

## Amendment to the lists of third countries for imports of poultry commodities from Canada and the United States

(10/01) Annexes V and XIV to Implementing Regulation (EU) 2021/404 as regards the entries for Canada and the United States in the lists of third countries authorised for the entry into the Union of consignments of poultry, germinal products of poultry, and fresh meat and meat products from poultry and game birds has been amended again in relation to highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI). The corresponding Implementing Regulation (EU) 2024/834 has been published in the Official Journal L on 8 March 2024.

The **United States** have notified the Commission of five outbreaks of HPAI in poultry in the states of Missouri (4) and North Carolina (1), which were confirmed between 20 and 23 February 2024. With the implementing regulation that has now been published, the EU Commission has suspended the entry into the Union of consignments of poultry, germinal products of poultry, and fresh meat of poultry and game birds from those areas mentioned in the United States.

Moreover, **Canada** has submitted updated information on the epidemiological situation in relation to an outbreak of HPAI in a poultry establishment in the province of Quebec, which was confirmed on 4 December 2023.

Furthermore, the **United States** have submitted updated information on the epidemiological situation in relation to 23 outbreaks of HPAI in the states of Arkansas (1), California (2), Kansas (1), Maryland (1), Minnesota (12), Ohio (3) and Wisconsin (3), which were confirmed between 17 October and 27 December 2023.

The Commission has evaluated the information submitted by Canada and the United States. The Commission considers that Canada and the United States have provided appropriate guarantees that the animal health situation that gave rise to the suspensions, no longer represents a threat to animal or public health within the Union, and that, consequently, the entry into the Union of poultry commodities from the concerned zones of Canada and the United States from which entry into the Union had been suspended, should be reauthorised.

Annexes V and XIV to Implementing Regulation (EU) 2021/404 were amended accordingly to take account of the current epidemiological situation as regards HPAI in Canada and the United States. Implementing Regulation (EU) 2024/834 entered into force on 8 March 2024 and is available at the following link: [http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg\\_impl/2024/834/oj](http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg_impl/2024/834/oj)

## Current situation on African swine fever

(10/02) While African swine fever (ASF) is spreading in South-eastern Europe and was recently detected for the first time in **Albania**, in the east of the country, near the border with Kosovo, the epidemic situation in **Germany** has eased. In addition to four cases in Brandenburg, there were only positive tests in wild boars in Saxony this year. There were 39 ASF detections, which, however, remained limited to the district of Bautzen. There are currently no more restricted zones II in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, although ASF is still being detected in wild boar in neighbouring Poland just a few hundred metres from the state border.

According to data from the European Animal Disease Information System (ADIS), there have already been ASF cases in wild and domestic pigs in 22 European countries this year. The epidemic is currently active in the Balkan states in South-eastern Europe. With 21 cases, **Serbia** reported the most outbreaks in domestic pig herds in Europe. It was followed by **Romania** with 17 and **Bosnia and Herzegovina** with eleven. In addition, 29 ASF-infected wild boars have already been found in **North Macedonia**, some of

them not far from the border. In **Serbia and Greece**, too, several cases of the virus were detected in the wild boar population in 2024. According to ADIS, **Italy** leads the inglorious ASF ranking in wild boars in Europe with 295 cases, just ahead of **Poland** with 293 positive findings. In addition, there have already been 193 virus detections in Bulgaria, and a good 100 each in the Baltic countries of **Latvia** and **Lithuania**.

On 1 March, Implementing Regulation (EU) 2024/808 laying down specific control measures for African swine fever (ASF) and amending Annexes I and II to Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/594 was published in the Official Journal L. Previously, the disease situation in **Poland** had improved in certain zones listed in Annex I to Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/594 as restricted zones III in relation to kept pigs. In addition, the disease situation in **Croatia** has improved in the zone listed as infected zone in Annex II of Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/594 in relation to wild porcine animals.

Implementing Regulation (EU) 2024/808 is available at the following link:

[http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg\\_impl/2024/808/oj](http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg_impl/2024/808/oj)

### **EU agrees on a controversial packaging regulation**

(10/04) Negotiators from the European Parliament and the Member States found a provisional agreement on the EU Packaging Regulation on 4 March. According to the Belgian Presidency of the Council of the EU, packaging waste is to be reduced by a total of 15 percent from 2018 to 2040. The law considers the full life cycle of packaging and introduces mandatory quotas for reuse. The EU Parliament and the EU Council now have to formally approve the regulation in order for it to come into force.

The new rules aim to reduce unnecessary packaging by setting a maximum of 50 per cent of empty space in grouped, transport and e-commerce packaging, and by requiring manufacturers and importers to ensure that the weight and volume of packaging is minimised. The EU Parliament and Member States agreed on reuse targets for 2030 and indicative targets for 2040, which vary depending on the type of packaging. They apply to packaging for alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages – except for wine, milk and other perishable beverages, transport and sales packaging as well as grouped packaging. Cardboard packaging is generally exempt from the requirements. However, the regulation provides for general five-year exemptions from the recycling targets under certain conditions – for example, if an EU country exceeds the targets beforehand. Micro-enterprises are also exempt from the targets.

Under the new rules, the 27 EU Member States must ensure the separate collection of at least 90 percent of single-use plastic bottles and metal beverage packaging per year by 2029. To achieve this goal, they need to introduce deposit systems for these forms of packaging. However, the minimum requirements do not apply to systems that were already in place before the regulation enters into force, provided that they meet the 90% target by 2029. General restrictions will be introduced for certain types of packaging: single-use plastic packaging for fruit and vegetables, for food and beverages, spices and sauces, for small cosmetics and toiletries used in the accommodation sector and for very light plastic bags (e.g. those offered in bulk food markets).

To prevent adverse health effects, Parliament has enforced a ban on the use of so-called "perpetual chemicals" (per- and polyfluorinated alkyl substances or PFAS) in food contact packaging.

The packaging industry generates an annual turnover of 370 billion euros in the EU. However, despite increasing recycling rates, the amount of packaging waste is growing faster than the amount recycled. In recent years, the amount of packaging waste in the EU has increased by almost 25 percent. In 2021, each European generated an average of 190 kilograms of packaging waste. This amount is expected to increase by a further 19 percent by 2030 if no countermeasures are taken. Plastic waste is even expected to increase by 46 percent.

The press release of the EU Council is available at the following link:

<https://www.consilium.europa.eu/de/press/press-releases/2024/03/04/packaging-council-and-parliament-strike-a-deal-to-make-packaging-more-sustainable-and-reduce-packaging-waste-in-the-eu/>

### **Update on the planned ban on rodent control with anticoagulants**

(10/05) We reported on the topic of "Rodent control with anticoagulants" in EPEGA Circular No. 46 on 29 November and reported that the EU Commission currently has no ambitions to ban anticoagulants for rodent control. As reported, biocide legislation distinguishes between the authorisation of active substances and products. Active substances are authorised centrally at EU level, while products are authorised at national level. The process for the approval of active substances at EU level has been continued in the meantime. With the Implementing Decision (EU) 2024/734 published in the EU Official Journal L on 29 February 2024, the approval of seven anticoagulant active substances has now been extended until 31 December 2026 under the current approval conditions. The implementing decision enters into force on 20 March 2024 and is available at the following link: [http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec\\_impl/2024/734/oj](http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec_impl/2024/734/oj)

In this context, Implementing Decision (EU) 2024/816 answering the questions on the second comparative assessment of anticoagulant rodenticides was published in the EU Official Journal L on 20 March 2024. This implementing decision contains recommendations for the authorisation of biocidal products (grub baits) with anticoagulants as active substances and is aimed at the national authorities responsible for the authorisation of biocidal products (commercial preparations). It is available at the following link: [http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec\\_impl/2024/816/oj](http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec_impl/2024/816/oj)

### **EFSA publishes safety assessments on food enzymes**

(10/06) The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) has published the following opinions on the safety assessment of food enzymes:

#### **Safety evaluation of the food enzyme glutaminase from the non-genetically modified *Bacillus amylo-liquefaciens* strain AE-GT**

The food enzyme glutaminase (L-glutamine-amidohydrolase; EC 3.5.1.2) is produced with the non-genetically modified *Bacillus amyloliquefaciens* strain AE-GT. The food enzyme is intended for use in the following five food production processes: processing of dairy products for the production of flavouring extracts, processing of eggs and egg products, processing of meat and fish products for the production of protein hydrolysates, processing of plant and fungal products for the production of protein hydrolysates, and processing of yeast and yeast products.

On the basis of the data provided, the Panel concluded that this food enzyme does not raise safety concerns under the intended conditions of use.

#### **Safety evaluation of the food enzyme microbial collagenase from the genetically modified *Streptomyces violaceoruber* strain pCol**

The food enzyme microbial collagenase (EC 3.4.24.3) is produced with the genetically modified *Streptomyces violaceoruber* strain pCol. It is intended for two food production processes: the production of modified meat and fish products and the production of protein hydrolysates from meat and fish proteins.

Based on the data provided, the Panel concluded that this food enzyme does not raise safety concerns under the intended conditions of use.

### **EU Parliament approves new rules on Geographical Indications**

(10/07) Last week, the European Parliament gave the green light to new rules on Geographic Indications (GIs) for wine, spirits and agricultural products. According to rapporteur Paolo De Castro of the S&D, the

new rules will strengthen the protection of GIs, simplify their registration, and strengthen producer groups. In the future, ingredient information with GI products as ingredients will be newly regulated. These must be contained in a substantial quantity and be a characteristic component of the final product. Also, it must not contain unprotected products that are comparable to the GI product. In addition, the percentage of the GI ingredient must be indicated on the label and the producer group must be informed in advance. In the trilogue procedure, the European Parliament had urged special protection of GIs in online trading. Rules that allow domain names that illegally use Geographical Indications to be shut down or to disable the access to them via geo-blocking have now been enshrined. The European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO) will set up a domain name alert system for this purpose.

The new law aims to simplify the registration process of GIs and a fixed deadline of six months will be set for the scrutiny of new GIs. In addition, in the future, the manufacturer's name will be displayed on the label in the same field of vision as the Geographical Indication. The GIs include Protected Geographical Indications (PGI) and Protected Designations of Origin (PDO). They are based on the EU Regulation on the Protection of Geographical Indications and Designations of Origin for Agricultural Products and Foodstuffs, which came into force in 1992.

### **European Parliament votes in favour of agreement with Chile (Annex)**

(10/08) EU parliamentarians have voted in favour of a free trade agreement between the EU and Chile. The expanded agreement will largely reduce tariffs, facilitate trade in services and allow access to raw materials such as lithium, copper and hydrogen. Agricultural trade will also be partially liberalised. On the EU side, 66 % of the previous agricultural tariffs will be abolished. Agricultural products categorised as sensitive are exempt. These include meat, certain types of fruit and vegetables and olive oil. The quantities of the existing first come first serve quota are to be increased for the import of poultry meat at tariff rate 0. The new quotas for poultry meat can be found on page 7 of the attached document "Schedule for the elimination of customs duties".

In future, 216 protected geographical indications (GIs) from the EU will also be recognised in Chile. The EU Commission expects EU exports to the South American country to increase by a total of up to 4.5 billion euros. For the first time, a chapter on gender equality was included in the agreement, in which both partners commit to measures against discrimination. The EU and Chile also agreed on commitments regarding environmental and climate protection as well as social standards. These are based on the standards of the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. The "Advanced Framework Agreement" (AFA) replaces the Association Agreement between the EU and Chile, which was adopted in 2005. It consists of a political part and an economic part covering trade and investment. Following the parliamentary vote, the rules on trade liberalisation, which fall within the exclusive decision-making remit of the EU, are still awaiting final approval by the Council. The approval of the member states is not required for this.

### **China no longer imposes anti-dumping duties on Brazilian poultry meat**

(10/09) China has finally decided not to extend the recently discontinued anti-dumping duties on Brazilian poultry meat. This was announced by the Ministry of Economy in Brasília on 27 February with reference to the government in Beijing. No reasons were given for the withdrawal of the tariffs introduced in 2018. The Brazilian government hopes that the elimination of the tariffs, which had amounted to between 17.8% and 34.2%, will increase the competitiveness of domestic suppliers on the Chinese market. China has long been the main buyer of Brazilian poultry meat exports. Last year, according to figures from the Brazilian Ministry of Economy, the People's Republic purchased more than 679,000 tonnes of poultry meat worth around USD 1.9 billion (EUR 1.8 billion) from the South American country, which at

the same time sold a total of 5.1 million tonnes of poultry meat on the global market, making it the world's largest exporter. China introduced the anti-dumping duties in June 2018 because it considered the prices for Brazilian goods to be too low and categorised them as a threat to domestic producers.

### **Audit Report Hungary**

(10/10) This report describes the outcome of an audit carried out from 11 to 26 September 2023 by the Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety in order to assess the official controls related to slaughter hygiene and meat inspection requirements.

The audit found that the overall system in place could provide reassurances that the official controls over the production and placing on the market of red meat and poultry meat are delivered as intended. Nonetheless, those assurances are undermined, notably, by the lack of suitable guidance and lack of supervision of official staff working at slaughterhouses. In addition, other weaknesses identified include:

- The derogation of the performance of post-mortem inspection under the responsibility of the official veterinarian is not only applied in the smallest slaughterhouses, those complying with the definition of low-capacity slaughterhouse but also in others that exceed the legally established throughput threshold. The competent authority initiated actions to address this issue during the audit.
- The risk assessment undertaken by the central competent authority to decide the frequency of all official controls at slaughterhouses does not take into account the operator's past record as regards the outcome of official controls that have been performed on them and their identified level of compliance as required by legislation.
- There is no established system for the official veterinarians to record and evaluate the results of ante-mortem and post-mortem inspections and to communicate those results to the food business operator and to the holding of provenance if either inspection reveals the presence of any disease or condition that might affect human or animal health, or compromise animal welfare.

The official control system in place includes taking official samples for microbiological analyses in order to guarantee the safety of red meat and poultry meat.

The report contains recommendations to the central competent authority to address the shortcomings identified and to further enhance the control system. It is available at the following link:

<https://ec.europa.eu/food/audits-analysis/audit-report/details/4724>

### **Audit Report Argentina**

(10/11) The report describes the outcome of a remote audit of Argentina carried out by Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety from 5 to 21 June 2023. The objective of the audit was to evaluate whether the official controls related to public health aspects and certification system over the production of poultry meat and products therefrom and wild leporidae intended for export to the European Union (EU) provide adequate guarantees that the production of these commodities is in line with the requirements laid down in EU legislation and are able to support the public health attestations contained in the relevant export health certificates (i.e. Implementing Regulation (EU) 2020/2235).

The report concludes that there is an adequate official control system in place covering the production chain of poultry meat and products derived therefrom and wild leporidae intended for export to the EU. The official controls over the production of these commodities at EU slaughterhouses and wild game handling plants were, overall, in line with the requirements laid down in EU legislation.

Nevertheless, the guarantees provided for and attested to in some of the statements of the export health certificate for poultry meat are compromised by shortcomings such as the potential conflict of interest of private veterinarians that carry out official control tasks, the measures in place for identifying and handling the risk of Salmonella positive flocks and the absence of procedures for the segregation of products

destined to the EU. The audit also identified one longstanding shortcoming concerning the performance, by the official veterinarians or the official auxiliaries personally, of a daily post-mortem inspection of the viscera and body cavities of a representative sample of each flock slaughtered.

The certification system applied is designed to enable officials endorse the statements contained in the EU official certificate accompanying consignments destined for the EU.

The report contains recommendations to address the shortcomings identified. It is available at the following link: <https://ec.europa.eu/food/audits-analysis/audit-report/details/4718>

**Annex:**

- Expanded agreement Chile – Tariff elimination schedules

**Imprint**

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