

Current situation on the spread of highly pathogenic avian influenza

(30/01) According to the latest figures from the US government, bird flu of the subtype H5N1 has broken out in the United States in 169 cow herds in 13 states so far. Four people have been infected with the virus from cows. The course of the disease was mild in all cases. Now bird flu in the United States has spread from infected cows to cats and raccoons. This is confirmed by the results of a recent study by Cornell University in the United States, among others, which was published on 25 July in the journal "Nature". According to the study, the examination of the viral genetic information found in sick cows, cats and raccoons showed that the virus was transmitted between animal species.

According to the researchers, the cats and raccoons are likely to have been infected by drinking raw milk. The researchers did not find mutations in the virus that would lead to improved transmissibility to humans. Nevertheless, the result of the study is "worrying" because the spread in mammals could promote adaptation of the virus to mammals and thus also to humans.

Cats contracting the H5N1 virus is nothing new. In recent months, cases of sick cats have become known in several countries, including Poland. The sources of infection could not be fully clarified. However, researchers assume that the infection occurred by eating infected birds. Transmission from mammal to mammal is not assumed in these cases.

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

(30/02) Annexes V and XIV to Implementing Regulation (EU) 2021/404 as regards the entries for 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) 2024/2111 has been published in the Official Journal L on 29 July 2024.

The **United States** have notified the Commission of four outbreaks of HPAI in poultry in the state of Colorado (2) and Florida (3), which were confirmed between 16 and 19 July 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.

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) 2024/2111 entered into force on 30 July 2024 and is available at the following link: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg_impl/2024/2111/oj

Current situation on the New Castle Disease in Brazil

(30/03) Following the outbreak of New Castle Disease in the Rio Grande do Sul region of Brazil, there is no new information regarding regionalisation by the EU Commission, as the German Federal Ministry of Agriculture (BMEL) has just announced in response to an enquiry. The current situation is as follows:

As is known, Brazil is authorised to import all poultry products into the Union that fall within the scope of Annexes V, XIV and XV of Implementing Regulation (EU) 2021/404. As regards the special condi-

tions for entry into the Union of consignments of fresh meat of poultry and wild birds, Brazil is listed in column 4 of the table in Section B of Annex XIV with the code 'N'. According to this code, in the event of an outbreak of infection with Newcastle disease virus, the introduction into the Union from the third country, territory or zone thereof may continue to be authorised without changing the code of the third country, territory or zone. However, the introduction into the Union from territories subject to official restrictions imposed by the competent authority of the third country or territory concerned due to an outbreak of that disease shall be prohibited.

The Brazilian competent authority must ensure that the EU animal health requirements laid down in EU legislation (e.g. Delegated Regulation (EU) 2020/6923 and Implementing Regulation (EU) 2021/404) are met for the import of relevant consignments into the Union and that these consignments are duly certified.

According to the BMEL, Brazil has announced that the scope of the animal health emergency area established on 18 July 2024 was reduced from the entire territory of the state of Rio Grande do Sul to the territory of five of its municipalities (Anta Gorda, Doutor-Ricardo, Putinga, Ilopolis and Relvado) on 24 July. In addition, the export restrictions imposed by Brazil generally apply to fresh and processed poultry meat, eggs and, for example, preparations made from blood. However, heat-treated products continue to be exported to the EU.

Current situation on African swine fever

(30/04) In **Germany**, African swine fever (ASF) continues to spread among domestic pigs in the Hessian district of Groß-Gerau. By 31 July, ASF had broken out on the eighth farm with around 1,800 pigs. Hesse is converting the previous restriction zone in the ASF outbreak area into a so-called exclusion zone II and supplementing it with a 10-kilometre-wide, new exclusion zone I. This covers almost 150,000 hectares and is intended to act as a buffer zone. In this buffer zone, hunting is to be intensified. Meanwhile, a mobile electric fence is being erected in Rhineland-Palatinate to demarcate the ASF core zone. For the first time, parts of Baden-Württemberg are also in the exclusion zones.

No new cases of epizootic hemorrhagic disease in France

(30/05) In France, the spread of epizootic haemorrhagic disease (EHD) has come to a standstill. This is according to the latest report by the Epidemiological Surveillance Platform for Animal Health (ESA), which was published on 23 July. According to the report, the exclusion zones imposed after the outbreaks have not shifted since 7 December 2023, and thus have not moved north beyond Brittany. Last week, according to ESA, only one new detection on French soil was announced. The first case occurred in September last year, and since then a total of 4,330 outbreaks have been registered throughout France.

On the Iberian Peninsula, however, the EHD seems to continue its spread. According to ESA, there was a new outbreak in the Spanish autonomous community of Castile-La Mancha at the end of June. Eight new detections were also reported from the north of Portugal; since the beginning of the year, a total of 33 outbreaks have been reported in Portugal.

Corrigendum to the model certificate for fresh meat from New Zealand

(30/06) Chapter 12 (model 'NZ-TRANSIT-SG') of Annex III to Implementing Regulation (EU) 2020/2235 sets out the model certificate for the entry into the Union of fresh meat intended for human consumption originating from New Zealand transiting through Singapore with unloading, possible storage and reloading before entry into the Union. Implementing Regulation (EU) 2024/399 erroneously added an attestation as regards Delegated Regulation (EU) 2023/905 to that model certificate. This model

certificate should be limited to the certificate of compliance with transit requirements and has therefore been corrected accordingly. As a result of this correction, the autonomous provision on a transitional period in Article 3(1) of Implementing Regulation (EU) 2024/399 has also been corrected .

The corresponding Implementing Regulation (EU) 2024/2020 was published in Official Journal L on 29 July and is available at the following link: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg_impl/2024/2020/oj

Questions and Answers on the Cooperate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (Annex)

(30/07) On 25 July 2024, the Cooperate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD) officially entered into force. As reported, the CSDDD obliges large European and foreign companies throughout the EU to work to ensure compliance with certain environmental and human rights standards in their supply and value chains. The EU Commission has now published a comprehensive document with questions and answers (FAQ) on the CSDDD, which we have attached to this newsletter for your information.

"Dithmarscher Gans" registered as a protected geographical indication

(30/08) The name 'Dithmarscher Gans' from Schleswig-Holstein is entered in the register of protected designations of (PDO) and protected geographical indications (PGI) after the EU Commission received no objection to Germany's application. The corresponding Implementing Regulation (EU) 2024/2112 was published in the Official Journal L on 31 July and is available at the following link: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg_impl/2024/2112/oj

As can be seen from the application documents, the "Dithmarscher Gans" is an old, relatively robust and heavy land goose breed. It was bred around 150 years ago on a stretch of land between the Elbe and Eider rivers in the Dithmarschen region. In order to be allowed to sell a goose as a "Dithmarschen goose", it is required by the commission that the parent animals are kept in free range within the region. This often takes place on extensive wet meadows and marshes. In addition, the geese must be hatched and reared in Dithmarschen or another northern German region until they are 21 days old. Transport to slaughter is also regulated and must take place in the late evening or at night. For the next stage of production, plucking must be carried out without water. This is to prevent the flavouring substances under the skin from being washed out. The "Dithmarscher Gans" joins a list of 3,622 already protected products from all over Europe.

Food Additives: Guidance document describing the food categories

(30/09) The descriptors describing the food categories in Annex II Part E of Regulation (EC) No 1333/2008 on food additives were updated in July 2024 and have now been published in the 7th version on the homepage of the EU Commission (https://food.ec.europa.eu/safety/food-improvement-agents/additives/eu-rules_en).

Annex II Part E of Regulation (EC) No 1333/2008 lists 18 food categories for which certain additives are authorised - either as group or individual authorisations. As the respective categorisation of highly processed products can sometimes cause difficulties in practice, the EU Commission regularly publishes the descriptors discussed here. The descriptors of the categories can be useful for the control authorities of the Member States and the food industry to ensure the correct implementation of food additive legislation. The descriptors are a valuable aid in categorising individual foods into the food categories listed in Annex II of Regulation (EC) No 1333/2008. We would like to point out that all guidelines are not legally binding.

The revised 7th version of the descriptors *Guidance document describing the food categories in Part E of Annex II to Regulation (EC) No 1333/2008 on Food Additives* is available at the following link:
: https://food.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2022-12/fs_food-improvement-agents_guidance_1333-2008_annex-2.pdf

Audit report Estonia

(30/10) This report describes the outcome of an audit in Estonia, carried out from 20 to 23 February 2024 as part of the Directorate-General (DG) for Health and Food Safety work programme.

The objectives of the audit were to assess:

- the early detection of African swine fever by surveillance;
- the effectiveness of measures and actions taken to prevent the disease from spreading into domestic pig population in the infected area;
- the effectiveness of measures to control the disease in wild porcine animals;
- the effectiveness of measures and actions taken to prevent the disease from spreading outside the infected area via live pig movements, fresh meat, meat preparations or meat products from domestic or feral pigs and animal by-products;
- the effectiveness of measures and actions taken to prevent the spread of infection in case of outbreaks in domestic pigs;
- the supervision and verification of the effectiveness of the measures and actions taken.

The audit also followed-up the implementation of the proposed actions in response to recommendations from previous audits, namely DG(SANTE)/2018-6421.

The report concludes that the veterinary authority has established a robust framework for African swine fever control, supported by appropriate legislation, control plans and staff instructions. The effective registration system for pig establishments, and updated pig movements, should facilitate disease management when necessary. Clear biosecurity rules, implemented both in pig establishments and hunting grounds, have contributed to the control of the disease. The competent authority has implemented effective surveillance for the non-commercial sector and for wild boar. For domestic pigs, although the planned surveillance is adequate, its implementation is inconsistent at farm level, which may have a negative impact in the early detection of the virus.

In the last year, there have only been two outbreaks of African swine fever, which were adequately managed according to the existing contingency plans and effectively contained. The wild boar population has been slowly growing in the last years despite the national plan to reduce it. The competent authority has recently amended the surveillance in wild boars to make it more targeted and it has in place a system for the adequate control of wild boar products.

The report contains a recommendation for the veterinary authority aimed at addressing areas in which further improvements are required. It is available at the following link:

<https://ec.europa.eu/food/audits-analysis/audit-report/details/4789>

Annex:

- FAQ on the CSDDD

Imprint

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