

**Minutes of the meeting of the expert group
on Regulation (EU) 2016/429 - to discuss Delegated Acts on the identification,
movement and certification of equine animals - E00930**

27 October 2017, Brussels

1. Approval of the agenda

2. Nature of the meeting

The meeting was non-public. The Member States' experts on animal breeding (purebred breeding animals of the equine species), the Member States' experts on animal health and the invited experts on horse competitions and racing were participating in the meeting.

3. List of points discussed

1. Exchange of views on a content of Regulation (EU) 2016/429 of the European Parliament and of the Council ("Animal Health Law")¹ and suggestions for a future Commission Delegated Regulation supplementing Animal Health Law as regards identification, movement and certification of equine animals, and in particular as regards:

- a. Categories of equidae.

The majority of Member States was advocating for a simpler system and was in favour of 2 categories of equidae ('equidae for an establishment', where an establishment is defined in Article 4(27) of Animal Health Law, and 'equidae for slaughter'). In addition, in a group of 'equidae for an establishment' there should be special provisions, being derogations from standard requirements or specific rules, on movement of horses used for racing and competitions with a higher health status. Only one Member State was in favour of keeping all categories of equidae as laid down in Article 2 of Directive 2009/156/EC, and another Member State suggested 3 categories of equidae: horses with a higher health status supported by studbooks, equidae for slaughter and horses for leisure. The invited experts on horse competitions and racing were advocating for keeping a category of registered horses with special conditions to accommodate frequent movements of horses for racing and competitions.

- b. New obligation: Registration of establishments where equine animals are kept and of their movements between those establishments.

Most of the Member States were in favour of 15 days as a residence period for equidae on an establishment for the purpose of their certification from the establishment of origin, except for equidae for slaughter with no residence period (as it is currently the case also for bovine animals and swine for slaughter). Some of the Member States were of the opinion that it should be 30 days residence period and an exemption from that rule granted for horses with a higher health status. It was also clarified that during this residency period of 15 or 30 days, movement of equidae from and to this establishment should be possible on national territory (the residency period should not be understood as isolation or quarantine).

In accordance with Animal Health Law, all establishments where equidae are kept shall be registered in the central database. However, there should be a derogation from obligation of establishment registration in case equidae are staying for a random visit on an

¹ Regulation (EU) 2016/429 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 9 March 2016 on transmissible animal diseases and amending and repealing certain acts in the area of animal health ('Animal Health Law') (OJ L 84, 31.3.2016, p. 1)

establishment. It was suggested that an establishment should be registered in the central database within 30 days of commencement of keeping there equidae.

The invited experts on horse competitions and racing were willing to give the competent authorities access to their data bases which they keep for their own purposes.

Registration of all movements of equidae is to be documented in a register kept by the operator of the establishment. One Member State requested for a derogation – an exemption from an establishment register in case if all movements are registered in the central data base (this is in line with Article 102(4) of the Animal Health Law).

All movements between Member States shall be recorded in TRACES. Registration of national movements of equidae is a responsibility of the Member States' competent authorities. Member States identified a need to develop TRACES in a way that the establishment of origin may also be the establishment of destination, what is currently impossible. Several Member States requested that for a journey through several Member States during the period of validity of the certificate there is pre-notification to the affected competent authorities, similar to what was agreed for temporary admission in the recent review of the import conditions, the idea of a journey log similar to the welfare rules was mentioned. However, there was also the opinion that the health situation in Member States is comparable and that therefore only the traceability must be ensured.

c. Requirements for entry into the Union of equine animals.

The majority of Member States requested to keep in the future legislation one type of entry into the Union for equidae. Only one Member State was in favour of continuing with the current system for imports (permanent entry, temporary admission). During the meeting it was agreed that the current regime for entry into the Union of equidae for slaughter will be maintained (3 months of residence period before dispatch). In case of equidae for an establishment it would be 40 days of residence period before dispatch, as currently required for horses intended to be temporarily admitted into the Union.

In addition, Member States agreed that provisions on temporary export of Union horses to third countries and their subsequent re-entry should be preserved in the future legislation, with 30 days period for such movement. The same time period should be considered while drafting conditions for within Union movement of horses with the higher health status.

d. Rules on the information to be included in and specific provisions for a single lifetime identification document provided for in point (c) of Article 114(1) of the Animal Health Law that has to accompany equine animals when they are moved.

Member States were in favour of a single identification document which is multipurpose. Some of them also considered the current system for duplicate and replacement document as good, while others wanted to reinforce this system. Two Member States were of the opinion that there is no need for a graphical description, as well as for additional information which is unrelated to animal health (information on breeding, medication and for the sport). Four Member States, requested not to change the current format of the identification document as already a big investment was done in this area and the system is functioning well. There was also a request for harmonisation of data exchange between data bases and one Member State was willing to present its national system established for that purpose.

2. Miscellaneous: Understanding of 'a unique code' referred to in Article 114(1)(a) of the Animal Health Law.

Two Member States were of the opinion that 'a unique code', which is to be entered in the computer database established by the Member State, should be understood as the transponder code. In their view the means of identification referred to in points (a) ('a unique code') and (b) ('a physical means of identification') of Article 114(1) of the Animal Health Law should be considered as a single number. If at all, the Universal Equine Life Number (UELN) should only be used for purebred breeding animals of the equine species.

Two other Member States expressed their strong support for the UELN. This worldwide recognised system allows tracing back horses to the country of origin and the issuing body which identified the horse for the first time and it ensures the continuity of the identification for several purposes (breeding, sport, etc).

The invited experts on horse competitions and racing also supported the UELN, as they see it as a valuable tool contributing to traceability.

As a compromise the Commission proposed two identification numbers for equidae, with priority to transponder number and unique life number (ULN), compatible with the UELN, as additional number. Both registered in the identification document and in the central database.

4. Conclusions/recommendations/opinions

The Commission obtained an up-date on the current situation in the Union, and the expectations of Member States for the future legislation as regards identification, movement and certification of equine animals and plans for its implementation.

The main conclusions of the meeting were the following:

- a) The majority of Member States was in favour of 2 categories of equidae ('equidae for an establishment' and 'equidae for slaughter'), with special provisions on movement for category of horses with a higher health status.
- b) The majority of Member States requested to keep in the future legislation one type of entry into the Union for equidae. Current regime for equidae for slaughter should be maintained (3 months of residence period in third country of origin) and for equidae for an establishment–40 days.
- c) Provisions on temporary export of the Union horses to third countries and their re-entry into the Union should be preserved in the future legislation, with 30 days period for such movement.
- d) Member States were in favour of a single multipurpose identification document.
- e) Member States did not oppose to the Commission compromise proposal to have two identification numbers for equidae, with priority to transponder number and ULN, compatible with UELN, as an additional number. Both numbers should be registered in the identification document and in the central database.

A follow up expert group meeting is required to discuss a draft legal text prepared based on the above conclusions.

5. Next steps

The outcome of the discussion and the opinions provided by the participants of this expert group will be used by the Commission during further Commission work towards delegated acts under Animal Health Law, and as relevant, in the context of the Animal Health and Welfare Section of the Standing Committee on Plants, Animals, Food and Feed (PAFF)².

6. Next meeting

The next meeting will take place in the first half of 2018.

² http://ec.europa.eu/food/animals/health/regulatory_committee_en