

Current information on highly pathogenic avian influenza

(46/01) In **Germany**, there is currently a suspected outbreak of highly pathogenic avian influenza in a turkey flock of 16,000 animals in Kleve (North Rhine-Westphalia). The laboratory results from the Friedrich Loeffler Institute are still pending and the animals have been culled as a precautionary measure. In order to prevent further spread of the avian influenza virus, the district administrator has issued a general decree establishing a 10-kilometre exclusion zone around the farm. The area thus extends across the Rhine and into the Netherlands.

In the **Dutch** town of Putten (province of Gelderland), bird flu was officially detected on an organic laying hen farm on 17 November. To prevent the spread of the virus, the approximately 23,000 chickens are being culled by the Dutch Food and Goods Authority (NVWA). The last HPAI outbreak in the Netherlands was reported in December 2023.

In October, the total number of outbreaks of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) in Europe rose sharply, according to a recent report by the Friedrich Loeffler Institute (FLI). A total of 223 HPAI cases were reported in October, significantly more than in the previous month. The situation has worsened again, especially for commercial poultry. While only seven poultry farms or hobby farms were affected in September, there were 93 outbreaks in October. In Eastern Europe, **Hungary** accounted for 57 outbreaks. There, the HPAI appears in the provinces that were already severely affected last year (Bács-Kiskun, Békés, Fejér and Hajdú-Bihar). These regions are characterised by a very high density of poultry (duck fattening and foie gras production). Individual cases have been reported from countries such as **Poland**, **Romania** and **Slovakia**. In Central Europe, **Italy** reported 10 outbreaks, mainly in the regions of Emilia-Romagna, Lombardy and Veneto. In **France**, four farms tested positive, including two vaccinated duck fattening farms. **Germany** and **Austria** each reported two outbreaks at the end of the month. In Bavaria, a goose fattening farm with 80 animals was affected and a poultry farm with 400 animals. In Austria, a large laying hen farm in the district of Amstetten was affected. On 7 October, an HPAI H5N1 outbreak was detected in a hobby poultry farm in Upper Austria.

According to FLI, the increase in the autumn months corresponds to the seasonality of HPAI. The autumn migration of birds is expected to be very dynamic. These migrations from the breeding grounds to the wintering areas traditionally begin at the end of August, and the movements intensify until mid-November. In the summer months, it was mainly seagull birds on the coast that were affected, but from September 2024 onwards, more cases were reported again in waterfowl (ducks, geese and swans). This change of species can also explain the shift of events inland.

In the **USA**, the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) has now announced that it will intensify testing and monitoring following the occurrence of H5N1 viruses in several hundred dairy herds. Together with its Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), the Department is planning to implement a multi-stage strategy for taking milk samples in order to better assess where this virus is still present. The aim is also to obtain more information on the effect of biosecurity and containment measures and to minimise the risk to farm workers who may come into contact with H5N1-infected animals, the USDA explained. A regulation issued in May 2024 had already led to the containment of the spread of H5N1. According to the ministry, the number of states affected by outbreaks has fallen from 14 to the current two.

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

(46/02) Annexes V and XIV to Implementing Regulation (EU) 2021/404 as regards the entries for Canada, the United Kingdom 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) 2024/2922 has been published in the Official Journal L on 21 November 2024.

The **Canada** has notified the Commission of six outbreaks of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) in poultry in the provinces of British Columbia (5) and Saskatchewan (1), which were confirmed between 21 October 2024 and 31 October 2024.

The **United Kingdom** has notified the Commission of an outbreak of HPAI in poultry in the county of Cornwall, England, which was confirmed on 17 November 2024.

The **United States** have notified the Commission of five outbreaks of HPAI subtype H5N1 in poultry in the states of California (3), Montana (1) and Utah (1), which were confirmed on 12 November 2024. In addition, the United States has submitted updated information on the epidemiological situation in relation to two outbreaks of HPAI in poultry in the state of Florida, which were confirmed on 18 September 2024 and 7 October 2024. The Commission has evaluated the information submitted by the United States, and considers that it has provided appropriate guarantees that the animal health situation that gave rise to the suspension of the entry of consignments of certain products into the Union from the concerned zones in that third country, as set out in Annexes V and XIV to Implementing Regulation (EU) 2021/404, no longer represents a threat to animal or public health within the Union, and that, consequently, the entry into the Union of those consignments from the concerned zones of the United States, from which entry into the Union had been suspended, should be reauthorised.

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 this areas mentioned in Canada, the United Kingdom and 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, the United Kingdom and the United States. Implementing Regulation (EU) 2024/2922 entered into force on 22 November 2024 and is available at the following link: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg_impl/2024/2922/oj

Current situation on African swine fever

(46/03) In October, the number of cases of African swine fever (ASF) in wild boars in Europe rose significantly again after an interim drop in the previous month, reports the Friedrich Loeffler Institute (FLI) currently. This is due in particular to a massive increase in reports from **Bulgaria** (234). However, the number of reports also increased significantly again for **Poland** (232), as well as for **Germany** (131). In October, 121 cases were reported from Hesse, two cases from Rhineland-Palatinate and 8 cases from Brandenburg. In Saxony, as in the previous month, no ASF cases were detected in wild boars. There was also an increase in ASF notifications for **Latvia** (70), **Lithuania** (31), **Slovakia** (24), **Romania** (9) and **Estonia** (6), while notifications decreased for **Hungary** (24) and **Italy** (5). The reports in Italy came only from the north of the country (Lombardy 2; Piedmont, Emilia-Romagna and Liguria each 1). According to the FLI, the resurgence in the number of ASF cases in autumn/winter after a low level in September coincides with the seasonal courses of previous years. For Germany, however, there has been a substantial improvement in the situation in the classic epidemic areas in the east of the country. The re-

newed increase in the number of cases also for Germany is driven by the newly infected regions, especially in Hesse.

There was no further outbreak in domestic pig farms in Germany in October. In Europe, the total number of domestic pig outbreaks is still at a low level this month. Most outbreaks were reported from Serbia (21), but then Romania followed again (20). In Serbia, only small holdings with a maximum of 152 animals were affected, in Romania small holdings but also two farms with just under four and 25 thousand animals, respectively. The outbreak in Italy affected a farm with about 5,400 animals in Lombardy.

Outside Europe, further outbreaks of ASF occurred in domestic pig farms in Vietnam (38), Sri Lanka (4), India and the Philippines (2 each) as well as in Indonesia and South Korea (1 each) during the reporting period.

"ELAN" - EU digitalisation project in the import and export of goods (Annex)

(46/04) The European Parliament and the European Council have decided, by Regulation (EU) 2022/2399 (<http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2022/2399/oj>) establishing the European Union's Single Window Environment, to fully digitalise so-called non-customs formalities at the EU's borders for the import and export of goods. The background of the regulation is to supplement the already digitalised fiscal customs matters in such a way that all obligations of companies participating in foreign trade can be fulfilled completely digitally. As the Federal Ministry of Agriculture (BMEL) currently announces, it is intended in this context to digitalise all documents that have to be submitted to customs authorities and other competent authorities on the occasion of import and export. In the food and agriculture sector, the Commission's Directorate-General for Agriculture (DG AGRI) has already drawn up four draft regulations, which are currently being coordinated with the Member States.

According to the BMEL, this "package of regulations" will serve to bring about the necessary changes to existing regulations and to create two new regulations in order to create the necessary robust legal basis for the **ELAN (ELectronic system for DG AGRI Non-customs formalities)** digitalisation project. ELAN was divided into two sub-projects:

- The **ELAN1-L subproject** deals with the digitisation of import and export licenses for the use of certain tariff quotas.
- The **ELAN2-C subproject** deals with the digitisation of certificates, such as the Certificate of Conformity for fruits and vegetables as well as for cereals, basmati rice and others. (A list of the allowances concerned can be found in Article 4 of the attached draft delegated act laying down rules for the operation of ELAN.)

For the details of an intended pilot with parallel operation paper/digital, the commissioning of a digital data model (AGRIM), the possibility for authorities in third countries to enter the certificates issued there in the Commission's CERTEX database to facilitate trade, and the exchange of data with customs services in the EU, please refer to the attached document "Transitional Plan – ELAN1-L". There is currently no such plan for the ELAN2-C subproject. The Commission has announced that it will submit this plan at a later date, with the aim of putting everything for ELAN2-C into operation about a year later.

According to the BMEL, two new regulations will be created to ensure the legally compliant operation of ELAN using the Commission's already existing CERTEX database. For the ELAN1-L subproject, a total of 5 existing regulations in the area of licensing law and tariff quota law are to be amended, which you will find attached.

The Commission has announced that it will launch the public consultation for the package of regulations in the course of January 2025.

EU production of poultry meat is expected to continue to grow

(46/05) A further increase in poultry meat production is expected in the European Union (EU-27) in the current and next year. This is according to the supply balance for 2024 published by the EU Commission in October with the forecast for 2025. After a decline in production in 2021 and 2022, production increased continuously. According to preliminary data, 13.9 million tonnes of poultry meat are expected to be produced in the EU in 2024, and an increase to 14.1 million tonnes is forecast for 2025 (plus 1%). This is the highest value ever achieved in the EU.

Foreign trade in poultry meat is also expected to recover slightly. After exports fell from 2.49 million tonnes in 2019 to 1.83 million tonnes in the following years up to 2023, the volume is expected to reach 1.88 million tonnes in 2024 and is forecast to increase slightly to 1.92 million tonnes in 2025. Imports of poultry meat increased from 0.71 million tonnes in 2020 to 0.83 million tonnes in 2024. That would be an increase of 17.5%. Only a slight increase in imports is predicted for 2025.

The consumption of poultry meat in the EU has also increased steadily in recent years. While 11.96 million tonnes were consumed in 2020, 12.87 million tonnes (plus 7.7%) of poultry meat were consumed in 2024. A further slight increase is predicted for 2025. However, the degree of self-sufficiency in poultry meat has recently fallen in the EU. In 2020, the degree of self-sufficiency was 114%, in 2023 it was only 108%. This is unlikely to change much for the current and next year. As in the past four years, the share of poultry meat in total meat consumption is just over 35%.

EU Commission is working flat out to reach an agreement on the Mercosur agreement

(46/06) It remains to be seen whether there will be an agreement between the EU and the Mercosur states this year. At the recent G20 summit in Rio de Janeiro, no political agreement was reached on the controversial free trade agreement. Nevertheless, according to information from responsible Commission circles, work is continuing at full speed to bring the talks to a successful conclusion. The next possible date is now 5 or 6 December. A delegation from the EU Commission is then expected to attend talks in Montevideo, the capital of Mercosur member Uruguay.

An approaching agreement is once again causing unrest in France. As early as 26 November, the French National Assembly is to hold a debate on the agreement envisaged in Brussels. Representatives from the left to the right have called on the government to make a statement. According to media reports, Prime Minister Michel Barnier will then also make a statement. A vote on a resolution on a possible Mercosur treaty is also planned. The Italian Minister of Agriculture, Francesco Lollobrigida, has also criticised a possible agreement. In Lollobrigida's view, geopolitical crises have already dramatically weakened the European primary sector. Imports of products, produced at lower production costs than in the EU, are hardly bearable in the current situation, he said in Rome.

Meanwhile, Brazil's Agriculture Minister Carlos Favaro announced a major agricultural agreement with Brazil's largest trading partner, China. The agreement is about expanding meat exports - and possible consequences for the feared trade war between China and the USA. US agricultural exporters have already seen a significant decline in their business with China over the past year; Brazil has taken over market share in many areas. Brazil is now seeking to further strengthen its agricultural trade relations with China and benefit from potential tariff escalations between the United States and China once President-elect Donald Trump begins his second term in January.

Annex:

- Transitional Plan – ELAN1-L

Imprint

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