



First of all, in this context of sanitary crisis across all Europe, I hope that all of you are well and that the consequences of the crisis for you and your loved ones are manageable.

In our daily veterinary work we have been fighting with different coronaviruses such as PRCv (Porcine Respiratory Coronavirus) in pigs, IBV (Infectious Bronchitis Virus) in poultry, etc for years. Our experience allows us to understand all epidemiological aspects of combating diseases caused by different viruses.

The present „corona-flu” situation, where in some countries veterinarians fight arm in arm with human medicine doctors and ensure continuity of supply of safe food of animal origin, gives the One Health approach a new meaning and proves its necessity.

This unprecedented context has a real influence on the work of the European institutions. Their main efforts are focused on the response to the COVID-19 pandemics (a 37 billion euros program has been already adopted at European level) and most of the other dossiers are put on hold. It is still very difficult to anticipate the agenda of the European institutions in the upcoming weeks but they are adapting to the context and the European Parliament should begin to organize committee meetings in the days to come. We will keep following key dossiers for veterinarians along with the consequences of the crisis for our profession at European level.

Piotr KWIECIŃSKI, UEVP President

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PRIORITY ISSUES

Latest news about COVID-19

The sanitary crisis impacts the work of the European institutions

The sanitary crisis all over Europe has made the European institutions adapt in their daily work: teleworking, modified agenda and postponed meetings are now the norm. As a matter of fact, non-essential staffers are required to work from home.

- Last weeks were considered white in the European Parliament, meaning that the various meetings of the parliamentary committees are postponed. Some of the committees restarted their work on the last week of March and an extraordinary plenary sitting should be organised in April.
- The Council and the Commission have cancelled or postponed most of the meetings planned in the coming weeks.

The 2030 Biodiversity Strategy and the Farm to fork Strategy were supposed to be published by the European Commission on 25 March 2020 but were postponed to **29 April 2020**. MEPs of the EPP are now asking to postpone these publications to September 2020.

As the situation will still evolve, it is very difficult to anticipate the agenda of the European institutions in the upcoming months and further modifications will certainly take place.

Members of the European Parliament and stakeholders stance on live animal transport

On 19 march 2020, more than 35 NGOs sent a [letter](#) to the European Commission and the Council asking to prohibit the transport of farm animals to third countries, as well as journeys longer than eight hours.

This demand comes in the context of the Commission's [guidelines](#) concerning border management and the availability of goods and services considered as essential during the coronavirus outbreak.

The European Commission issued a series of instructions on 23 march 2020 about 'Green Lanes'. These recommendations are aiming at keeping freight moving and preventing congestion at borders.

As livestock was included in the 'priority goods' list, the NGOs are worried about the consequences for the health and welfare of transported animals. The main issue is related to traffic jams at border where some trucks can wait up to 18 hours before being able to cross.

On 23 march 2020, 42 Members of the European Parliament (MEP) from the Animal Welfare Intergroup sent another [letter](#) to the Commission and the Council on the same issue of banning long-distance animal transport during the COVID-19 outbreak.

Along with the NGOs, they ask for the suspension of live animal transport in third countries and of journeys over 8 hours.

Both the NGOs and the MEPs also ask for better communication between States and chief veterinary officers (CVO) in order to prevent livestock transporters trucks from facing refusal of entry or long queues.

Publication of advices from the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe and the Federation of Companion Animal Veterinary Associations

The Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE) and the Federation of Companion Animal Veterinary Associations (FECAVA) have issued two infographics giving advice about behaviour in the context of the COVID-19 outbreak.

- The first [document](#) targets **companion animal practitioners**. It contains a series of 14 behavioural recommended actions for veterinarians aiming at slowing the spread of the virus and protecting practitioners, their staff and their clients.
- The second [document](#) targets **pet owners**. It contains a series of 10 behavioural recommended actions for pet owners visiting their vets. The document gives insights about when, how and why pet owners should go visit their vets in today's context

The FVE and FECAVA also inform that there is no evidence that pets can be infected by the virus.

AnimalHealth Europe communication on supply of veterinary medicines

On 25 March 2020, AnimalHealth Europe Secretary General **Roxanne Feller** published a [communication](#) on the state of play of veterinary medicine supply in Europe in the context of the coronavirus crisis.

Firstly, Ms Feller welcomed the categorisation of veterinary medicines as 'essential goods' in the '[Green Lanes](#)' guidelines of the European Commission. These guidelines concern freight movement in the European Union (EU) and, more generally, the cross-border supply policy of the EU under the COVID-19 outbreak.

AnimalHealth Europe requests that Member-States set measures to avoid disruption of supply and that they notify the European Commission concerning transport-related restrictions.

This communication states that no supply issues in veterinary medicines are to be reported for the moment but that no certain future predications about these issues can be shared as the situation evolves rapidly and unpredictably.

Finally, the document advises:

- **Veterinarians** to contact veterinary medicine company representatives for any concerns concerning supply of veterinary medicines
- **Farmers** to contact veterinary surgeons for any concerns about these issues
- **Pet owners** to keep in mind that '*there is no scientific evidence that companion animals play a role in the spread of COVID-19 to people*' and to contact their vets by phone or online before coming to them.

Latest news on antimicrobial resistance at EU level

Publication of a report on antimicrobial resistance in zoonoses from humans, animals and food for the years 2017 and 2018

On 3 March 2020 the **European Food Safety Authority (EFSA)** and the **European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC)** published a joint [report](#) on Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) analysing data from pigs and calves of less than a year (data from 2017) and poultry (data from 2018).

The main outcome of the document is that Salmonella bacteria and Campylobacter bacteria are becoming increasingly multidrug-resistant. This means that a large proportion of these bacteria are resistant to at least three antimicrobials, including Ciprofloxacin that was used for the treatment of infections caused by the two cited bacteria.

The report highlights some cases of Salmonella infection in humans with carbapenems resistance, another antimicrobial.

Finally, the report includes key outcome indicators that can help Member-states in their progress assessing for the reduction of antimicrobial use and the fight against AMR.

Update on the EMA activities

Decisions of the Committee for Medicinal Products for Veterinary Use (CVMP)

The Committee for Medicinal Products for Veterinary Use (CVMP) held a [meeting](#) from 17 to 18 March 2020.

The Committee adopted by consensus a positive opinion for an initial marketing authorisation application for Lydaxx. The Committee adopted by consensus positive opinions for type II variation applications for Vectra Felis and Vectra 3D. The Committee also adopted by consensus a positive opinion for a type IB variation application for Equisolon and Meloxoral.

Finally, the Committee adopted a scientific advice report on the efficacy of antiparasitic veterinary medicinal product for cats and dogs.

European Medicine Agency reports on authorised medicines for minor uses and minor species

On 25 March 2020, the European Medicine Agency (EMA) published a [report](#) on the new authorised veterinary medicines for minor uses and minor species (MUMS) of the last 10 years (2009-2019).

The MUMS market is limited in order to stimulate innovation in veterinary medicine in the context of minor species and rare diseases.

Species considered as minor are species that are not part of the 'major species' categorisation (cattle, sheep, pigs, chickens, salmon, cats and dogs). Medicines of Minor use are used for rare diseases in major species.

Furthermore, this limited market policy also stands for veterinary medicines that have a limited market (bee medicines, fish vaccines, ...).

The report states that 22 MUMS medicines have been authorised by the EMA (under centralised procedure) since 2009. It also comments that, from 2009 to 2019, the EMA received 272 requests for classification as MUMS/limited market, 245 of these were classified MUMS and 73 products were recommended as eligible for financial enticements.

It is interesting to note that 1/3 of the above-mentioned requests were submitted by MSMEs.

European Medicine Agency notice to stakeholders about Brexit and EU rules for veterinary medicinal product

On 13 March 2020, the European Medicine Agency (EMA) published, in the context of Brexit and its transition period, a series of stakeholder sectorial readiness notices.

A [document](#) entitled '*Notice to stakeholders - withdrawal of the United Kingdom (UK) and European Union (EU) rules for medicinal products for human use and veterinary medicinal products*' was part of the series.

This note is divided in three distinct parts.

- The first part informs on the **legal situation** after the end of the 1-year transition period. It reminds stakeholders that, at the end of the transition period, **EU rules on medicinal products will no longer apply in the UK.**

This part focuses on various issues of the medicinal product sector such as:

- *Marketing authorisation and its procedures.*
This includes, for example, issues related to Minor Use Minor Species/limited market (MUMS/limited market) for veterinary medicinal products.
 - *Production and importation of finished products as well as active pharmaceutical ingredients*
This includes, for example, issues related to the 'Official Batch Protocol Review' (OBPR) that ensures the monitoring by Member-States and its competent authorities of marketing authorisation holder for immunological veterinary medicinal products.
 - *Pharmacovigilance*
 - *Labelling and information of products*
 - *Inspection results.*
- The second part focuses on '*relevant separation provisions of the Withdrawal Agreement*'.
 - The last part explains the post transition period rules relating to Northern Ireland.

As a reminder, the Brexit transition period should end on 31 December 2020.

OTHER ISSUES

Latest news on animal diseases at EU level

African Swine Fever outbreak in Poland

On 18 March 2020 an outbreak of African Swine Fever (ASF) was discovered in a large pig farm in western Poland.

The farm is located in the Lubusz province, less than 100 km from the German border. Approximately 23.700 pigs were affected and the relevant authorities took measures to slaughter all the farm's pig population.

Protection zones have been implemented in the areas surrounding the farm.

Highly pathogenic influenza A virus outbreak in Germany

On 13 March 2020, the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) received information from Dr **Dietrich Rassow** (Directorate of Animal Health and Animal Welfare, German Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture) concerning an outbreak of the H5N8 virus in a German farmyard in the east of the country.

Approximately 50 ducks and chickens were cull by the authorities.

The appearance of such an outbreak raises serious concern in the German and European poultry industry.

Latest updates on animal welfare at EU level

The Commission opens a public consultation on the evaluation of its animal welfare strategy 2012-2015

The European Commission launched on Monday 23 March 2020 a 12-week period of [public consultation](#) in the context of the evaluation of its **animal welfare strategy 2012-2015**.

As a reminder, in 2012, the European Commission adopted its [2012-2015 strategy](#) for animal protection and welfare as the continuation of the [2006-2010 action plan](#) on the same subject.

This strategy, after having identified the main problems relating to animal welfare in the European Union (EU), proposed a series of general strategic actions intended to remedy these problems. These actions gravitated around the simplification of the European legislative framework, international cooperation, public information, the well-being of fish in aquaculture, the development of support tools for member states on the issue of EU compliance and the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP).

In 2018, the need for an evaluation of this strategy was expressed in a [report](#) of the European Court of Auditors. In order to be able to carry out a relevant evaluation that can determine whether the said strategy has achieved its objectives and to what extent (effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, consistency, added value), a series of public consultations are planned.

The basic document of this evaluation is a [roadmap](#) determining the objectives and the actions to be provided in the context of the evaluation of the strategy. A public consultation on this roadmap was organized between May 17 and June 14, 2019 and a total of [37 opinions](#) from stakeholders were received.

On 23 March 2020 the first action in the evaluation process has opened. The Commission published a **questionnaire** aimed at collecting a set of contributions on the actions taken in the context of the strategy. Stakeholders can therefore present their views on the European strategy on animal welfare (2012-2015) until 15 June 2020.

Agricultural Commissioner on animal welfare in the next Common Agricultural Policy

On 2 March 2020, Agricultural Commissioner **Wojciechowski** [answered](#) a [parliamentary question](#) from Member of the European Parliament (MEP) **Emmanouil FRAGKOS** (Greece, ECR) concerning the implementation of Measure 14 of the 2014-2020 national and EU rural development programmes (welfare of goat and sheep) in Greece.

Commissioner Wojciechowski, in addition of insisting on the lack of animal welfare support in the Greek Rural Development Programme, stated that animal welfare will be an important component of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) post 2020 by saying that *"The Commission proposal for the future CAP identifies as one of its objectives the need to improve the response of EU agriculture to societal demands on animal welfare"*.

EU Farm to Fork Strategy

The European People's Party (EPP) group is requesting a delay concerning the publication of the Farm to Fork (F2F) Strategy.

As a reminder, this strategy will act as the agri-food component of the European Union (EU) [Green Deal](#). It aims at making the food chain more climate neutral and more sustainable.

The strategy was supposed to be published on 25 March 2020 but due to the COVID-19 situation, its publication was delayed to **29 April 2020**, along with the EU 2030 Biodiversity Strategy.

In a statement, the EPP group and its Members of the European Parliament (MEP) insist that the publication of the strategy should be reported to at least after the summer. The main reason behind it, concerns the new rules and restrictions that the strategy would impose to farmers *"who are currently coping with the effects of the coronavirus pandemic and have to ensure food production in Europe at the same time."*

The last [draft of the F2F strategy](#) confirms that it is still in the making as the European Commission still has to decide on the numbers related, for example, to the use of pests and on the ones related to areas to reserve for organic farming.

The strategy plans a revision of the animal welfare legislation, including new modalities on animal welfare in transport.

Developments on the publication date and on sensitive points still debated are expected in the coming weeks.

EU 2030 Biodiversity Strategy

On 5 March 2020, a draft version of the **EU 2030 biodiversity strategy** leaked.

The strategy, that was planned in the context of the Green Deal, will have two main axes:

- An external one, in line with the COP15 Conference on Biological Diversity that will define a global post 2020 framework.
- An internal one, that will give the EU the means of its ambitions.

Some objectives are already laid out in the strategy (even though certain numbers are still in parentheses) such as:

- The wish to restore 30% or more of the European Union (EU) maritime and terrestrial ecosystems
- An afforestation project that will have supposedly millions of trees planted
- The transformation of 10% of the agricultural lands in unproductive and/or landscapes areas.
- The wish to stop the deterioration of the populations of pollinators and farmland birds
- The increasing of the share of EU funding dedicated to nature.

Concerning pesticides, a 50% reduction in the use of these products is planned out but this modality will be co-managed by the Agri-food initiative of the Green Deal: the **Farm to Fork Strategy**. The latter strategy will deal with the issue of pesticides in the context of the **Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)** reform.

The 2030 Biodiversity Strategy was supposed to be published by the European Commission on 25 March 2020 but was postponed to **29 April 2020** due to the COVID-19 situation.

Delegated act supplementing Regulation (EU) 2016/429 “Animal Health Law”

On 13 March 2020, the Council of the European Union decided not to raise any objections concerning the [COMMISSION DELEGATED REGULATION \(EU\) .../... of 30.1.2020 supplementing Regulation \(EU\) 2016/429 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards rules for entry into the Union, and the movement and handling after entry of consignments of certain animals, germinal products and products of animal origin \(+annexe\)](#).

This means that, if the European Parliament does not object the text, it will have the green light to be published in the Official Journal of the European Union.

FVE 2020 General Assembly

The 2020 General Assembly of the Federation of European Veterinarians (FVE) that was supposed to take place in London in June is cancelled due to the coronavirus crisis.

The Presidents of the FVE, the British Veterinary Association (BVA) and the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) co-signed a [letter](#) informing the interested parties of their decision.

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