EPGA news

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Agreement reached on trade support for Ukraine

(14/01) On Tuesday 9 April, the EU Parliament's Trade Committee gave the green light at the last minute for the extension of trade liberalisation with Ukraine until 2025. The Ukrainian trade minister explained that this was the key to maintaining the Ukrainian economy. With 26 votes in favour, eight against and no abstentions, the International Trade Committee (INTA) approved the provisional agreement reached on Monday in negotiations with the member states, which extends the trade benefits for Ukraine until June 2025. The so-called Autonomous Trade Measures (ATM), which were first introduced in 2022 after the Russian invasion and expire in June, are known to facilitate Ukrainian agricultural exports to the EU by eliminating all remaining tariffs and removing all trade barriers.

The compromise approved by the committee provides for increased safeguards against market distortions, including an emergency brake in the event that the import volumes of "sensitive" products - poultry, eggs, sugar, oats, maize, cereals and honey - exceed the average import volumes from the second half of 2021 and from 2022 and 2023. For the poultry meat sector, this is expected to mean that 137,013 tonnes (product weight) or 191,819 tonnes (carcass weight) per year will be imported duty-free into the EU according to this reference period.

Both the Parliament and the Council must now give their final green light to the provisional agreement. Parliament's plenary is expected to vote on the regulation at the last session of the current mandate from 22 to 25 April. The current trade measures expire on 5 June 2024 and the new rules should enter into force immediately after that date.

Current situation on the spread of highly pathogenic avian influenza

(14/02) In March, the total number of reports of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) in **Europe** fell sharply compared to the previous month. Most reports were of the H5N1 subtype. There were three reports of subtype H5 in wild birds and two in poultry. In addition, subtype H5N8 was reported once in wild birds. Overall, the number of outbreaks in domestic poultry fell significantly from 65 in February to six in March. No further HPAI outbreaks in domestic poultry were detected in **Germany** in March. Two outbreaks each were reported from **Bulgaria** and **Poland** and one each from **Sweden** and **Romania**, according to the Friedrich-Loeffler-Institut (FLI). According to the FLI, the spread of HPAI in the **(sub)Antarctic and Antarctic regions** is an unprecedented milestone in the development of HPAI. This is very worrying as experts fear that the negative impact of HPAI on Antarctic wildlife and biodiversity could be immense. The World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) will continue to monitor the situation closely.

Six months after the start of the vaccination campaign against highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI), the French Ministry of Agriculture has given a first positive assessment. According to the report, there were only 10 outbreaks of avian influenza in livestock farms in **France** between last autumn and the "symbolic half-term" of the campaign on 2 April, compared with 315 in the same period last year. According to the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), the current cases have also predominantly affected farms with unvaccinated herds. France aims to have a total of around 64 million ducks fully vaccinated by 30 September. Currently, according to official figures, more than 21 million ducks have been immunized by two vaccinations each; more than 26 million animals have received at least one dose. The vaccination campaign is mainly financed by the taxpayer. The state bears 85% of the costs, the rest is covered by the poultry industry. According to the ministry, a total of around 100 million euros is to be estimated. Preparations for the 2024/25 campaign are expected to begin shortly. At the same time, Paris wants to get the other member states and the EU Commission on board; a first exchange is planned for the end of April. According to the French Ministry of Agriculture, the vaccination campaign abroad is being followed with growing interest. The impact on exports is said to have been very limited.

On 10 April 2024, the European Commission published Implementing Decision (EU) 2024/963 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 outbreak in **Bulgaria** (in the Plovdiv region). The annex to the decision (EU) 2024/1066 contains the updated territorial outlines of the protection and surveillance zones as well as the provisional duration of the protective measures.
Implementing Decision (EU) 2024/1066, which has now been published, amends Implementing Decision (EU) 2023/2447 accordingly. Implementing Decision (EU) 2024/1066 is available at the following link: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec_impl/2024/1066/oj

Current situation on African swine fever

(14/04) In contrast to the situation with domestic pigs in Europe, the number of cases of African swine fever (ASF) in wild boar rose again significantly in March compared to the previous month in many of the affected countries. In Latvia in particular, but also in Lithuania, ASF cases in wild boar are once again on the rise throughout the country. As the Friedrich Loeffler Institute (FLI) currently reports, ten cases were reported in Germany in March. Of these, one case was reported from Brandenburg (SPN district) and the remaining nine cases from Saxony (Bautzen district). After the first ASF cases in Albania last month, no further cases were reported from the country in March. Poland (321) again reported a large number of cases and the number of cases in Latvia (221) almost doubled compared to the previous month. Italy (146) and Lithuania (129) also reported a relatively high number of cases during the reporting period. In Italy, most cases were again reported from the north. However, three cases also occurred in central Italy. Compared to the previous month, however, the number of reports in Italy remained the same.

Multi-country outbreak of Salmonella – EFSA publishes first update

(14/05) A cross-border outbreak of Salmonella Mbandaka ST413 has been ongoing in the European Union/European Economic Area (EU/EEA) and the United Kingdom (UK) for over two years since September 2021. By 30 November 2022, 196 cases had been recorded and published in a joint European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) and European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) Rapid Outbreak Assessment. By 15 March 2024, 300 cases (an increase of 104 cases) had been reported in Estonia (n = 3), Finland (n = 98), France (n = 16), Germany (n = 2), Ireland (n = 7), the Netherlands (n = 1), and the United Kingdom (n = 173). Twenty-three cases were hospitalised, six cases had septicaemia and one case died in the UK.

In November 2022, when the first assessment was published, ready-to-eat chicken products and/or fresh chicken meat were identified as probable vehicles of infection based on case interviews in Finland and the UK. Subsequent investigations by the food safety authorities in Estonia, Finland and the Netherlands and the sharing of genomic food information with EFSA in 2024 identified frozen steam-cooked chicken breast, produced in Ukraine, as the vehicle of infections. The contaminated batches had been imported by non-EU operators and distributed in the EU/EEA and UK markets.

The shelf lives of contaminated frozen chicken meat products expired in November and December 2023. The most recent cases were detected in Finland in October 2023 and in the UK in February 2024. Assuming that the identified contaminated batches are no longer on the market, and given the expiration dates and control measures implemented, the likelihood of new infections occurring with the outbreak strain from these batches is low. However, despite the implementation of control measures, cases continued to occur throughout 2023 in the EU/EEA and in early 2024 in the UK, suggesting undetected routes of exposure which require further investigation and pose a continued, albeit reduced, risk for new infections.

The publication is available on EFSA's website at the following link:
https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/supporting/pub/en-8749

Consumption of poultry meat in Germany increased significantly in 2023

(14/09) In Germany, gross domestic production of poultry meat amounted to 1.71 million tonnes last year, which was 3.9% more than in 2022. In 2023, German net production (total slaughters) increased at a slightly slower rate, by 1.4 % to 1.53 million tonnes. This was due to the fact that more animals ready for slaughter were exported in 2023, but fewer were imported. Poultry meat consumption has increased significantly. In 2023, 1.68 million tonnes of poultry meat were consumed in Germany, which was 7.8% more than in 2022. As a result of the increase in the population in Germany, per capita consumption increased by 7.6%, not quite as significantly as total consumption.

At this point, it should be pointed out that the basis for calculating the German supply balance has changed. The Federal Office for Agriculture and Food (BLE) has revised the coefficients for converting foreign trade from product weight to slaughter weight for live poultry and poultry meat. In addition, the usable offal of poultry meat is no longer recorded in the poultry meat supply balance. These items are now included in the offal section of the meat supply balance as a whole. The recalculation resulted in lower values for gross indigenous production and consumption compared to previous publications. In the meantime, the BLE has published the still provisional data for 2023.

Germany's imports of poultry meat also rose sharply in 2023. The supply balance shows an increase of 14.1% to 1.14 million tonnes. The background to this is likely to be the renewed increase in demand for out-of-home consumption after the Corona years. While the local food retail trade focuses on goods that have been produced according to the standards of the Animal Welfare Initiative, this plays a subordinate role in out-of-home consumption. On the other hand, more poultry meat was exported in 2023 with 0.98 million tonnes (up by 4.2%). Nevertheless, an import surplus of 135,000 tonnes is calculated. In 2022, it was only 53,000 tons.

Chicken meat was once again the most popular poultry meat in Germany in 2023, with a share of 70%. In 2016, it was only 62%. Per capita consumption was able to recover in 2023 after falling in 2022. The experts at the agricultural journal “Marktinfo Eier & Geflügel (MEG)” assume a consumption of 13.9 kg of chicken meat per inhabitant, which was 0.8 kg more than in 2022. This figure is derived from the supply of chicken meat as a whole. It is not possible to distinguish between broilers and soup hens in the official statistics, since the foreign trade of chickens does not distinguish between these headings. The turkey market has not been able to benefit from the poultry meat boom in recent years. For 2023, a consumption of 4.6 kg was calculated, which is 400 g more than in 2022. Gross domestic production of turkeys recovered in 2023 (plus 6.2%). In 2022, there had been a decrease of 6.8%, mainly as a result of avian influenza. Extensive culls and bans on reintroduction led to a decline in production. Gross domestic production of ducks in Germany fell by 4.5% to 23,100 tonnes in 2023. In previous years, production fell more sharply in some cases. Production in 2018 was 39,200 tonnes. Goose meat production amounted to 3,600 tonnes in 2023, a decrease of 2.7%. The per capita consumption of duck and goose meat stagnated in 2023 at 0.5 and 0.2 kg respectively.

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