



This month has been marked by the first level adoption in Brussels of the proposal on veterinary medicines. By this vote, the MEPs highlighted the need to ban collective and preventive antibiotic treatment of animals, but also to tackle antimicrobial resistance. The European Parliament would like first to find a consensus in plenary session in March or April, in order to clearly defend its position towards the Council. The European agenda also relies this month on the Animal Health Law which has been adopted by the MEPs at the first level and should be adopted in plenary session in March.

Thierry Chambon, UEVP President

PRIORITY ISSUES

State of play on the ongoing discussions on the proposed regulations on veterinary medicines and medicated feed

Vote at the European Parliament on the veterinary medicines proposal.

On 17 February 2016, the ENVI Committee adopted Françoise Grossetête's [draft report](#) regarding the **veterinary medicines proposal** by 60 votes to 2. All the compromise amendments were adopted.

The following results emerge from this vote:

DEFINITION.

- **VETERINARIAN PRESCRIPTION.** The definition of the “*veterinary prescription*” as proposed by amendment 250 which is defined as “*a prescription for a veterinary medicinal product issued by a veterinarian following the provision of a veterinary diagnosis in the context of clinical examination of the animal or of a check on the state of health of the animal*” has not been adopted. For the record, the initial Commission proposal mentions “*a professional person qualified to do so in accordance with applicable national law*”.
- **ENTITY RESPONSIBLE TO COLLECT DATA ON ANTIMICROBIALS.** Amendment 12 which does not precisely define the entity responsible for the collection of data on the volume of sales and the use of veterinary antimicrobial medicinal products has been adopted.

PREVENTIVE USE OF ANTIMICROBIALS. Compromise amendment 15 on **routine prophylactic and metaphylactic use** has been adopted:

- **METAPHYLACTIC USE.** Metaphylactic use must be restricted to clinically-ill animals and to single animals that are identified as being at a high risk of contamination, in order to prevent bacteria from spreading further in the group.
- **PROPHYLACTIC USE.** Prophylactic use of antimicrobials is allowed to single animals and only when fully justified by a veterinarian. Indeed, routine prophylactic use of antimicrobials is therefore not allowed. Also, veterinary medicines must not, under any circumstances, serve to improve performance or compensate for poor animal husbandry.

PRESCRIPTION.

▪ **ANTHELMINTIC PRODUCTS.**

- Anthelmintic products do not need to be issued by a veterinarian after a clinical examination and diagnosis. (Adoption of compromise amendment 39).
- A veterinary medicinal product can be issued without a veterinary prescription if there is no risk of the development of antiparasitic resistance and not anthelmintic resistance as proposed by the Commission. (Adoption of compromise amendment 30)

- **MANDATORY PRESCRIPTION.** A veterinary prescription is “*mandatory*” for certain types of veterinary medicinal products such as **veterinary medicinal products which contain psychotropic drugs or narcotics, veterinary medicinal products for food producing animals, antimicrobial veterinary medicinal products** (Adoption of compromise amendment 30).

ONLINE SALE. Antimicrobials, psychotropic and biological/ immunological veterinary medicinal products **cannot be supplied online.** (Amendment 38). The sale online of others veterinary medicinal products is, however, allowed under several conditions.

THE USE OF ANTIMICROBIAL PRODUCTS

- **CRITICALLY IMPORTANT ANTIBIOTICS.** According to the adopted amendment 165, an efficacious veterinary diagnostics to identify the cause of disease and to perform antibiotic sensitivity testing is imperative to facilitate correct diagnosis, and to use as little as possible, critically important antibiotics.
- **USE OF ANTIBIOTIC IN DRINKING WATER.** The use of antibiotics in drinking water should be restricted to cases where most of the animals or the whole herd are sick. (Amendment 495).

SALE OF ANTIMICROBIALS. Compromise amendment 13 on sale of antimicrobials has been adopted. For the record, it provides that:

- The persons qualified to prescribe veterinary medicinal products can retail antimicrobial products only for animals which are under their “*immediate care*”;
- The animals must be subject to an appropriate veterinary diagnosis and examination before any sales of antimicrobials;
- In the case of food-producing animals, the continuation of the treatment with antimicrobial products shall be decided based on a renewed clinical examination by a veterinarian.

ANTIMICROBIALS RESERVED FOR HUMANS. According to the adopted amendment 918, veterinary medicinal products containing antimicrobial active substances as reserved for treating specific infections in humans shall be prohibited.

ADVERTISEMENT OF VETERINARY MEDICINES. Advertisement of veterinary medicines is allowed to persons allowed to prescribe or supply veterinary medicinal products. (Adoption of amendment 105a)

PHARMACOVIGILANCE. The veterinarians must receive feedback on adverse events reported and regular feedback on all adverse reactions reported. (Adoption of amendment 643)

REMINDER OF THE NEXT STEPS.

▪ **EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT:**

- In March or April 2016, the European Parliament will vote in plenary session Françoise Grossetête's report on the veterinary medicines proposal. Françoise Grossetête wants the European Parliament to vote on the report before presenting it to the Council.
- The draft report on medicated feed (rapporteur Clara Aguilera) will be adopted by the AGRI Committee in March (date tbc).

▪ **COUNCIL :**

The next meeting at the Council Working Party of Veterinary Experts will be on 8 March 2016 concerning the veterinary proposal and on 10 March 2016 concerning the medicated feed proposal.

Vote by the ENVI committee on centralised marketing authorisation for veterinary medicinal products.

On 17 February 2016, the MEPs adopted in ENVI Committee by 53 votes to 3 a [report](#) from the MEP Claudiu Ciprian Tănăsescu (S&D, Romania), in response to a 2014 [proposal](#) from the European Commission on the authorisation and supervision of medicinal products for human and veterinary use. By adopting this report, the MEP approved the wish of the European Commission to take **account of the fact that centralised marketing authorisation for veterinary products is being decoupled from that for human medicines**. Also, the report states the funding, the skills and the mission of the European Medicines Agency. The report will be debated and put to a vote during the March/April plenary sessions in Strasbourg.

Adoption of the Animal health law by the MEPs in AGRI Committee

On 23 February, the [AGRI committee of the European Parliament voted](#) the [Animal Health draft Law approved by the Council](#) on 14 December 2015. For the record, the agreed rules clarify the responsibilities of animal professionals **including veterinarians to ensure the good health of their animals and to avoid introducing or spreading diseases**. Veterinarians will be legally obliged to raise awareness of the interaction between animal health and welfare and human health and better inform owners about the problem of resistance to treatments, including antimicrobial resistance. Also in order to prevent diseases, **veterinarians must make health visits to places where animals are outdoors when it is necessary**. These visits would aim to advice animal owners on issues related to animal health, or detecting any sign of emerging diseases.

NEXT STEPS. The vote at the second reading in plenary session will take place on 7 or 10 March 2016. Afterwards, the text will be published in the EU's Official Journal and enter into force on the twentieth day following that and will be applied by the Member States 3 years later. .

The Council to address endocrine disruptors

On 4 March 2016, the [Environment Council](#) is expected to issue a statement concerning a recent ruling on **endocrine disruptors** given by the General Court of Justice from December 2015 which **condemned the European Commission for not having fulfilled its obligation to adopt delegated acts regarding hormone disrupting chemicals (EDCs)**. In response to the judgment of the Court, the Commission will present, **before the summer 2016**, new scientific criteria for endocrine disruptors. For the record, the New Dutch EU Presidency wants the European Commission to develop criteria for identifying substances as **endocrine disruptors as soon as possible**.

OTHER ISSUES

The Council to agree on an EU platform on animal welfare

On 15 February 2016, during the Agriculture Council, **the European Agriculture Ministers held an exchange of views on animal welfare**. The meeting addressed the previous call from Germany, Sweden, Denmark and the Netherlands to **establish an EU platform on animal welfare**. It appears that the Council broadly supports its establishment. Several Member States noted in particular that, a level playing field should be ensured for EU and non-EU producers, with a view that the platform should focus on uniform implementation of existing animal welfare legislation. Some of the objectives of the EU platform could be to facilitate the exchange of experiences and best practices; give visibility to initiatives carried out to promote animal welfare; develop partnerships amongst stakeholders; identify best practices in Member States; share the knowledge and information on research and development, or to discuss the improvement of animal welfare legislation.

The European institutions and stakeholders to be involved into the fight against antimicrobial resistance

- **MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE.** On 9 and 10 February 2016, the EU Dutch Presidency organised a [Ministerial Conference](#) on Antibiotic Resistance in Amsterdam in the presence of the Health and Agriculture Ministers of Member States and of the EU Commissioner for Health and Food Safety, Vytenis Andriukaitis. The aim of the conference was to emphasise the need for a "one health" approach, bringing together both the human and animal health sides. **The Ministers discussed policy recommendations including those to minimise antibiotic use in livestock and to improve infection control.** The intention of the Council is to reach conclusions during the next Council meetings on this subject. Also, an evaluation of the Commission's Action Plan is currently ongoing.
- **THE EFSA TO PUBLISH A REPORT ON ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE.** On 11 February 2016, the European Food Safety Authority published a [scientific report](#) which underlines that antimicrobial resistance poses a serious risk to human and animal health. The report also found evidence of resistance to the antimicrobial colistin in *Salmonella* and *E. coli* among poultry in the EU. Finally, the report found that there are significant regional differences regarding the level of antimicrobial resistance. The highest levels of antimicrobial resistance are observed in eastern and southern Europe.
- **THE DUTCH PRESIDENCY TO PUBLISH ON EU MEMBER STATES' GOOD PRACTICES.** On 5 February 2016, the Dutch Presidency published a [document](#) explaining for several Member States their good practices in terms of fight against antimicrobial resistance. The Member States included are: Austria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Italy, Lithuania, Norway, Portugal, Spain and Sweden. The report describes the good practices and its expected results for each country.

The European Commission to urge Member States to comply with the Services Directive in the area of regulated professions.

On 25 February 2016, **the European Commission requested in a reasoned opinion** Austria, Cyprus, Germany, and Poland to respect the [Services Directive](#). According to the European Commission, these Member States maintain national rules establishing unjustified obstacles to the exercise of certain regulated professions. According to the European Commission, **in Austria, veterinarians must obey rules too strict regarding the establishment (location, legal status, ownership)**. The Member States have two months to notify the

Commission of measures taken to remedy the situation; otherwise, the Commission may decide to refer them to the Court of Justice of the EU.

The European Parliament to ask the European Commission to adopt a European system to register pets

On 25 February 2016, the European Parliament adopted in plenary session a [resolution](#) which aims to introduce a compatible system for the registration of pet animals across Member States. By adopting this text, the MEPs ask the European Commission to adopt a compatible system to identify and register dogs and cats in the Member States. The goal is to share registration data of these animals at EU level to fight against their illegal trade and prevent the spread of zoonotic diseases.

The European Commission to fight Wildlife Trafficking

On 26 February 2016, the European Commission adopted an [EU Action plan](#) to tackle wildlife trafficking within the EU. The Action Plan comprises of 32 measures to be carried out between now and 2020 by the EU and its 28 Member States. It focuses on three priorities, first to prevent trafficking and reduce supply and demand of illegal wildlife products, second, to enhance implementation of existing rules and combat organised crime more effectively and third, to strengthen cooperation between source, destination and transit countries. The document explains the next actions to set for the European Commission such as further limit trade in ivory within and from the EU, reduce or ban unsustainable imports into the EU of endangered species, like rare reptile species.

The actions to take on bovine welfare

- **SPAIN TO LAUNCH GUIDANCE ON THE RESPONSIBLE USE OF VETERINARY MEDICINES IN BOVINE.** On 8 February 2016, Spain's Vetresponsable, a national initiative which promotes the responsible use of veterinary medicines, launched a [new guidance](#) on the responsible use of veterinary medicines in bovine. **This document aims to help veterinarians to ensure the correct prescription and use of veterinary medicines in their day-to-day work.**
- **THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION TO PUBLISH ON SYSTEMS RESTRAINING BOVINE ANIMALS.** On 8 February 2016, the European Commission published a [report](#) on systems restraining bovine animals. The report explains the two systems to restrain the animal: **the upright system** where animals are bled in upright position and **the rotating system** where animals are bled after being rotated in an inverted or lateral position which is only authorised for slaughter without stunning. According to the European Commission, it appears that both systems have advantages and disadvantages. The upright system was in the past considered more appropriate for the perspective of animal welfare because it does not put the animal in an unnatural position. However, from now, data collected on animals in the EU show that from an animal welfare point of view there is no conclusive findings indicating that one system is better than the other.

Poland to address the issue of African swine fever at the Council

On 15 February 2016, the [Agriculture Council addressed the issue](#) related to the spreading of the African swine fever within the European Union. The Polish delegation of the Council expressed its disagreement on the recent European measures in Poland. The Member State considers that the recent extension of the areas in Poland subject to restrictions due to the African swine fever is unjustified, regarding the stable situation of the disease and the control measures adopted by the authorities. Also, Poland requested European assistance to Ukraine in order to eradicate the disease.

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