

## Meat MO Economic Board

**22 February 2021**

- o The 15th meeting of the Economic Board of the Meat Market Observatory (Meat MO) took place on 22 February 2021, with the participation of experts from the meat supply chain.
- o The exchange of views on the beef, veal and pigmeat market situation was based on the Commission's factual presentations (see Annexes I and III).
- o For the beef and veal market, discussions showed that, although the market has not fully recovered from the Covid-19 lockdown, there is a certain degree of stabilisation driven by retail sales. The export performance in 2020 had been maintained at 2019 levels, whereas imports declined substantially.
- o The Commission presented updated information on quantities of meat available for consumption in the EU in 2020 (see Annex II), as well as an overview of meat sales in retail and foodservices, and trends in meat substitutes.
- o The Meat MO noted that the beef sector is facing unprecedented challenges related to the public image of livestock in terms of environmental and climate impacts, that overlooks nutritional values and eating quality of beef. There is a need for accurate factual information for dissemination on the impact of red meat on human health and the environment. A better and objective description of services derived from livestock farming is also required.
- o For pigmeat, the Meat MO highlighted the current difficult market situation for producers, influenced by African Swine Fever (ASF) that has an impact on export possibilities, Covid-19-related restrictions in slaughterhouses, high feed costs, and production structures that differ quite substantially between Member States.
- o With regard to trade with the UK, a representative of UECEV made a presentation on post-Brexit challenges (see Annex IV).
- o The Meat MO monitors also the evolution of meat consumption patterns. In this respect, Eurocommerce provided a presentation on trends in sales of meat products from a retail perspective (see Annex V).
- o The closure of foodservices due to Covid-19 had a severe impact on the consumption of expensive cuts such as beefsteaks and veal, more than on poultry and pork. Household consumption increased during lockdown, in particular for minced meat and frozen meat. A vast majority of consumers still consider meat as an integral part of their healthy diets, but with increased focus on prices.
- o The Meat MO will keep monitoring the situation and evolution of the beef and veal, and pigmeat markets paying particular attention to the challenges that the Covid-19 lockdown, the ASF situation and post-Brexit pose for the immediate future.
- o The next meeting of the Meat MO Economic Board is scheduled for 21 June 2021 (tbc).