

BR(14)6492:1

MINUTES OF THE BREEDING LIVESTOCK WORKING PARTY

ON 22.04.2014

PRESENT: Schons (Chairman), David, Venneman, Journaux, Lind, Lykke, Eriksson, Laxäback, Trowska, Verset, Sturmlechner, Winters, Matousek, Motycka, Pontaga, Georgoudis, Fioretti

INVITED GUESTS: Alf Füssel (DG SANCO), Elissaveta Varbanova (DG AGRI)

SECRETARIAT: Runge, Gyorffy

Item 1: Adoption of the agenda and of the minutes of the last meeting

→ The group adopted the agenda.

The minutes of the last meeting were approved ([BR\(13\)9736 \(rev.1\)](#)).

Item 2: Recast of the EU zootechnical legislation – presentation of the Commission’s proposal and exchange of views

→ The European Commission representative gave a presentation [BR\(14\)3330 \(rev.1\)](#).

The Commission has chosen to adopt a proposal for a Regulation due to apparent differences in the national transposition of the directives.

The purpose is to regulate breeding activities for major livestock (cattle, pigs, sheep, goats and equidae). Other breeding animals (like dogs or cats) are not in, but can be regulated in delegated acts. The most important empowerment for the COM is to amend the annexes, but everything that is included in the text or in the annexes of the current legal acts can be found in the proposal.

The term breed society has replaced breed organisation and breed association. It has to be distinguished from the breed operation, which works with hybrid breeding pigs. Distinction should also be made between approval (of a breeding programme) and recognition (of a breed society or operation).

The Regulation does not contain a definition of “breed” to avoid that new problems arise but gives an idea how a breed could be understood in recital 11 which is an adaptation of the definition in France.

Cloning is not part of this legislation, there is a specific legislation dealing with this issue.

Discussions at Council level (in the Veterinary experts Working Group) stopped at art. 8. The Greek Presidency will continue discussing article by article and this dossier will be handed over to the Italian Presidency.

The Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions will be consulted.

The Chairman underlined that the proposal contains more changes than originally expected. In the beginning it has been described as a “recast” but this is obviously no longer the case. Some problems have been identified in the current system and it is important to address these issues.

As far as Copa-Cogeca is concerned, the Secretariat has received a diversity of views from its members, from totally against the proposal towards a more positive approach.

Several questions have been asked about a mandatory link between breeding society and breeding programme in the new regulation, if there will be a definition of the breeding programme at a later stage, if the control of pedigree belongs to the breeding society or to border control, about the genetic evaluation, if in one country more breeding indexes are possible, who will pay for the controls, provisions applicable to foreign companies.

Several experts expressed their views:

- In favour of maintaining the term “breeding organisation”. “Breed society” is old-fashioned and more restrictive. There is a difference between management of the breed and the breeding scheme managed by private companies to approve breed in accordance with breeding goals defined by breeding society (France);
- The main goal of the breeding regulation would be to make trade possible. Questioned the necessity for a breeding programme for breeds for which only few animals exist. Cross-bred should have more importance. The proposal puts a great emphasis on the power of a breed society which not in all countries might be the case (The Netherlands);
- The proposal does not take into account selection activity goals. Having different breeding programmes may only lead to complications. It is essential that this activity is funded by the government. In Italy, a particular attention is paid to quality based on geographical indications. There is a worry that if all animals are split in breeding programmes, GIs will be affected, and traceability would need to be increased which will lead to raising costs (Italy);
- A simple breeding programme to avoid inbreeding should suffice. Not all farmers can have a selection programme. The society should acknowledge the work done by breed societies (Greece);
- In the UK, breeding programmes are run independently from the breed societies. Milk recording organisations might also be interested in cross-border activity.(UK);
- A strong big breeding programme can negatively impact on breeding programmes in small countries for the same breed. The control system is complicated and difficult to understand. This regulation will increase competition on the market. It was too ambitious for the Commission to unify all directives for all species (The Czech Republic);
- There is no need for such a complicated dispute settlement as proposed. Regulations in the statutes of the breed societies should be enough (Germany).

The Commission replied that:

- The definition of the breed society is the same as today.
- Breeding is an economic operation carried out by the sector. There are provisions for rights, responsibilities, approval system. The approved recognised breeding organisations have to have a breeding programme, this is the rule. Minimum requirements have to be fulfilled by a breeding programme. Breed societies are responsible for the breeding programme.
- Some clarity on the non-approved breeding organisations was needed.
- Commission acts on the basis of the treaties. Protection of valuable genetic resources is a goal and needs to be ensured through rules and regulations. Progress on this proposal is not fast.
- Breeding societies are responsible for the breeding programme, but they may outsource some connected activities (e. .g breeding value estimation or milk recording).
- The designation of the reference centres is under the responsibility of the Commission; Interbull (for cattle) is there to stay, there is so far no plan to set up such centres for other species (but COM wants already now to claim this privilege);

- The withdrawal of recognition has to be based on the result of official controls; if there are no measures to remedy the situation, recognition is withdrawn.
- FVO would have to carry out the COM controls proposed, however, new qualified staff might be needed;
- Breeding is an economic activity that should be carried out by breeders (with certain rights and obligations) and not by departments of a ministry
- All existing directives are similar, therefore there is no difficulty in unifying them;

The Chairman underlined that in some MS, the competent authorities ensure sufficient controls. In the new official controls regulation, an amendment has been put forward to exempt primary producers from paying the control fees, it is up to the Council to see if they accept it or not. He concluded that taking into account that the status quo has triggered a high number of complaints and that some provisions have been there for a long time, there was a need for change in order to ensure that everybody is on the same line.

Item 3: Cloning of farm animals – exchange of views on the proposals for Directives

→ The Chairman introduced the two proposals for Directives ([COM\(13\)10306 \(rev.1\)](#), [COM\(13\)10307 \(rev.1\)](#)).

The Council had general discussions on the texts. The legal basis for the Directive on the placing on the market of food from clones has been questioned by some MS. Some member states have requested more time to analyse the impact of the proposals.

Descendants are not part of the proposal given the existing scientific evidence according to which descendants are born through normal sexual reproduction. Guaranteeing controls in this case is also an issue. Not having included the descendants as part of the proposals did not get the support from the EP which considered that the COM did not go far enough. It remains to be seen how the new EP will react on it.

The Commission has chosen to adopt directives and not a regulation in order to give MS the possibility to reach the objective (no cloning and no food placed on the market) in their own manner. It would be up to MS how they reach the objective.

The Commission fears that it can constitute a technical barrier to trade (the two directives have to be notified to the WTO).

The Secretariat raised the awareness on the fact that the legislative procedure is different for the two directives (one is in co-decision and the other is only a Council competence, with the EP having to agree or disagree).

The main concerns raised by members referred to the issue of offspring and how a possible inclusion will impact the sector. It has been agreed that more work needs to be done towards national parliaments by each delegation. UK questioned not allowing to clone farm animals but allowing to clone pets (dogs).

The Chairman encouraged the members to send to the Secretariat the relevant information on the national legislation. He suggested that we invite the EP representatives dealing with the report on the two proposals for Directives to our meeting in October.

Item 4: Update on the electronic identification of cattle and voluntary beefmeat labelling

→ The Chairman informed that the Council and the EP reached an agreement. It is important that we have common, harmonised standards. The EID will be introduced on a voluntary basis.

The text should be published soon.

Item 5: State aid reform in the agricultural sector, notably support for the livestock sector – presentation of the European Union guidelines for State aid in the agriculture and forestry sector and in rural areas 2014 to 2020

→ The European Commission representative gave a presentation on this point ([BR\(14\)3349 \(rev.1\)](#)).

The adoption of the new rules is foreseen for 1st July 2014.

Questions on the possibility to grant state aid for breeding activity (milk recording, ...), for purchase of breeding animals, for animal genetic diversity, on where the information on the measures financed by MS can be found, have been asked.

The Commission representative replied that the aid for livestock sector will be similar to the ones existing today. Aid for purchase of breeding animals has been requested by some MS but the COM is still analysing this request. It is important to link the aid to the quality of breeding animals. With respect to the Agricultural Block Exemption Regulation (ABER), the COM representative explained that a summary information sheet has only to be provided in the case of individual aids exceeding the new threshold for de-minimis-aids (15.000 euros).

The Chairman reminded the request from some new MS to continue the support for purchasing breeding animals which has been stopped and that it is important that the aid for livestock continues. In the case of the aid for damages caused by protected species (notably wolves), it is important that indirect costs are also indemnified.

Item 6: Update on Research

- **State of play on Horizon 2020 (topics already published etc.)**
- **EIP (how does it start, threats and opportunities for breeding sector)**

→ The Secretariat gave a presentation [BR\(14\)3335 \(rev.1\)](#).

The Chairman underlined the vast research opportunities which exist currently. Some of the topics are general and it is more difficult to see the benefit for farmers, for animal keepers. Another inconvenient is that some documents are only in EN. Another challenge would be with setting up operational groups.

The Vice-chairman encouraged members to be pro-active, to propose actions for focus groups and be involved in thematic networks which bring together science and professional expertise.

The Secretariat encouraged members to send their reactions to the Commission Work Programme for 2016-2017. The needs of the livestock sector have to be made known.

Item 7: New EU elections:

- **Time-schedule / Key points**
- **Impact on Parliament representatives for Agriculture and Breeding**
- **Impact on decision process in EU**
- **Topics that are mainly discussed during the campaign**

→ The group was informed about the EP elections due to take place on 25th May.

Item 8: AOB

- Information on REP VET and QUALIVET meetings; future cooperation with RepVet

➔ The Chairman informed about the Rep vet meeting on 16th April in which ways of strengthening the collaboration with Copa-Cogeca have been discussed and underlined the need to find new ways to cooperate with them.

The Chairman thanked the members for their participation and concluded the meeting.

The next meeting will take place on 21st October 2014.