

Current situation on the spread of highly pathogenic avian influenza

(09/01) On 26 February 2024, the European Commission published Implementing Decision (EU) 2024/759 in the EU Official Journal L concerning emergency measures in relation to outbreaks of highly pathogenic avian influenza in certain Member States following the recent HPAI outbreaks in **Bulgaria** (in Dobrich and Veliko Tarnovo regions), **Denmark** (in Aabenraa municipality), **Germany** (in Schleswig-Holstein state), **Poland** (in Greater Poland, Lubusz, Opole and Warmian-Masurian voivodeships) and in **Czechia** (in ysočina Region).

In addition, **Italy** has notified the Commission of an outbreak of HPAI in an establishment where poultry were kept, located in Veneto region.

Moreover, one of the outbreaks confirmed by Denmark is located in close proximity to the border with Germany. Accordingly, the competent authorities of those two Member States have duly collaborated with regard to the establishment of the necessary surveillance zone, as the surveillance zone extends into the territory of Germany.

The annex to the decision (EU) 2024/759 contains the updated territorial outlines of the protection and surveillance zones as well as the provisional duration of the protective measures.

Implementing Decision (EU) 2024/759, which has now been published, amends Implementing Decision (EU) 2023/2447 accordingly. Implementing Decision (EU) 2024/759 is available at the following link: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec_impl/2024/759/oj

Current situation on African swine fever

(09/02) On 26 February, Implementing Regulation (EU) 2024/760 laying down specific control measures for African swine fever (ASF) and amending Annex I to Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/594 was published in the Official Journal L. Previously, there had been new outbreaks of ASF in wild porcine animals in Italy and Greece.

Also, the epidemiological situation in certain zones listed as restricted zones I and II in Germany, and as restricted zones I and III in Italy in Annex I to Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/594 has improved as regards wild and kept porcine animals, due to the disease control measures being applied by those Member States in accordance with Union legislation.

Implementing Regulation (EU) 2024/760 is available at the following link:

http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg_impl/2024/760/oj

Amendment of Regulation 2020/760 planned in relation to the reference reference with poultry meat from Ukraine (Annex)

(09/03) On 21 February, the EU Commission briefly drew attention to the need for further amendment to Article 9 "Reference quantities" of Delegated Regulation (EU) 2020/760 in an oral presentation to the Expert Group on Horizontal Issues. These considerations are linked to the impact of the Temporary Trade Liberalisation Measures with Ukraine. It is recalled that imports of poultry meat have increased significantly since the introduction of the special arrangements on 4 June 2022. According to the EU Commission, imports from Ukraine can be used to calculate the reference quantity for the Erga Omnes quotas with the numbers 09.4213, 09.4216, and 09.4412 and can be transferred to other quotas within the groups with the possibility of cumulation. The Commission sees considerable risks of distortion in this area. Against this background, the EU Commission proposes in a first draft to delete the provisions in Article 9

(6) and (7) of Delegated Regulation (EU) 2020/760. As a result, imports of Ukrainian goods could no longer be used to build up reference quantities for other import quotas for which there is the possibility of cumulation. This amendment would affect the following three groups of quotas:

- 09.4211 (BRA), 09.4212 (THA), 09.4213 (EO), 09.4290 (ARG);
- 09.4214 (BRA), 09.4215 (THA), 09.4216 (EO) and
- 09.4410 (BRA), 09.4411 (THA), 09.4412 (EO), 09.4289 (ARG)

We have attached the presentation of the EU Commission for your information.

According to the German representative from the Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture (BMEL) on this Committee, it is expected that the EU Commission will announce further details and present a proposal to amend the regulation at the next meeting on 20 March 2024.

The EPEGA Board of Directors is expected to discuss this proposal next week. We would like all members who are affected by this regulation to send a brief written statement to the office so that we can incorporate this into a corresponding EPEGA position on these initial considerations to the EU Commission.

Committee for the Common Organisation of the Agricultural Markets (Annex)

(09/05) The most recent meeting of the joint management committee for animal products took place on Thursday, 22 February. The agenda includes inter alia the market situation in the egg and poultry sector. The next meeting of the Common Management Committee is expected to take place on 21 March 2024.

The presentation on the situation on the EU-poultry meat market was provided by the Commission and is attached and also available on the EPEGA homepage under the following link:

http://intranet.epega.org/meta_downloads/96790/EU_market_situation_Poultry-February_2024.pdf

Reduction of resistance due to reduced use of antibiotics

(09/08) The European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), together with the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) and the European Medicines Agency (EMA), has analysed the consumption of antimicrobials and the emergence of antimicrobial resistance (AMR) in bacteria from humans and food-producing animals (JIACRA IV) and published the results in the fourth joint report. According to the study, antibiotic resistance occurred less frequently in countries that had reduced the use of antibiotics in humans and animals.

The three agencies also assessed, for the first time, the evolution of antibiotic consumption and antibiotic resistance in *Escherichia coli* (*E. coli*) in humans and food-producing animals between 2014 and 2021. During this period, for example, the use of antibiotics in food-producing animals fell by 44%. The analysis carried out showed that *E. coli* bacteria are becoming less and less resistant to antibiotics in both animals and humans, as antibiotic use decreases overall. This shows that the worrying trends in antibiotic resistance can be reversed with the right measures and strategies. In addition, the report states that the use of important groups of antibiotics such as carbapenems, 3rd and 4th generation cephalosporins, and quinolones in humans is associated with resistance to these antibiotics in human *E. coli*. Similarly, the use of quinolones, polymyxins, aminopenicillins and tetracyclines in food-producing animals is associated with resistance to these antibiotics in *E. coli* bacteria in food-producing animals.

The One Health approach implemented through the collaboration of ECDC, EFSA and EMA and the findings presented in this report call for continued efforts to combat antimicrobial resistance at national, EU and global level across humans and food-producing animals, the agencies conclude.

More information is available at the following link:

<https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/topics/topic/antimicrobial-resistance>

Again no agreement on the European Supply Chain Directive

(09/09) The vote at ambassador level on the Corporate Sustainable Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD), which was scheduled for 28 February in the Committee of Permanent Representatives, was postponed again. The necessary qualified majority has not been achieved among EU Member States. In addition, the French government has come forward with another proposal at the last minute. According to this proposal, instead of the scope of companies with 500 or more employees, only companies with 5,000 or more employees would be directly affected. This will also have led to more questions instead of answers. The Belgian Presidency has expressed its views [on this](#).

Further consultations with the European Parliament (EP) mean that it goes back to the trilogue. There, the EP and the Council have until the week of 11-14 March 2024 to reach an agreement. This is because the Parliament must be able to vote in the final plenary week (22 to 25 April) in order to finalise the legislative proposal.

Following this decision, the German Association of Wholesale, Foreign Trade and Services (BGA), of which EPEGA is a member, published the following press statement:

"The Corporate Sustainable Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD) has once again failed to find a majority among EU member states today. The EU should no longer pursue the Directive in this form. Even without additional burdens from Brussels, German SMEs are drowning in reporting obligations and a flood of questionnaires. Competitiveness is not increased by extending a bad regulation to the whole of Europe. The CSDDD does not help human rights, harms small and medium-sized enterprises and makes it more difficult to diversify supply chains. The German Supply Chain Act must therefore also be urgently revised now," says Dr. Dirk Jandura, President of the Federal Association of Wholesale, Foreign Trade and Services (BGA).

"Europe is a great idea that works without ever new bans, rules and obligations to provide evidence. Instead, we need more freedom, more innovative strength and competitiveness. It was therefore right and proper that so many EU states have now refused to approve the directive in the Permanent Representatives Committee," the President of Foreign Trade continued.

"We are in the midst of a recession and a global race for market access, supply chains and raw materials. Companies are under enormous economic pressure. The National Supply Chain Due Diligence Act has only brought disadvantages to small and medium-sized enterprises. Bureaucracy and questionnaires do not help the worldwide observance of human rights," the BGA President concluded.

France: Vegetarian products must not be "steaks"

(09/11) In France, vegetarian products may no longer be marketed with names usually reserved for meat products. The government in Paris has published a list to this effect: Words such as steak, schnitzel, ham or fillet are thus reserved for purely animal products. The meat-processing industry had long insisted on such a regulation. Paris had already declared the use of terms "traditionally associated with meat and fish" to be no longer permitted for vegetarian products in 2020. However, before the ban came into force in October 2022, the Supreme Administrative Court suspended it following a complaint by a consumer organisation. The government has now published an amended regulation.

This means that a range of processed products with a small proportion of plant proteins can be marketed as meat products. These include various types of sausage or cordon bleu, for example. The meat industry had argued that products marketed as "vegetarian sausage" or "plant-based steak", for example, would confuse consumers. The organisation Protéines France, which brought the case before the Supreme Ad-

ministrative Court, argued that it was the marketing ban that was causing confusion. Producers from other EU countries are not affected by the new law and can continue to sell vegetarian food with meat names in France. According to EU legislation, the use of terms for products of animal origin is currently permitted, except for substitutes for dairy products.

Annexes:

- Presentation to the EU Commission – planned changes to Regulation 2020/760
- EU market situation poultry, February 2024

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