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Health and Food Safety Directorate General

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Standing Committee on Plants, Animals, Food and Feed
Section *Animal Health and Welfare*
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SUMMARY REPORT

A.01 General information by Member States.

No item raised.

A.02 Information from Spain, Portugal, Italy, Austria, Ireland and the UK on the results of the implementation of their bovine tuberculosis eradication programmes in 2017.

The Member States running eradication programs co-financed by the EU for bovine tuberculosis have presented the results achieved in 2017 as regards such programs and the perspectives for the following years. A slight decrease of herd prevalence has been achieved in 2017 compared to previous years for Spain, Portugal, Italy and Austria, but an increase has been registered in Ireland and in the UK. The Commission will continue to follow closely the trend of the disease prevalence in cooperation with each concerned Member State.

A.03 Information from Romania, Poland, Lithuania, Latvia and Hungary on the African swine fever epidemiological situation and the measures applied.

Member States provided the update on the current African swine fever situation and the measures taken to control the disease.

A.04 Presentation by Austria on an outbreak of *Brucella melitensis* in cattle.

Brucella melitensis has been confirmed as causative agent for abortion in cattle in a holding in Austria. No indications are so far available regarding the source of the infection. The veterinarian responsible for the holding is sick and reacts positively to serology for brucellosis. Epidemiological investigations are ongoing, restrictions on the farm are in place, and the bovines were culled.

A.05 Outcome of the audit of exports of live animals by sea in Slovenia.

Point was withdrawn from the agenda.

A.06 Update on Commission actions to prevent tail biting and prevent routine tail docking of pigs.

One Member State asked whether it has been decided where the next audits would take place. The Commission representative indicated that this depended on the assessment of the Member States' action plans which is nearing completion. Another Member State asked for clarification on the importance of diet as a risk factor for tail biting, and whether it could really be considered more important than enrichment material. The Commission indicated that Finnish farmers, who successfully raise pigs with intact tails, highlighted the importance of a consistent diet in a survey on the relative importance of risk factors for tail biting. Finland added that Finnish farmers had to comply on all requirements, including enrichment material, and had achieved good compliance with this requirement also by linking it to cross-compliance controls. Italy indicated that the Competent Authority there was doing a lot of work with company veterinarians and was also focusing on the health status of pig farms. They asked about the revision of the CAP and how moves to reduce tail biting could fit within this. The Commission indicated that the CAP would not go into the specifics of tail biting/docking but that the revised CAP will focus even more on Member States being able to demonstrate the impact of the measures taken.

A.07 Information concerning a declaration of freedom from viral haemorrhagic septicaemia (VHS) and infectious haematopoietic necrosis (IHN) from Germany for the zone "Zwiefalter Ach und Hasenbach bis Aquakulturbetrieb Schmutz, D-88529 Zwiefalten-Gossenzugen".

The documentation provided demonstrates that the surveillance program is conducted in compliance with current legislation. There were no comments nor discussion.

A.08 Information concerning a declaration of freedom from viral haemorrhagic septicaemia (VHS) and infectious haematopoietic necrosis (IHN) from Slovenia for the river Savinja from its spring to the barrier (Kolečev dam) including the fish farms "Ljubno" and "Podvolovljek".

The documentation provided demonstrates that the surveillance programme is conducted in compliance with current legislation. There were no comments nor discussion.

A.09 Information from Bulgaria on Peste des Petits Ruminants.

The Commission and the Bulgarian authorities provided updates on the control measures undertaken in relation to PPR outbreaks in small ruminant holdings in Yambol and Burgas regions in Bulgaria.

A.10 Information from Bulgaria on highly pathogenic avian influenza in poultry.

Bulgaria gave an update on the situation as regards highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) of subtype H5N8. A new outbreak was confirmed in July in the region of Dobrich outside the existing restriction zones established due to the previous outbreaks. Disease control measures are implemented, including new restriction zones.

A.11 Information on low pathogenic avian influenza in poultry in Denmark.

During the official active Avian influenza surveillance programme, the second LPAI H5 outbreak this year was confirmed in mallards (ducks for release for hunting). Killing and zoning around the outbreak were applied. The Commission informed the Member States on the state of play of import data/quarantine facilities with regard to Decision 2007/598/EC and requested all data on imports by 31 July 2018.

A.12 Information on the implementation of vaccination against avian influenza of other captive birds kept in zoos, approved bodies, institutes or centres in Member States according to Decision 2007/598/EC during 2017.

Three Member States were reminded to send the still outstanding information. So far vaccination is only reported from Denmark in three zoos in less than 300 birds.

A.13 Information and discussion in relation to a declaration of freedom from ISA-HPR deleted in compartment 18000 Rimstad, Norway.

The Commission briefly explained the EU rules relevant for the case of a compartment which wishes to regain its freedom after an outbreak of infectious salmon anaemia (ISA). The Commission also explained some inconsistencies between the current rules and proposed to the Member States a possible pragmatic way forward for the immediate future. Member States were invited to send their opinion in writing.

B.01 Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Implementing Decision on the evolution of animal diseases in the Union.

Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Implementing Decision amending the Annex to Implementing Decision (EU) 2017/247 on protective measures in relation to outbreaks of highly pathogenic avian influenza in certain Member States.

The Commission presented a draft decision to amend the Annex to Decision (EU) 2017/247 in order to update the regionalisation with respect to the last outbreak of HPAI in Bulgaria.

Vote taken: Favourable opinion.

B.02 Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Implementing Decision amending the Annex to Implementing Decision 2014/709/EU concerning animal health control measures relating to African swine fever in certain Member States.

ASF regionalisation measures were reviewed. Two Member States asked for a prohibition of the trade of wild boar kept in a holding. The Commission took note of this request and highlighted the importance of the current legislation which already covers this issue.

Vote taken: Favourable opinion.

B.03 Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Recommendation on a coordinated control plan for the official controls on online sales of dogs and cats.

Several Member States' and Norway's representatives took the floor, mainly to express their support to this Commission initiative. Some technical concerns were clarified during the discussion.

Vote taken: Favourable opinion.

B.04 Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Implementing Decision amending Annexes I and II to Decision 2003/467/EC as regards the declaration of certain regions of Italy as officially tuberculosis-free and officially brucellosis-free in relation to bovine herds

Italy gave a short presentation of the eradication program applied and the epidemiological situation. The Commission concluded that the conditions laid down in Directive 64/432/EC are fulfilled, and that the Annexes I and II to Decision 2003/467/EC should be amended accordingly. The document is foreseen to be voted in the September Committee meeting.

Vote Postponed

B.05 Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Implementing Decision on risk mitigating and reinforced biosecurity measures and early detection systems in relation to the risks posed by wild birds for the transmission of highly pathogenic avian influenza viruses to poultry.

A revised text was presented that brings more clarity into the identification of high risk areas according to the risk factors and on the measures that must be implemented depending on the specific up-to-date epidemiological situation. A compromise was found to allow for exemptions from restrictive risk mitigation measures that give Member States more flexibility to adapt to their specific situations.

Vote taken: Favourable opinion.

C.01 Exchange of views of the Committee on a draft Commission Implementing Regulation determining the application of certain disease prevention and control rules to categories of listed animal diseases and establishing a list of animal species and groups of animal species posing a considerable risk for the spread of specific listed diseases.

This draft Commission Implementing Regulation has been discussed in a series of meetings of the working group that took place from November 2017 until March 2018. The draft was presented for the exchange views of the Committee with a special emphasis on the fine tuning of listed species of aquatic animals.

M.01 Information from Belgium on Newcastle disease in captive birds and poultry.

Belgium updated on the situation with a total of 13 confirmed outbreaks since end April in eleven hobby holdings, one large dealer and one commercial laying hen operation and the control measures taken. There are several issues in relation to bird immunity, vaccine use and efficacy and virus strain characteristics that are currently scientifically addressed in collaboration between reference laboratories.

M.02 Information regarding Brexit.

At the request of one Member State about the possible trade impact of the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the Union, the Commission asked Member States to raise this matter at the special group in the Council and invited Member States to get in touch with their respective Permanent Representations. The conclusions of the EU Council were reminded and in particular: “The European Council renews its call upon Member States, Union Institutions and all stakeholders to step up their work on preparedness at all levels and for all outcomes”. The Commission informed Member States about a dedicated website on Brexit which contains all the relevant information on the negotiation process and related documents.

M.03 Bulgaria – African swine fever preparedness.

The Bulgarian representative made a presentation on ASF preparedness.

M.04 African swine fever - European Union Veterinary Emergency Team - Mission to Romania.

A presentation on a recent EUVET mission to Romania was given by a member of the EUVET.

M.05 National stock of FMD antigens.

The Commission reminded Member States about the obligation to provide the Commission, in accordance with Directives 64/432/EEC and 2003/85/EC, with the details on the FMD antigens and vaccine stocks kept in territories of the Member States and with the main results of real-time alert exercises carried out in accordance with national FMD contingency plans at their territories. The Commission requested the Member States which have not yet submitted this information for the year 2017 to do it as soon as possible.

M.06 European Union stock of FMD antigens.

The Commission distributed information on the available stock of foot-and-mouth disease virus antigens stored in the Union antigen and vaccine bank established in accordance with Article 80(1) of Council Directive 2003/85/EC.