



Brussels,  
PV/fvn agri.e.3 Ares(2023 11031510)

## MINUTES

### MEETING OF THE EXPERT GROUP MEAT MARKET OBSERVATORY – BEEF, VEAL AND PIGMEAT

16 October 2023

Chair: AGRI E3 Animal Products

Delegations present: experts were present from all delegations, except CEJA European Council of Young farmers.

#### 1. Approval of the agenda and of the minutes of previous meeting

2. **Nature of the meeting:** non-public virtual meeting

#### 3. List of points discussed

- EU beef market situation
- EU pigmeat market situation
- Trends in sales of meat products - presentation by EuroCommerce
- Specific Meat Trade Barriers - presentation by UECBV

#### 4. Conclusions/recommendations/opinions

- The European Commission presented the most recent beef and veal as well as pigmeat market data.
- For the beef market, the Meat MO highlighted a production decline in the first semester of 2023 and herd reduction from the Eurostat survey in June 2023. Prices remain stable at a high level after a declining trend during the summer months. Such high prices and the moderation of feed prices in the last months allowed the situation to improve. However the level of prices does not compensate input costs and the sector remains under pressure due to a weak demand, driven by inflation concerns.

- The Meat MO also noted that, overall, while trade volumes decreased in the first half of 2023, the value of traded products increased.
- The Meat MO underlined the contrast with the rest of the world (except the US) where production remains dynamic and expressed concerns on the discouragement and disengagement of producers in a context of uncertainty about EU regulatory initiatives (e.g. animal welfare) that could impact the sector and about the impact of current and future market openings following FTA agreements.
- The EU Meat MO noted that there is a strong decline in pig production, with reductions in nearly all EU Member States.
- After several months of record high prices, the past two months have seen a downward trend in both pig carcass prices and piglet prices. Still, it is worth noting that both remain above the prices of last year and the historical average of the last five years.
- On international trade, the Meat MO noted decreased pigmeat exports towards most third country destinations, the UK being an important exception.
- Participants expressed concerns regarding the sector's future prospects for all partners in the chain. For producers in particular, uncertainty over upcoming legislation also brings reluctance to invest.
- Eurocommerce presented trends in sales of meat products and the evolution of meat consumption patterns in the EU from a retail perspective. General inflation continues to decrease in the EU but food inflation remains high. The cost-of-living crisis has had a significant impact on consumer behaviour, with consumers switching to more affordable options.
- Meat products have recorded high prices, which has led to a decrease in volumes sold to consumers by retailers. This is taking place in a wider context where many consumers are choosing to eat less meat (for health or sustainability reasons) or switching between meat segments (e.g. buying more chicken than pork).
- UECEBV presented a list of challenges faced by its members. These difficulties include obstacles related to regionalization when it comes to animal diseases, that are causing trade disruptions and losses. Additionally, UECEBV highlighted a lack of transparency that can delay the export process to 3<sup>rd</sup> countries, as well as concerns regarding the Sanitary and Phytosanitary chapter of free trade agreements.
- UECEBV also underlined the importance of exporting meat and enhancing the valorisation of the entire carcass to prevent food waste and support the Green Deal transition, which requires significant investment. They emphasized that imports should not come at the expense of local production, with livestock farming a crucial part of European agriculture. The organization also mentioned that the EU's high standards can be costly for the industry and may challenge food security.

## 5. Next steps

The Meat MO will keep monitoring the situation and evolution of the beef and veal, and pigmeat markets, paying particular attention to challenges emerging from EU production and price evolution, international trade, food inflation and changing consumption patterns.

## **6. Next meeting**

The next meeting of the Meat MO is scheduled for 27 February 2024 (tbc).

## **7. List of participants**

The list of participants is attached to the minutes.

(e-signed)

Pierre BASCOU

List of participants– Minutes  
*Meeting of the Expert Group Meat Market Observatory -  
Beef, Veal and Pigeat*  
**16 October 2023**

Organisations
Centre de liaison des industries transformatrices de viande de l'UE (CLITRAVI)
EuroCommerce
European agri-cooperatives (COGECA)
European farmers (COPA)
European Coordination Via Campesina (ECVC)
Union Européenne du Commerce du Bétail et des Métiers de la Viande (UECBV)