

Current information on highly pathogenic avian influenza

(44/01) In **Germany**, highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) was officially detected in two small poultry farms in Bavaria at the end of October. A farm with around 400 animals, including ducks, geese, turkeys and laying hens in a district of Abenberg, as well as a small farm in Altötting with around 90 animals, are affected. In addition to the animal health measures on the affected farms, protection and observation zones have been set up in which special requirements apply, in particular an obligation to keep poultry indoors in both restriction zones.

In **Austria**, an outbreak of bird flu was confirmed at the end of October in a large laying hen farm in the Lower Austrian district of Amstetten. To protect against further transmission, the stock was culled. The Austrian poultry industry pointed out that the infection pressure from bird flu is increasing particularly early this year and more strongly than in recent years. This trend was also confirmed by increased bird flu outbreaks in neighbouring countries.

In **South Korea**, the first outbreak of HPAI of the season was confirmed on 31 October 2024, according to the South Korean Ministry of Agriculture, after the virus serotype H5N1 was detected. A small farm about 180 kilometres east of Seoul with about 780 chickens and ducks is affected. To contain the spread, the authorities ordered a nationwide 24-hour stop to all poultry transports in order to carry out extensive disinfection measures. Since the beginning of October, several wild birds in South Korea have already tested positive for H5N1, indicating increased virus circulation.

Japan is also affected by HPAI outbreaks again. After a break of more than four months, another outbreak was reported in mid-October in a poultry farm with 19,900 broiler chickens. The authorities reported further outbreaks in poultry farms, this time in laying hens. The Japanese veterinary authority informed the World Organization for Animal Health (WOAH) about the cases and confirmed the H5N1 serotype. At the end of September, a wild bird in Japan had already tested positive for the virus, after which the authorities ordered stricter biosecurity measures.

In addition, **Taiwan**, **Bhutan** and the **Philippines** also recorded new HPAI outbreaks in Asia. Taiwan has had five confirmed cases since August, while Bhutan reported an outbreak near the Indian border after five years. The Philippines reports nine active outbreaks in the Central Luzon region.

On 5 November 2024, the European Commission published Implementing Decision (EU) 2024/2833 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** (Plovdiv region), **Czechia** (Jihomoravský region), **France** (Finistère and Morbihan departments), **Croatia** (Brodsko-Posavska county) **Italy** (Emilia-Romagna and Lombardy regions), **Hungary** (Bács-Kiskun, Békés, Fejér, Hajdú-Bihar and Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok counties), **Poland** (Wielkopolskie voivodeship) and **Slovakia** (Nitriansky region). The annex to the decision (EU) 2024/2833 contains the updated territorial outlines of the protection and surveillance zones as well as the provisional duration of the protective measures.

Implementing Decision (EU) 2024/2833, which has now been published, amends Implementing Decision (EU) 2023/2447 accordingly. Implementing Decision (EU) 2024/2833 is available at the following link: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec_impl/2024/2833/oj

EU report: Performance of official controls in the Member States in 2022

(44/03) The EU Commission recently published its annual report on the performance of official controls in EU countries for the year 2022. The report covers the areas of food and feed safety, animal and plant health, animal welfare, pesticides, organic farming and quality schemes. The Commission report on the

overall performance of official controls in the Member States (2022) to ensure the application of food and feed law and the rules on animal health, animal welfare, plant health and plant protection products is available at the following link:

<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52024DC0388>

This report is supplemented by a Commission working document describing the approach and sources. This 'Report from the Commission On the overall operation of official controls carried out in Member States (2022) to ensure the application of food and feed law, rules on animal health and welfare, plant health and plant protection products' is available at the following link:

<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52024SC0208>

The summary of the report shows that it presents the overall result of the official controls carried out in 2022 by the EU countries and the Commission's control activities. In 2022, there were 16.4 million companies that were eligible for official controls. The national authorities carried out around 5 million controls on these companies. These controls identified 1.2 million infringements, which led to the imposition of just over 475,000 administrative sanctions and 12,000 criminal penalties. The Commission reviews the implementation of official controls by EU countries and the associated enforcement measures.

The Commission's inspections show that, overall, national authorities have systems in place to check and ensure that companies are implementing EU requirements and to take action in the event of non-compliance. However, in certain EU countries, the Commission found shortcomings in the official control systems and identified potential for improvement. In such cases, the Commission makes recommendations to the national authorities. The Commission systematically follows up its recommendations and uses other enforcement instruments where appropriate. It also supports EU countries by providing technical assistance and training as part of the Better Training for Safer Food initiative and through technical meetings of expert networks.

Since 2020, national authorities have been communicating the results of their controls in a standardised electronic format. However, not all EU countries were able to transmit all data in the required format.

Scientist proposes expansion of the German livestock strategy

(44/04) The President of the Thünen Institute, Prof. Folkhard Isermeyer, proposes an extended national livestock strategy. In a paper, the scientist predicts that the demand for a reduction in animal husbandry will increasingly become the focus of climate policy. Proof of this is the fact that the food industry worldwide is working intensively on plant-based substitutes for animal foods and is aligning its advertising campaigns accordingly. It is therefore foreseeable that the consumption of animal-based foods will fall slowly but steadily and that the competitiveness of animal husbandry will be increasingly burdened by climate policy measures.

For Isermeyer, it follows that a livestock strategy does not have to solve the animal welfare issue alone, as has been done with the proposals of the Borchert Commission. Instead, it is a matter of expanding the bundle of goals: "Fewer animals, in the right locations, with significantly more animal welfare, easy to plan for farmers, and also a significant reduction in the consumption of animal products," says the Thünen President, describing the challenge for a comprehensive national livestock strategy.

For the animal welfare component, there is no need to reinvent the wheel. The work of the Borchert Commission could be seamlessly linked here, according to Isermeyer, who was significantly involved in the Borchert concept. So far, however, there is no plan for the component "fewer animals, site-appropriate". The Thünen President proposes to set up a commission analogous to the "Competence Network for Livestock Husbandry", which will address the topic of "future land use" with a clear, tightly defined mandate.

In his paper on the annual conference of the umbrella organisation of scientific societies for agricultural, forestry, nutrition, veterinary and environmental research (DAF), Isermeyer regrets that politicians have

not been able to agree in the current legislative period to consistently implement the Borchert concept: "Apparently, the goal of bringing the entire livestock sector up to a high level of animal welfare has not met with sufficient approval in the political sphere, let alone enthusiasm." The problems for animal welfare and agriculture thus remained largely unsolved.

Audit report Netherlands

(44/06) The audit of the Netherlands took place from 30 May to 10 June 2024 and was undertaken as part of the Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety's audit programme. The overall objective of the audit was to confirm the appropriateness of the competent authorities' controls required by Article 123 of Regulation (EU) 2019/6 of the European Parliament and of the Council. The audit focused solely on controls on certain provisions concerning antimicrobial veterinary medicinal products.

Overall, the report concludes that appropriate controls are in place to verify compliance and enforce the vast majority of the requirements of Regulation (EU) 2019/6 that are aimed at tackling antimicrobial resistance via a more prudent use of antimicrobials. Such controls were already in place prior to the applicability of this Regulation, which also explains the high level of prudent use of antimicrobials in the country. However, the competent authorities allow veterinarians to use old antimicrobials outside the terms of their marketing authorisations.

Aside from the afore-mentioned deviation from the terms of marketing authorisations, the comprehensive measures put in place in the Netherlands, as described in this report and also in the report of the 2016 fact-finding mission on the prudent use of antimicrobials, could serve as an example of good practice to other Member States.

The report contains a recommendation to the competent authorities aimed at rectifying the shortcomings identified and at enhancing the implementation of control measures. It is available at the following link: <https://ec.europa.eu/food/audits-analysis/audit-report/details/4807>

Hansen becomes new EU Commissioner for Agriculture

(44/07) In Brussels, the first four candidates for the new team of EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen have survived their hearings before the European Parliament. In the first round on Monday, the designated Trade Commissioner Maroš Šefčovič, the designated Commissioner for Culture Glenn Michelletti from Malta, the designated Commissioner for Agriculture Christophe Hansen from Luxembourg and the Greek Apostolos Tzitzikostas, who is to take over the transport portfolio, were questioned in the first round. All four received the green light from the deputies.

If no candidate fails at the hearing, MEPs want to officially elect the new Commission on 27 November. A simple majority in the plenary vote is sufficient for this. Von der Leyen's Commission could then probably start its work on 1 December. The Christian Democrat politician herself had already been re-elected by the EU Parliament in July.

Amending Lists of Establishments

(44/08) 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, USA, United Kingdom

Meat products: Argentina, Brazil, Serbia, United Kingdom, United Kingdom (Northern Ireland)

Minced meat, meat preparations, MSM: USA, United Kingdom, United Kingdom (Northern Ireland)

Meat from farmed game: New Zealand, United Kingdom, United Kingdom (Northern Ireland)

Wild game meat: New Zealand, United Kingdom

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>

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