



This month, several actions were taken on animal health, including antimicrobial resistance with a draft implementing regulation listing prohibited and authorized antimicrobials intended for use in animals as well as criteria for plans to control residues of veterinary medicines in food.

Measures have also been taken by the European Commission concerning African Swine Fever and Avian Influenza, in order to limit the risk of epidemics spreading.

In terms of animal welfare, discussions in the EU Council have accelerated regarding the proposal for a regulation on the welfare and traceability of dogs and cats. In addition, commitments and campaigns in favour of animal welfare were conducted during the pre-election period. More than 500 MEPs and several Member States have expressed their support for animal welfare issues and called for them to be addressed in the next mandate.

Volker MOSER, UEVP President

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PRIORITY ISSUES

Update on EMA activities

Meeting highlights from the Committee for Veterinary Medicinal Products (CVMP)

The Committee for Medicinal Products for Veterinary Use (CVMP) held a meeting from 21st to 22nd May 2024.

The Committee adopted positive opinions for marketing authorisation of two new vaccines intended for the active immunisation of chickens for reduction of egg drop: Nobilis Multiriva RT+IBm+ND+EDS and Nobilis Multiriva RT+IBm+ND+Gm+REOm.

The Committee adopted a positive opinion for grouped variation requiring assessment for Bluevac BTV, a bluetongue virus vaccine.

The Committee adopted positive opinions for variations requiring assessment concerning quality-related changes for: Contacera, Felpreva, Locatim, MS-H Vaccine, Nobivac LoVo L4, Rabitec and Tulissin.

The Committee also adopted positive opinions for variations requiring assessment to align the product information with version 9.0 of the QRD template for: Circovac, Forceris, Isemid, Nobivac LoVo L4, Porcilis AR-T DF, Vectra Felis, Vectra 3D and Virbagen Omega.

The Committee adopted two scientific opinion reports, one on immunological products for dogs and the other on a plant substance for salmon.

The Committee adopted a draft consolidated 3-year work plan for the veterinary domain (2025-2027) for stakeholders' consultation.

Finally, the Committee held a meeting on 22 May 2024 with stakeholders, including representatives Access VetMed, AnimalhealthEurope, Association of Veterinary Consultants (AVC), COPA-COGECA, Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE), Groupement Pharmaceutique de l'Union Européenne (PGEU) and International Council on Animal Protection in Pharmaceutical Programs (ICAPPP). Topics discussed included: updates on the activities of the Antimicrobial Working Group and the Ad hoc Expert Group on Antimicrobial Advice (AMEG) and training workshops on antimicrobial resistance, new consumer safety guidelines for immunological veterinary medicinal products for endogenous targets, parasiticides for companion animals and innovations in the use of data to support the registration of medicinal products.

Latest news on animal health at EU level

European Commission consultation on a draft implementing regulation regarding antimicrobials for use in animals

On 23rd May, the European Commission opened a consultation on a draft implementing regulation listing prohibited and authorized antimicrobials intended for use in animals. It supplements the Regulation on veterinary medicinal products, especially article 112 and 113.

More specifically, the annex to the implementing act provides a list of antimicrobials, and the main document, the conditions on the use of antimicrobials. The consultation will be opened to feedback until 20th June.

Opening of the scrutiny phase for the delegated regulation on the criteria for the selection of samples for control plans on Veterinary Medicinal Products residues in food

On 3rd June, the European Commission opened a scrutiny phase of two months about the delegated regulation on the criteria for the selection of samples for control plans on Veterinary Medicinal Products (VMP) residues in food.

The delegated act amends the delegated regulation on specific requirements for the performance of official controls on the use of pharmacologically active substances authorised as veterinary medicinal products, already supplementing the Regulation on official controls and other official activities performed to ensure the application of food and feed law, rules on animal health and welfare, plant health and plant protection products.

This revised version of the delegated act adapts certain sampling criteria, in particular the mandatory sampling frequency for certain combinations of groups of substances and groups of products.

Scrutiny phase aims to collect positions of the experts representing member states and of the European Parliament. If there are no objections for the delegated act approval, it can be published on the Official Journal of the European Union and enter into force.

Publication of a joint framework for action by five EU agencies to implement the EU's 'One Health' program

On 7th May, the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA), the European Environment Agency (EEA), the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) and the European Medicines Agency (EMA) published a joint framework for action to implement the European Union's "One Health" program.

This joint framework sets out a progressive action plan for the next three years (2024-2026) with five strategic objectives:

- Strategic coordination
- Coordination of research
- Capacity building
- Communication and stakeholder engagement
- Partnerships and joint activities

In particular, these objectives will:

- Strengthen the scientific evidence base;
- Ensure that scientific advice and risk assessment are increasingly integrated;
- Support the development of intersectoral coordination mechanisms and build capacity and expertise for the "One Health" approach.

In addition, on 22nd May, the European Commission published a Communication on the European Health Union, in which it reiterates the importance and objective of the "one health" approach. In particular, it states that European Union is best placed to develop stronger policies capable of tackling major health challenges such as antimicrobial resistance and the impact of climate change on health.

Publication of an epidemiological analysis of African swine fever in the European Union by EFSA and publication of implementing decisions concerning new outbreaks of the disease

On 16th May, the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) published an Epidemiological analysis of African swine fever in the European Union during 2023.

The analysis reports a recrudescence of African swine fever (ASF) outbreaks in 2023 in Europe, with the presence of the disease in wild pigs more than five times higher than in 2022. For domestic pigs, African swine fever outbreaks were seasonal in all countries, with 88% of outbreaks reported between July and October.

The report also states that, despite the introduction of African swine fever into new countries and the increase in the number of outbreaks, the size of the restricted zones in the EU has remained stable.

The analysis provides some recommendations, including:

- European countries are encouraged to continue running awareness campaigns targeting farmers and veterinarians;
- For domestic pigs: focus surveillance efforts on passive surveillance;
- For wild boar: give priority to passive surveillance and the search for and analysis of wild boar carcasses;
- Continue weekly sampling of two dead pigs in each establishment within risk or restricted zones;
- Harmonise data collection to facilitate research and transmission of hunting data to ENETWILD;
- An up-to-date census of pig farms is essential to ensure timely control of the disease and avoid its rapid spread;
- Cooperation between countries affected by the disease.

In addition, on 6th May and 17th May, the European Commission has published two implementing decisions concerning new movements in outbreaks of African swine fever in Europe. Outbreaks of African swine fever have been detected in the Pomorskie region of Poland, and in the Emilia Romagna region of Italy, which will be classified under protection and surveillance zones. On the contrary, the Liberec and Central Bohemian Regions in Czech Republic are to be removed from the swine fever presence lists due to the disappearance of the disease.

New outbreaks of Avian influenza in Europe

The European Commission published an implementing decision about new outbreaks of Avian Influenza in Europe. The County of Békés in Hungary is now under protection and surveillance zone. The implementing act also mentions outbreak of the disease in Bulgaria without mentioning a region in particular.

OTHER ISSUES

Latest news on animal welfare at EU level

Proposal for a potential compromise text by the EU Council on the Regulation on the welfare of dogs and cats

On 15th and 16th May, the Belgian Presidency of the EU presented a (non-public) compromise proposal on the [European Commission's proposal](#) to improve the **welfare of dogs and cats**.

According to the information gathered, this compromise text would suggest the following changes (compared to the European Commission's initial proposal):

- A ban on breeding to produce hybrids;
- A ban on breeding bitches that have undergone two caesarean sections for their own welfare;
- A ban on the use of dogs or cats with extreme conformation characteristics or which have been mutilated, in the case of dog shows or competitions;
- The inclusion of foster homes in the text;
- With regard to the qualifications of animal keepers, the text excludes volunteers and trainees who are supervised by an animal keeper.

The Belgian Presidency's ambition is to finalise the text before the end of its term at the end of June, otherwise the dossier will be taken over by the Hungarian Presidency of the EU Council.

In June, the working group will also begin discussions on the proposed [Regulation](#) on the welfare during transport of animals.

Animal welfare commitment and campaign in the run-up to the European elections

The non-governmental organization, Eurogroup for animals, has launched the vote for animal 2024 campaign, and over 500 MEP candidates have pledged to do more to protect animals at EU level if elected to the European Parliament.

The campaign aims to push candidates to do more for animal welfare, particularly on the following topics:

- Commitment to live animal transport;
- Non-animal sciences, aquatic species welfare;
- Conservation of wild animals;
- Animal product imports and pet welfare;
- Future ban on fur farming;
- The importance of sustainable food production;
- Demand for a European Commissioner for Animal Welfare.

To date, Finland, Italy and France have had the highest number of candidates supporting the pledge.

In addition, on 23rd May, Slovenia, supported by Bulgaria, France, Portugal and Sweden, shared a note on animal welfare.

The 5 countries call on the European Commission to keep animal welfare at the top of its agenda, arguing that the revision of EU rules on animal welfare on farms and at the time of slaughter is an area where the EU must be at the forefront. Finally, the member states call for the economic and social impacts of any proposed legislation in the field of animal welfare to be properly assessed.

Call to Member states to incorporate animal welfare in the scope of the due diligence directive while transposing it into their national law

On 24th April and 24th May respectively, the European Parliament and the EU Council approved the Due Diligence Directive. This text requires companies and their upstream and downstream partners to prevent, halt or mitigate their negative impact on human rights and the environment, including at the sourcing, production and distribution levels. This includes slavery, child labour, labour exploitation, the erosion of biodiversity, pollution or the destruction of the natural heritage.

Although animal welfare is not part of the list of obligations, the text recognises that companies should contribute to the protection of animal welfare.

The non-governmental organisation Eurogroup for Animals is calling on the Member States to include animal welfare when transposing the directive into national law.

Publication in the Official Journal of the European Union of the European Commission's Delegated Directive on animals used for scientific purposes

On 15th May, the European Commission's Delegated Directive on requirements for establishments and requirements for the care and accommodation of animals, and methods of killing animals was published in the Official Journal of the European Union.

The purpose of this delegated act is to adapt two annexes to the Directive on the protection of animals used for scientific purposes. The amendments will apply to species not currently covered by the annexes but falling within the scope of the directive.

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