

**FINAL MINUTES OF THE «CDG ANIMAL PRODUCTS
– SECTOR SHEEP AND GOAT MEAT - BEEKEEPING», 30.06 -**

Points on sheep meat and goat sector

1. Approval of the agenda and of the minutes of the last meeting.
2. Sheep meat and goat meat market situation and forecasts:
 - Current situation and forecasts
 - Import situation at Easter
 - Production costs
3. Implementation of the CAP (greening and permanent grassland, coupled support, young farmers, areas with natural constraints); including simplification of the CAP, with relevance to the sheep sector;
4. Simplification of the carcass classification system – state of play;
5. Implementation of the Regulation (EC) no. 1069/2011 on the provision of food information to consumers with regard to the indication of the country of origin for meat used as ingredient - Follow up to the Commission report on the possibility to extend mandatory origin labelling for meat (of all types) as an ingredient)
6. Market access update. Trade opportunities and challenges for the sheep meat sector.
7. EFSA Scientific Opinion on the welfare risks related to the farming of sheep for wool, meat and milk production
8. Peste des Petits Ruminants (PPR) and lumpy skin disease (LSD) – EFSA's conclusions (possible)
9. AOB

Points on beekeeping

1. Situation and management of the honey market
2. Adulteration of honey
3. Information on delegated acts on national apiculture programs
4. Status report on the status of the various products of the hive
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6. Study Epilobee mortality of honeybees and next steps
7. Status Update on *Aethina tumida*
8. Information on the activity at the European Parliament on honey breakfast and bee day
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10. AOB

Points for sheep meat and goat sector

1. Approval of the agenda and of the minutes of the last meeting.

The Civil Dialogue Group approved the agenda. The minutes were approved with the comments made by DG Santé on the point regarding the welfare of sheep.

The Chairman informed about the new chairman of the Copa and Cogeca Working Party on Sheep, Mr Charles Sercombe (NFU, UK) and thanked the former chairman, Mr Emmanuel Coste (FNSEA, FR).

7. EFSA Scientific Opinion on the welfare risks related to the farming of sheep for wool, meat and milk production

The Commission gave a presentation which can be found on CIRCABC <https://circabc.europa.eu/>.

The European Commission has mandated EFSA to evaluate the welfare of sheep for the first time, to look into potential problems in reference to farming systems, genetic line, environmental conditions etc. and see what indicators can be used in relation to each production type.

Discussion

Producers representatives underlined that it is in farmers interest to keep animals in good conditions and disapproved the tone of the document. They questioned the ultimate goal of this analysis.

The environmental organization representative requested clarifications on the difference between extensive and intensive in terms of welfare.

Questions about Commission's plan to extend this study to the welfare of goats, impact of infectious diseases on welfare have been asked.

The Commission representative assured that it is not in Commission's interest to say that farmers do not do well. Compared to welfare assessment which looks into good aspects as well, a risk assessment, which this is, analyses the negative aspects. This is a scientific result underlining that certain problems could happen, even if not all the time, if they are not taken care of. The categorization of the farming systems is found in the presentation. Some criteria have been chosen for the purpose of the risk assessment. The issue of parasites and infection diseases have been looked at but for any further detail, the interested persons should refer to EFSA. A potential analysis on welfare of goats would be investigated.

The Chairman concluded by underlining that producers mind their animals and they should be consulted in any decision to be taken.

2. Sheep meat and goat meat market situation and forecasts:

- Current situation and forecasts

- Import situation at Easter

- Production costs

The Commission representative gave a presentation which can be found on CIRCABC <https://circabc.europa.eu/>.

Prices evolved well, with a tendency to increase in the last 2 weeks which might be the trend for the end of the year. In the 4th quarter of 2015, there was a slight decrease of slaughter. For 2015, stabilization is expected. UK production has slightly increased, however exports are difficult because of a strong currency. Goat meat is continuously decreasing (Greece, Spain, France, Italy being the most important goat meat producers). Australia and Uruguay lamb prices are lower than ours. March was the most important months for New Zealand imports into the EU. A slight general decrease has been observed for 2014, while for first four months of 2015, except for New Zealand which has increased its exports to the EU all the other exporters to the EU have decreased their exports. Import value is constantly increasing. EU exports are down for the moment while live animal exports to Lebanon and China went up. The value of wool in New Zealand is going up. In terms of forecast, stability is to be expected on the market.

While opening the discussion, the chairman underlined that details on market needs to be studied and that sheep farmers do not get income from wool.

Discussion

Questions on trends for the value of fifth quarter and skin, on the reasons for which Spanish production has halved since 2007, on the impact of the CAP reform on sheep production, on trade flows per species (meat or milk) have been asked.

Producers representatives mentioned that a contribution from the sector could be made in

terms of input costs and that prices are expected to be lower than forecasted.

The animal welfare representatives referred to animal welfare during transport and asked the Commission to take measures against bad treatment during transportation and give recommendations to MS how to implement the ECJ ruling. The environmental organization representative supported this and called for stopping the live animals exports.

The impact of dramatic disappearance of small local slaughterhouses has been referred to.

The Commission representative replied that there is a lack of data when it comes to the fifth quarter and skins. The reason for the decrease in production for Spain is the change in the coupled payments. Animal welfare during transport is a point for DG Santé and FVO group to address. Trade flows are difficult to separate per species (meat or milk). There is a market for that product outside of the EU and everybody has to act according to the rules and MS ensure proper controls, and ensure ethical standards are guaranteed. The ECJ ruling provides that rules apply for the entirety of transport not only on EU territory. MS have a basis to make sure controls are carried out. For next meeting, we should have more time to address this specific point and make sure DG Santé representatives can attend the meeting.

The Chairman concluded by the fact that this is a withstanding issue, with a lot of point of view. What needs to be taken into account is also the fact that trade can be done from countries which do not have same standards as in EU. In terms of sheep market, instability is there, good incomes are a real challenge at producer level.

3. Implementation of the CAP (greening and permanent grassland, coupled support, young farmers, areas with natural constraints); including simplification of the CAP, with relevance to the sheep sector;

The Commission representatives gave presentations on these points which can be found on CIRCABC <https://circabc.europa.eu/>.

Voluntary coupled support

Maintaining the current levels of production (2009-2013) is the objective of voluntary coupled support. Sheep and goats are eligible. There are different national ceilings to be granted depending on the MS. 12% of total voluntary coupled support envelope will be given to sheep and goats. More details on the scheme will be uploaded soon.

Young farmers scheme

The young farmers scheme is mandatory under the new CAP. Luxembourg is the only country which decided to grant a lump sum payment.

Greening

Farmers have to comply with greening obligations. The level of permanent grassland to be kept is the one in 2012. If the ration decreases by 5%, reconversion of land that was ploughed is necessary. Crop diversification does not apply if permanent grassland constitutes more than 75% of the land.

Simplification

No change in the basic act is foreseen. The purpose is to target greening from an administrative point of view. Beginning of next year, new proposals are to be adopted.

The Chairman underlined the importance of these points and that the options of each MS start to become clear now.

The Commission representative gave a presentation which can be found on CIRCABC <https://circabc.europa.eu/>.

Discussion

Questions on the contribution of coupled support to avoiding the decline in sheep numbers, on the eligible sectors have been asked.

The environmental organisation representative disapprove the definition of ecological focus area.

The Commission representative underlined that each MS chooses the sector(s) which are in difficulty and mostly need this type of support.

4. Simplification of the carcass classification system – state of play;

The Commission representative gave a presentation which can be found on CIRCABC <https://circabc.europa.eu/>.

The work has started with the identification of the relevant regulations (in the case of sheep sector: Regulation 1249/2008 and Regulation 315/2002) and the identification of the points necessary to be simplified. Next step was to merge these into one regulation.

Producers representatives requested for more transparency on reporting and dressing specifications, for more harmonisation across MS in order to get more accurate figures.

5. Implementation of the Regulation (EC) no. 1069/2011 on the provision of food information to consumers with regard to the indication of the country of origin for meat used as ingredient - Follow up to the Commission report on the possibility to extend mandatory origin labelling for meat (of all types) as an ingredient)

In February 2015, the European Parliament called the Commission to introduce mandatory origin labelling for meat (of all types) used as an ingredient, by means of a resolution. The Commission services sent a reply to the European Parliament on this request. written contribution. The Commission considers that it is not proportionate to go for origin labelling for meat (of all types) used as an ingredient because of weak consumers' willingness to pay for such information and the challenges and administrative burden involved. Voluntary information can always be provided. The Commission does not intend to present any legislative initiatives in this regard.

6. Market access update. Trade opportunities and challenges for the sheep meat sector.

The Commission representative gave a presentation which can be found on CIRCABC <https://circabc.europa.eu/>.

TSE and bluetongue are the main challenges faced.

Discussion

Trade representatives underlined the need for better access for the EU faced with competition from New Zealand and Australia which benefit from opportunities in US. The sheep sector is very impacted by TSE. Chinese market is an important market, largely serviced by New Zealand. Having access means having options, better returns for farmers and optimising market input. Edible fifth quarter products are premium in non-EU markets. From an Irish perspective, Ireland should be present in the next meeting in July.

A question on whether it is up to the MS to push for access or if it is EU which should do it has been asked.

The Commission representative mentioned that they will push further China and Japan. Trade conditions are being negotiated by the Commission. If something is dealt bilaterally, the Commission would be very keen to receive this information.

The Chairman concluded by underlining the evolving market for sheep, for different parts of carcasses and the need for market access for this sector.

8. Peste des Petits Ruminants (PPR) and lumpy skin disease (LSD) – EFSA's conclusions (possible)

The Commission representative gave a presentation which can be found on CIRCABC <https://circabc.europa.eu/>.

EFSA was mandated when these viruses were approaching the EU. Little is known about these diseases. Sporadic disease may be possible even if it is not endemic. There are good vaccines for PPR, for LSD, the vaccines present some limitations.

In January 2015, LSD has been introduced in Cyprus. Some recommendations have been made: early detection, compensation farmers, carry out vaccination campaigns and culling of infected animals. It is difficult to say what vector has contributed to this first case.

Turkish authorities reported LSD in European part, closed to Greece and Bulgaria.

Discussion

The representatives of the animal health organisation have congratulated the Commission for the way they managed the outbreaks and asked about the role of the Commission in OIE activities.

The Commission representative replied that there are no steps to be taken when it comes to disease eradication through OIE. The system for disease notification is excellent. Support is needed for transboundary diseases. It is believed that the impact is not big when it comes to beef production, in the case of dairy herds, there might be some losses.

9. AOB

a (large carnivores). The Commission services sent a written contribution.

A question was asked about the openness of the platform to other members and how farmers could be included in this initiative.

b. Producer representatives asked about research and development project involving the European Commission in Uruguay.

The Commission representative answered that EU has lot of cooperation in food production, biotechnology, it may be that a cooperation project with Uruguay exists but it was impossible to say something on this without any further details.

The Commission representative reminded the members that the documents are on CIRCABC before the meeting.

The Chairman concluded the meeting by saying that two half days are not satisfactory and asked the group to send agenda items in time. He thanked the participants for attending and for their contribution and the interpreters for their work.

Points on beekeeping

1. Honey market situation and management

The Commission representative gave a presentation which can be found on CIRCABC <https://circabc.europa.eu/>

A Commission representative gave a presentation on the honey market situation. The figures were the same as those previously provided by the Member States. There were around 16 million beehives in 2013 and the number of hives had increased between 2003 and 2016. The distribution of hives was linked with the climate. The trend in the number of beekeepers seemed to be stable, but Italy had seen a drop of 20,000 beekeepers compared to 2013. More than half of all beekeepers were over the age of 55, thus demonstrating the aging of the sector. Most beekeepers had less than 10 hives.

2013 had seen a decrease in honey production in the traditional Member States, such as France and Italy. There are generally no direct links between the number of beehives and the amount of honey produced.

Global honey production had increased. China was the main producer country (30%), followed by the EU (12.3%), Turkey (5.7%) and Argentina (4.8%).

The EU only played a small role in honey exports. The main countries of destination in 2014 were Saudi Arabia, Switzerland and the USA. Being around 60% self-sufficient, the EU

needed to import. The main countries that exported to the EU in 2014 were China, Mexico and Ukraine. Imports from China had increased by more than 20,000 tonnes over four years. Imports from Thailand had also increased by more than 3,500 tonnes over four years. The average import price in 2014 was 2.14 €/kg and the average export price was 5.31 €/kg.

Copa-Cogeca said that the data presented were the same as those seen before and should be updated. There was also no information on the price of Chinese honey on the documents sent before the meeting. This was very important to analyze the market, given that imports from China were increasing, with 7,000 tonnes more in 2014 than in 2013. It was also vital to pay close attention to the traceability of imports from Thailand and Ukraine.

Looking back at the past decade, the number of beehives had increased by 40% (if we consider that the statistics are given for number of hives in the countries members of the EU (from 15 to 28), but the level of honey produced remained the same. Beekeepers therefore needed to compensate the decrease in production and in fact had increasing production costs to deal with. It was essential to have data on prices per Member State.

2014 was a difficult year for the sector but the statistics are not yet available.

The Commission replied that the data on prices could be found on CIRCABC. The Commission was concerned about the drop in production.

FoodDrinkEurope said that it would be helpful to have more detailed information on the European honey market. Imports of honey from Ukraine had been duty free for a quota of 5 000 tons per year in 2015, and FoodDrinkEurope wished to know whether this would continue.

The Commission replied that the quota for Ukraine would be renewed provided the deep comprehensive trade agreement is signed with Ukraine.

2. Adulteration of honey

The Commission indicated that a Recommendation to the Member States has been adopted since the issue of fraud on honey was presented at a previous meeting. It sets up the parameters of a control plan coordinated at EU level intended to evaluate the frequency of fraudulent practices in the marketing of certain foodstuffs. With respect to honey the plan provides for the collection of more than 2,000 samples over several months and the availability of the results by the end of the year. The Recommendation has not been published in the Official Journal.

In parallel, the Commission has mandated the Joint Research Centre to provide support by testing honey samples with advanced methods to detect fraudulent addition of sugar, and also to conduct further scientific work on methods allowing the detection of honey adulteration by all types of exogenous sugar.

Copa-Cogeca noted that there were a number of unanswered technical issues concerning fraud detection and that they should have been tackled beforehand. In particular Copa-Cogeca invited the Commission to be careful when communicating on the results and to differentiate between feeding bee with sugar syrups and veritable cases of fraud. Copa-Cogeca also wondered whether the recommendation would be a regular occurrence or whether it was a one-off.

FoodDrinkEurope asked how to determine the geographical and botanical origin.

The Commission replied that the sampling has been set up as a balanced selection of the different products on the market, from imports or from the EU, and that the objective of the control plan is to establish the prevalence of real cases of fraud. The format for publishing the results has not yet been decided, but in any case the information will be anonymized. The Commission also clarified that the methods to determine the geographical and botanical origin are recognized methods based on the determination of the relative frequency of pollens.

The Commission indicated that this Recommendation was related to control plans for 2015 and that no decision has been taken for the next years.

3. Information on the delegated acts for national beekeeping programmes

A Commission representative gave a presentation on this item. The delegated act was very short and covered the matter of allocating the EU budget based on the number of beehives and the obligation to avoid double funding. The delegated act included a definition of a beehive and the obligation to use a reliable method to determine the number of beehives. The Member States had held long debates on this matter, as they had different recording systems. A decision was therefore made to harmonise the recording period from 1st September until the end of December each year. In addition, a specified minimum amount of Union aid per programme should be set, in order to allow all Member States to implement a cost-effective apiculture programme. For the first years of implementation of the national beekeeping programmes, the budget would be allocated according to the number of beehives in 2013. If the implementing and delegated acts were approved during the summer, the ongoing national beekeeping programmes could also include the new measures adopted by the CAP reform.

In terms of timing, the Commission adopted the delegated act in mid-May and sent it to the European Parliament and Council. With no negative reactions, the act should soon be adopted. If this is the case, the implementing act could be submitted for approval before the summer break. In addition, a meeting with the Member States had been scheduled to inform them about the interpretation of the delegated and implementing acts, and to encourage the Member States to continue working on new methods to determine the number of beehives.

Copa-Cogeca stated that the new rules marked a general improvement, even though some Member States could be penalised by the new method to fix the number of beehives. Copa-Cogeca is concerned about how the Commission will assess the validity of the systems developed by member states to define the number of colonies. It is positive to include other products of the hive in the statistics.

The Commission replied that the data (system of evaluation and results) would be public, therefore would necessitate greater discipline. In addition, the Commission would ask to receive fewer, but better quality data.

4. Report on the status of various products of the hive

The Commission indicated that discussions had already been held during the CAP reform, but that the decision was taken not to include a definition of the various products of the hive in the single CMO regulation. With the reform, these products are however covered by the national apiculture programmes.

Copa-Cogeca indicated that royal jelly production in China totalled between 2,000 and 4,000 tonnes, whereas France produced 2 tonnes. In the EU, there was no harmonisation on the definition of the different products of the hive and they also had different statutes in the various Member States, for example, propolis was sold in some countries as a medicine, yet in others as an agricultural product. At the same time, these products were important for beekeepers, as they made it possible to diversify their sources of income.

The Commission replied that the first step for the sector would be to agree on a definition of these different products and this could take time. They will ask to the different member states if they have definitions for the bee products. The sector will do the same.

5. State of play of the draft ISO international standard for royal jelly

A presentation was given by a representative of the royal jelly producers' group. The presentation is available on DG AGRI's website.

Copa-Cogeca asked how the new standard could be used, should it be approved. They also wondered who would carry out the controls and how much this would cost.

The representative from the producers' group explained that the final use of the standard was still being discussed. Everybody would be able to access the standard, yet, given the costs, it may not be so easy to use it for direct sales.

Beelife asked whether having two types of royal jelly would confuse consumers.

The representative replied that both types showcased two different qualities of the product. Further information for consumers would be needed.

6. Epilobee study on honeybee mortality and the next steps

A Commission representative presented this item. The objective of the study on honeybee colony mortality was to ascertain the state of play of honeybee colony loss on a harmonised basis in each of the participating Member States. In total, 176,769 colonies in 17 Member States were checked during the two years of the programme. A decreasing trend in colony mortalities (most importantly in winter mortality) had been noted over the course of the programme. The data gathered on various topics, such as disease prevalence, use of veterinary treatments, the beekeeping context, and management, would be further analysed. A statistical analysis of any correlation between colony loss and potential risk factors was underway.

The EURL, the participating Member State scientist and EFSA was expected to publish a number of scientific papers on further details. EFSA had also given itself a mandate to establish a framework to assess the risk of multiple stress factors to honeybee colonies. This would take five years (project MUST-B).

Copa-Cogeca commented that Epilobee was a good project, however the section relating to plant protection products was missing. The differences between the Member States were well known on winter losses, as it was colder in the north than in the south. In addition, there was no definition or distinction between a dead hive and a non-productive hive, which was vital for the sector. The Commission clarified that these things have been considered already before the study and had to be omitted because of either lack of standardisation, methodology or due to the complexity they would have added.

7. Update on the status of *Aethina tumida* (small hive beetle)

A Commission representative presented this item. The 2015 surveillance results revealed no new cases in Calabria or in Sicily. The Commission's implementing decision to restrict movement had been prolonged until the end of November 2015, given that surveillance was still ongoing. According to EFSA technical assistance report efforts to eradicate should be attempted immediately and rigorously. If it was not possible to achieve eradication, then other methods could be used. It was essential that beekeepers comply with the mandatory notification of the pathogen to alert the veterinary services about any suspected cases of small hive beetle as soon as possible. It was fundamental not to trade queens and other material from infected areas, as well as to forge agreements among themselves, especially as there seemed to be conflicting views in Italy.

Copa-Cogeca stated that Italian beekeepers had been left stranded and had not yet received support, which was unacceptable as they were losing their only source of income. In addition, Sicily was the main transhumance region, so the economic impact also affected beekeepers outside of the protected zone.

The Commission replied that the Italian government had informed the Commission that they would compensate beekeepers for eradication measures.

8. Information on the honey breakfast event at the European Parliament and world bee day

A Slovenian member of the European Parliament presented the point. 80% of beekeepers in Slovenia were members of the national association. The honey breakfast initiative in primary schools began in 2006. The main goal was to raise awareness about beekeeping and thus increase the number of young beekeepers. In 2012, on the back of these activities, it became a tradition to hold a Slovenian honey breakfast on the third Friday of November.

This initiative had been presented to several EU Institutions and a honey breakfast in the European Parliament was organised on 16th April 2015. At this event, a presentation was given on the initiative to have a world bee day on 20th May. This needed to be presented to

the UN and there was much hope that it would be successful.

Copa-Cogeca thanked the MEP for this initiative and asked whether there had been support from other Member States to develop similar initiatives elsewhere.

The Commission indicated that this kind of initiative had the support of several Member States, however there were no clear views or projects on how to finance this.

Beelife asked whether this initiative could be included in the school milk and fruit and vegetable schemes.

The Commission replied that this was being discussed.

The Chair indicated that the group was in favour of having a world bee day.

9. Report on the status of bee tests, suspension of three neonicotinoids and the new status of thiacloprid (endocrine disruptor)

A Commission representative gave a presentation on this item. In 2013, EFSA published a new risk assessment and the Commission had worked hard to push forward this risk assessment scheme. However, without the support of the Member States, the matter went back to the Commission, so the question on how to proceed was now on the table.

Neonicotinoid restrictions were currently in place and the Commission would soon begin a review of its scientific information. The Commission would also send out a call for further data. The members were encouraged to provide said data.

Thiacloprid was subject to the renewable phase. After ten years, a new file would be assessed.

Copa-Cogeca said that these issues were important for beekeepers and that data should also include wild bees and bumblebees.

Beelife advocated a general ban of the three neonicotinoids and stated that the process should be faster for the two other active substances.

The Commission replied that bumblebees and solitary bees were covered by the call for data.

A strict schedule was already in place.

10. AOB

Copa-Cogeca explained that the requirements for the adoption of new national rural development programmes ran counter to the objective to save bees. This point would be further discussed at the next meeting.

The Chair thanked the participants and indicated that the next meeting would take place in November.

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