

EU Parliament approves caps on duty-free agricultural imports from Ukraine

(16/01) The European Parliament has approved the planned restrictions on duty-free imports of certain Ukrainian agricultural imports. MEPs voted in Strasbourg on 23rd April to introduce caps on duty-free imports of poultry, eggs, sugar, maize, honey and oats. This compromise was agreed by the representatives of the Parliament and the 27 Member States at the beginning of April. In principle, the agreement also provides for an extension of the duty-free regime for Ukraine, which has been in force since 2022. However, the duty-free quantity for the agricultural products concerned is to be limited to the average import volumes between mid-2021 and the end of 2023. Custom duties are to be levied again on imports that exceed this. By considering the second half of 2021 for the calculation period, the permitted quantity for duty-free imports decreases significantly compared to previous plans.

In the European Parliament, 428 MEPs voted in favour of the new customs rules, with 131 votes against and 44 abstentions. They are due to come into force at the beginning of June, when the current regulation expires. The Council must now give its approval, which is considered a formality.

At the most recent meeting of the Horizontal Trade Mechanisms Committee, which took place on 24 April in Brussels, the amendment to Delegated Regulation (EU) 2020/760 that was outlined during the February meeting was not on the agenda, according to the Federal Ministry of Agriculture. As reported on 29 February in EPEGA Circular No. 9, the EU Commission had outlined the possibility of deleting the provisions in Article 9 (6) and (7) of Delegated Regulation (EU) 2020/760 in February. As a result, imports of Ukrainian goods could no longer be used to build up reference quantities for other import quotas where cumulation is possible.

The next meeting of the Horizontal Trade Mechanisms Committee is expected to take place on 22 May 2024.

Current situation on the spread of highly pathogenic avian influenza

(16/02) The following overview from the EU Commission provides an overview of HPAI events in the European Union in the period from 1 October 2023 to 10 April 2024.

HPAI outbreaks in the European Union (01/10/2023 – 10/04/2024)

Production type	No of outbreaks	No of animals	% of outbreaks	% of animals
Laying hen	25	1.201.026	12	19
Broiler	13	668.299	6	10
Turkey	68	1.573.712	32	25
Duck	43	1.045.511	20	16
Goose	22	124.447	10	2
Guinea fowl + Pheasant	3	27.041	1	0
Mixed	9	35.115	4	1
No information	29	1.721.508	14	27
Grand Total	212	6.396.659	100	100

According to the Animal Disease Information System (ADIS) of the EU Commission, the following member states were most affected by the current outbreak of bird flu:

Hungary with 76 outbreaks and 1,603,222 affected animals

Bulgaria with 16 outbreaks and 1,527,951 affected animals

Poland with 34 outbreaks and 868,764 affected animals

Germany with 29 outbreaks and 561,365 affected animals

France with 9 outbreaks and 402,162 affected animals

In the **United States**, bovine animals in 32 dairy cow herds in nine states have now been infected with the highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) virus type H5N1. According to the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), it is still believed that wild migratory birds were the original source of the infection. However, according to previous research, there are some cases in which virus transmission also occurred through livestock transport. In addition, the virus also found its way from infected dairy herds to nearby poultry flocks and vice versa. APHIS highlighted that genomic sequencing of viruses isolated from cattle does not indicate that there is a change leading to higher transmissibility to or between humans. However, there is a higher risk of infection in people who have frequent contact with infected animals.

The World Health Organization (WHO) had recently warned against consuming such products due to the detection of avian influenza viruses in raw milk. However, there are no concerns about pasteurized dairy products. U.S. health officials also point out that there is no danger to consumers in the commercial dairy cycle, as the virus is killed in heated milk.

Since the H5N1 virus has also been shown to spread within and between herds, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) advises keeping dairy shipments to a minimum. The route of transmission from cow to cow is still unclear. Anything that comes into contact with infected, unpasteurized milk – whether human, animal or machine – can spread the virus. So far, no significant virus concentration has been detected in respiratory samples, according to APHIS, suggesting that the respiratory tract is not the primary route of transmission.

Unlike in poultry flocks, the affected dairy cows with symptoms on the farms recovered within seven to ten days. Affected cows are isolated from other animals on the farms. The USDA does not anticipate that culling of animals will be necessary.

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

(16/03) 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) 2024/1219 has been published in the Official Journal L on 25 April 2024.

The **United States** have notified the Commission of nine outbreaks of HPAI in poultry in the states of Florida (1), Kansas (1), Michigan (3), Minnesota (1) and New Mexico (3), which were confirmed between 9 April and 17 April 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 that area 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 Ontario, which was confirmed on 30 January 2024.

The Commission has evaluated the information submitted by Canada. The Commission considers that Canada has provided appropriate guarantees that the animal health situation that gave rise to the suspension, 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 zone of Canada 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) 2024/1219 entered into force on 26 April 2024 and is available at the following link: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg_impl/2024/1219/oj

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

(16/05) The most recent meeting of the joint management committee for animal products took place on Thursday, 18 April. 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 16 May 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/96826/EU_market_situation_poultry-April_2024.pdf

Audit report Italy

(16/07) This report describes the outcome of an audit of Italy, carried out from 15 to 27 June 2023, as part of the Directorate-General (DG) for Health and Food Safety work programme. The objectives of the audit were a) to evaluate the suitability of planned arrangements in achieving the objective of eradicating African swine fever (ASF) and b) to verify the extent to which the veterinary authorities have fulfilled the guarantees and corrective actions submitted to the Commission services in response to the recommendations of previous Commission audit reports.

The report concludes that, following the detection of first ASF cases in wild porcine animals in continental Italy in January 2022, veterinary authorities took comprehensive action to control ASF in wild porcine animals and prevent the spread of the disease into the domestic pig population.

The authorities succeeded to a great extent to keep the disease out of pig keeping establishments thanks to an updated and accurate system of registration of pig establishments (database), overall effective measures to strengthen biosecurity, both in pig establishments and during hunting, and a strategy policy to depopulate the infected zone without repopulation being allowed yet. In addition, they benefited from surveillance activities being implemented largely as planned in the Regions visited during the audit, supported by an overall effective laboratory network which also provided epidemiological advice.

However, the planned reduction of the wild porcine animal population and the actions taken to limit the spread within it were insufficiently effective, due to delays and difficulties encountered in implementing measures of the regional eradication programmes. This led to a gradual extension of the infected area since the start of the epidemic.

The authorities granted a limited number of derogations for movements, and only for movements within restricted zones II, under certain conditions. However, those could not fully ensure that pig meat/pig products would not circulate outside those restricted zones.

The creation of the role of an “Extraordinary Commissioner” at national level for coordinating and monitoring activities represents a measure which should improve the effectiveness of the measures taken by the Regions, in particular as regards coordination of measures between different Regions and accelerating measures required which were delayed for several reasons.

The report contains recommendations for the veterinary authorities, which address the shortcomings identified. It is available at the following link:

<https://ec.europa.eu/food/audits-analysis/audit-report/details/4743>

Amending Lists of Establishments

(16/08) The European Commission has changed the lists of establishments approved for delivery to the EU for the game and poultry sector for the following third countries:

Meat from poultry and lagomorphs: Ukraine, United Kingdom

Meat products: Switzerland, Turkey, USA, United Kingdom

Mincd meat, meat preparations, MSM: Bosnia-Herzegovina, Switzerland, USA, United Kingdom

Meat from farmed game: New Zealand

Wild game meat: New Zealand, USA

The current lists of establishments can be found on the website of the EU Commission under the following link:

<https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/tracesnt/directory/listing/establishment/publication/index#!/search>

Annex:

- EU market situation poultry, April 2024

Imprint

Editor: European Poultry, Egg and Game Association (EPEGA),

Am Weidendamm 1A, DE 10117 Berlin

Manager: Christine Amling/Sebastian Werren

Tel.: +49 30 590099-562, E-Mail: info@epega.org, Internet: <http://www.epega.org>

The information letter is prepared with the utmost care, but we exclude liability. Reports are confidential and for personal use only.