it planned to review the current slaughter regulation and animal welfare legislation in order to provide protection for animals that are not currently covered, such as lambs and sheep. It also questioned the European Commission on whether it would take any action against France for its failure to monitor the application of slaughter regulations.

Overall, the European Commission replied that the protection of lambs and sheep at the time of slaughter is governed by a [Regulation](#) on the protection of animals at the time of killing. In addition, it indicated that the European Commission has currently no conclusive evidence that the French authorities have not implemented European slaughter rules.

Update on the 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 8 to 9 September 2020.

The Committee adopted 2 positive opinions for Librela (*bedinvetmab*) and OvuGel (*triptorelin acetate*) concerning marketing authorisations.

The Committee adopted a positive opinion for a type II variation application for Cytopoint (*lokivetmab*) to add a new therapeutic indication.

The Committee adopted a positive opinion for a type II variation application for Nobilis IB Primo QX to update the product information.

The Committee adopted 4 positive opinions for type II variation applications concerning quality-related changes for Zycortal Nasym, Nobovac L4 and Canigen L4, SUvaxyn Circo and Suvaxyn Circo+MH RTU.

The Committee adopted 3 positive opinions for type IB variation applications concerning quality-related changes for Vectra Felis and Vectra 3D; Simparica and MiPet Easecto; NexGard Spectra, Afoxolaner Merial and NexGard.

The Committee agreed to include sodium polynaphtalene sulfonate and sodium lauryl ether sulfate 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 Committee adopted 4 scientific advice reports to requests for initial advice on efficacy issues for a new veterinary medicinal product for metabolic disorders in horses and for the extension of an immunological veterinary product to dog; initial advice on safety issues for a new immunological veterinary product for dogs; as well as follow-up advice on quality, safety and efficacy issues for a new veterinary medicinal product for musculoskeletal disorder indication in dogs.

OTHER ISSUES

Latest updates about the Veterinary profession

The regulated professions as part of the priorities of the new Single Market Enforcement Task force

The creation of a Single Market Enforcement Task Force (SMET) was announced in the European Commission's [Single Market Enforcement Action Plan](#) on 10 March 2020 and aims at ensuring better compliance with Single Market rules.

To achieve this goal, the SMET will focus, inter alia, on the obstacles put in place by Member states during the covid-19 crisis, including about regulated professions. The SMET's priorities plan was last discussed on 21 September 2020.

Member States' reiterated their commitment to the SMET work during the Competitiveness Council on 18 September 2020.

Report of the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe about the shortage of veterinarians in rural and remote areas

In a recent [report](#), the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE) highlighted the noticeable shortage of veterinarians in rural and remote areas in 28 European countries.

According to this report, in these countries, around 78.5% veterinarians in rural areas are already experiencing a shortage. This issue would cause several consequences: it would impact veterinarians, animals and farmers alike and it would hinder the economic development of rural areas.

To address this issue, the FVE proposes several recommendations:

- to support regular preventive veterinary visits to all farms;
- a smart management of veterinary practice by using already available infrastructure for other purposes, namely encouraging veterinarians to enlarge their network of cooperatives with other health professions;
- facilitating favourable living conditions, such as providing for child-care support;
- financing the supply of work equipment. Especially, facilitating those instruments that allow working off-site, such as telecommunication technologies and health monitoring technology.

The report also includes a summary of findings for each of the 28 countries.

Latest updates about VAT matters

On 7 September 2020, Petras Auštrevičius (Renew, LT) submitted a [parliamentary question](#) for written answer to the European Commission about the consistency of the current constraints to Member States' flexibility in setting VAT rates with [Article 113](#) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) on which the VAT [Directive](#) is based.

As a reminder, Article 113 of the TFEU allows the European Union, and in particular the Council, to regulate tax matters.

The European Commission's answer is expected in the upcoming months.

In addition, the European Commission launched a [public consultation](#) on 1st October 2020, about an initiative to change the status of the VAT advisory committee into a comitology committee on VAT. This comitology committee could, by qualified majority, adopt implementing acts proposed by the European Commission on tax matters. This committee is made up of representatives from the Member States and the European Commission. The consultation is open until 29 October 2020.

Latest news about animal feed

A charter on Feed Sustainability by the European Compound Feed Manufacturers' Federation

On 25 September 2020, during a congress, the European Compound Feed Manufacturers' Federation (FEFAC) published its '*Feed Sustainability Charter 2030*'.

This [charter](#) highlights 5 main goals on how the European animal feed industry can contribute to the development of more sustainable value chains in livestock and aquaculture:

- Contribute to Climate-Neutral Livestock & Aquaculture Production Through Feed
- Foster Sustainable Food Systems Through Increased Resource & Nutrient Efficiency
- Promote Responsible Sourcing Practices
- Contribute to Improving Farm Animal Health & Welfare
- Enhance the Socio-Economic Environment and Resilience of the Livestock & Aquaculture Sectors

According to the organization, this charter is a response to the European Commission's [Green Deal](#).

Latest updates about animal identification

Initiative of the European Commission on medical information in horse passports

The European Commission launched an [initiative](#) on the content and format for information that must be included in the identification document of animals in the horse family (equidae).

The information gathered by the European Commission will help it prepare a delegated act on this topic.

The feedback period is open until 22 October 2020.

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