
The latest EU agriculture, environment & trade news

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PLANNED LIVESTOCK EMISSION RULES TOO MUCH FOR COMAGRI MEPS

There was widespread opposition to the lower thresholds for inclusion of livestock farms under planned revisions to the Industrial Emissions Directive (IED) at the Sept 29 meeting of the European Parliament's Agriculture Committee, with MEPs repeating many of the criticisms expressed by Ministers at Monday's Farm Council [see AF83-22], particularly of plans for the rules to be extended to the cattle sector & cover all farms with more than 150 livestock units.

Patrick Child, Deputy Director General of DG Environment (since Oct 2021), reminded Committee members of the responsibility of the livestock sector for 54% of EU emissions of methane & 67% of those of ammonia. The British official reminded MEPs that "in contrast to other emissions of pollutants these emissions have sadly remain stable for over 20 years." "Emissions of ammonia, for example, fell by less than 10% between 2005 to 2019, which is the lowest percentage fall across all air pollutants, while methane emissions have also not been reduced." "We cannot afford any further delay in reducing these emissions of greenhouse gases & pollutants," he said. "We must now set a clear pathway for their reduction." The current Directive, up for revision, covered "a small number of livestock farms, about 4% of the European Union's pigs & poultry farms, but it can be readily adapted to provide for a larger part of the livestock rearing sector to ensure the emission pathway that we need." "Yet at the same time, we are very mindful of the need to ensure the lowest possible burden for farmers who are facing very challenging times at present," the former DDG in in DG Research & Innovation (April 2016-Oct 2021) attempted to reassure MEPs. "The Commission has put a lot of effort, therefore, into designing a new legislative framework that is both proportionate & gives ample time for farmers to adapt."

"We have focused very clearly on the larger scale farms who can play their part, most cost effectively," he said, with the proposal covering "13% of the largest cattle, pigs & poultry farms across the European Union, which together represent 60% of ammonia & 43% of methane emissions from EU livestock." The proposal involved "minimal administrative requirements," with Member States allowed to implement the system in ways that are compatible with their existing systems." "The Industrial Emissions Directives framework allows experts of Member States, the livestock sector & environmental NGOs & academic experts to define together the specific measures which farmers should implement to curb their emissions," he said. "This will be based on existing best available techniques & practices & will be organised using the much praised IED's information exchange process." The Commission would "invite experts from the various livestock subsectors from Member States, & from environmental NGOs to work together with us to define what are the best available techniques for the rearing of livestock," & would "address in particular the specifics of pasture-based cattle systems where animals are only seasonally reared in indoor installations." He also pointed out that "our proposal will require farmers to adapt their ways of working at the earliest, by 2029, by which time we hope that the current crisis will be behind us." The long delay would "also, I hope, allow us time to adapt the Common Agricultural Policy for the post-2027 period to support the efforts of farmers in this area."

Rapporteur on the file, Belgian MEP Benoît Lutgen, considered that "it is a bit odd to have agriculture covered by industry." It was "very odd to me that the Commission believes that small-holdings, 150 cows, that is not very big as an industrial installation," should be included. "That is really not reflecting reality as far as I am concerned ... I think that you are going to annoy a large selection of farmers by this," the EPP euro-deputy from Bastogne in the Ardennes insisted. The Italian Socialist Paolo De Castro, his group's Shadow Rapporteur on the dossier, insisted the plans "should not ... jeopardise the sustainability of agriculture, which already has to face up to various challenges." "So we are surprised along with the Rapporteur by the threshold chosen by the Commission... because it means even small farms, medium-sized farms are going to be regarded as tantamount to highly polluting industrial type farms."

Renew Europe's J  r  my Decerle, from France, said that "I am not going to say anything different from what my previous speakers have just said." Child had talked about meeting interested organisations, but the MEP stressed that "the ones that I am meeting with are very concerned & they see this as a provocation." "We cannot have a Directive designed for large industrial installations," applying to the farm sector, he insisted. Instead, the new rules would have to respect, "the characteristics of European agriculture." The meeting's Chair Beno  t Biteau spoke for the Greens as their Shadow Rapporteur. "We understand completely the objectives of the proposals made by the Commission," he said. "We would probably share those objectives, but it really is important to improve & increase the way in which we deal with this." "We need to work possibly on the notion of density, level of burden, which is really important when we want to talk about the report on possible pollution, & I think that it should be possible to find compromises," he said. "I think what we need to do is get to work & make sure that the Directive makes progress & it does not stay as it is at the moment."

There was a strong dissenting voice from the Dutch MEP Anja Hazekamp, speaking for The Left group. "We welcome the inclusion of intensive animal farming & the lowering of the threshold for poultry & pig farms in the revision of the Industrial Emissions Directive," she said. "There is a serious urgency for strong legislation for agricultural emissions of greenhouse gases & pollutants not only from pigs & poultry farms, but also from other farmed animals such as cattle." She highlighted the "enormous," agricultural pollution issues in the Netherlands & Belgium. "These problems have been piling up over years & years," she said. "Meanwhile, farmers have been misled to think that business as usual was okay, no." "We need to include the entire intensive animal industry in the Industrial Emissions Directive not only the largest firms," she insisted. "Let us not be na  ve in claiming that new technologies will save us." "We have technologies such as low emission floors, air filters," she said. "They just do not work efficiently. The most efficient way to drastically reduce emissions of pollutants & greenhouse gas is to drastically decrease the number of animals kept in the agro industry & starting with animals in factory farms." "Let us not wait until 2029," she stressed, referring to the Commission's proposed date for imposition of the new requirements. "Let us start immediately."

AGRI MEPS QUESTION PLANNED EU INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY OFFICE ROLE ON GIs

AGRI MEPS, meeting on the morning of Sept 29, made clear that they do not want to see the running of the system of Geographical Indications (GIs) taken out of the hands of DG AGRI.

Speaking to his colleagues, Italian S&D MEP Paolo De Castro, Rapporteur on the dossier, explained that his 5-page working document on a 'Regulation of the European Parliament & of the Council on European Union Geographical Indications for wine, spirit drinks & agricultural products, & quality schemes for agricultural products,'* "offers the possibility of having a single consolidated European text on quality production, a text that will be able to guarantee closer alignment on quality ... between all sectors, while protecting the unique characteristics of the various elements & allow periodic revision" [see AF81-22].

He stressed that the aim was to "improve & expand on the original proposal, enhancing it & improving on a system that's already unparalleled in the world," while not requiring any increase in spending, & simplifying the role of the European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO). In particular, he stressed that "the producer groups are the real driving force between the GIs & need to continue to run this (GI scheme)," insisting that "only people directly involved in the production phase should be doing it." The groups should also have "the possibility of introducing a system of mandatory contributions," obliging "all producers to support all the costs that the producer group pays when it comes to carrying out activities under the regulation." He also wanted the incorporation of protected names in the names of processed products to be banned, unless the producer group agrees to their being used. "If we really are serious about simplifying the registration system what we need to do is have a timetable for the examination of requests for registration & the granting of GIs by the European Commission," he said. "We want the maximum... to be five months... extended by three more months only under justified cases."

For the EPP, Shadow Rapporteur   lvaro Amaro from Portugal backed De Castro's stress on the role of producer groups. He also highlighted the need for stronger protection for GIs online, agreeing with a point made in the Italian Socialist's working document. For Renew, German MEP Ulrike M  ller read the speaking notes of Frenchwoman Ir  ne Tolleret, absent because of illness. "Ms Tolleret has been in contact with many stakeholders & one of the main concerns that has been raised repeatedly in this transfer of competences from the European Commission to the European Union Intellectual Property Office," she said, warning of a "risk of losing the current link between policy-makers (&) managers in the territory," which was "essential for GIs." "However, we should not question the essential contribution EUIPO could make to ensure better protection of GIs," she said. "Its competences should be strengthened & clarified."

French Green MEP Beno  t Biteau, who also chaired the meeting, read the thoughts of his party's Shadow Rapporteur on the issue, fellow Frenchman Claude Gruffat. "Generally speaking, our Rapporteur welcomes the initiative from the Commission," Biteau said, although Gruffat had urged caution on the role of the EUIPO, "& wonders whether it would be appropriate." The Green Shadow had also called for clarification on the role of recognised producer groups. For The Left group, Spanish MEP Eugenia Rodr  guez Palop, said that De

Castro had “clearly identified the key issues to be tackled in the Parliament phase of all of this,” although she disagreed on some issues. “I think all of us recognise the vital contribution of GIs to the development of rural areas & the protection of the rural heritage,” she said. “It is an added value & has helped primary producers & helped to create jobs & supported the very identity of rural areas.” Palop added that “we should recognise the present GI system has worked very well, but it does not mean that it cannot be improved in some areas.” She stressed the importance of new rules on ‘evocation’ of GI names on other products, as well as on e-commerce, but agreed “on the doubts the document identifies on the present Commission proposal on the Intellectual Property Office.” “We should not forget that GIs do not just protect a name,” she underlined. “They are also are part of agricultural policy...so it is more sensible that the management task remains with DG AGRI.”

Speaking on behalf of the Commission, Acting Deputy Director General Michael Niejahr responded by thanking De Castro & his team for a “very constructive document.” The senior official welcomed the stress on the role of producer groups, but was concerned about the idea of compulsory contributions, which would “mean financial burdens on those producers who are actually producing GI products.” On the role of the EUIPO, Niejahr reassured MEPs that “it is not the intention of giving away any decision-making powers from the Commission & DG AGRI.” “The Commission will retain the final decision,” he said. “What we want to put here... is really a framework,” which would set down in law “something that is already happening in practice, namely some technical...support from IPO for the Commission’s framework.”

*<https://emeeting.europarl.europa.eu/emeeting/committee/en/agenda/202209/AGRI>

SCHOOL FOOD SCHEMES NEED BIGGER BUDGET, EXPANDED EDUCATION ROLE, AGRI MEPS

The EU’s school’s scheme for fruit, vegetables, milk & dairy products should be better funded & simplified to involve more schools, while its education aspect should be increased, AGRI MEPS said on Thursday (Sept 29). COMAGRI Rapporteur on the issue, Belgian MEP Marc Tarabella, told the meeting that “the programme is far from being a success in all States.” He spoke on the basis of a 119-page study by the European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS) on the ‘Implementation of the EU school scheme for fruit, vegetables & milk products: A mid-term review’*, noting that the researchers had cited witness accounts from people to have access “to healthy & sustainable food for all children regardless of their social economic background.”

EPRS had concluded that the scheme needed an expanded budget, as it currently covers just one fruit per child per week, something which Tarabella, felt was “not enough to make a real influence on eating habits,” while they had also found, according to the S&D euro-deputy, that “in some Member States they don’t make full use of the budget.” He wanted more to be done on education. “Awareness raising should become more frequent & cover more ground,” he said, urging farm visits so that “children can reconnect with the animal production & consumption.” The fruit & vegetables provided under the scheme “of course should be unprocessed products, preferably organic,” he said. “Certain criteria of eligibility such as seasonality, variety & availability of local products that should be borne in mind.” It was “also appropriate to give the priority to short production cycles ... in line with the local lifestyle & the cultural norms,” he continued, adding that products “containing added sugars, added fats & added salt should not be allowed in the programme.”

The EPP’s Shadow Rapporteur Salvatore De Meo from Italy, was happy with the goal of strengthening the scheme, expressing the view that the most important aspect was “food education.” “We forget how education about a healthy balanced diet is a crucially important point in training consumers to be future citizens in good health,” he said, urging the use of “programmes such as this instead of demonising foods by banning them or having off-putting labelling.” For Renew, the Romanian Alin Mituța stressed that “we need to provide better quality products that are fresh, organic, locally grown, seasonal &, of course, prioritise short supply chains because in doing so, we support small farmers in all Member States,” while at “the same time providing healthy products for our children.” He too wanted to “strengthen the educational & nutritional component.” At the same time, there should be less tape & the Commission should do more to encourage the exchange of best practices, Mituța opined. “Let’s also analyse the possibility of extending the programme to candidate countries,” he suggested. “Some adjustments have been made to incorporate the Ukrainian refugee children fleeing the war, but I think we can go even further & extend the whole programme to our candidate countries.”

For the Greens, Austrian Sarah Wiener complained of administrative difficulties. “There are things that just don’t make sense,” the celebrity chef & author said. “Teachers are not allowed to drink milk along with the children or eat an apple, which I think is not really allowing them to set a good example.” The ECR group, represented by Ladislav Ilčić, felt that red tape meant that too few schools had taken part in the scheme, & wanted children to learn “exactly where the apple was grown, under which conditions we will strengthen the local community, which is in line with rural development.” Anja Hazekamp of The Left group noted that “yesterday was world school milk day & I think in future we should have a world school fruit & vegetable day.” She noted the very high consumption of milk, complaining that its “massive” production “has consequences for humans, animals & the environment & we should not be burdening future generations with further health & environmental problems particular given that there are... plant alternatives.”

*<https://emeeting.europarl.europa.eu/emeeting/committee/en/agenda/202209/AGRI>

EU HEALTH CHIEF KYRIAKIDES HIGHLIGHTS NEED TO CUT FOOD WASTE

EU Health & Food Safety Commissioner Stella Kyriakides has stressed the importance of cutting food waste at a time when there are concerns over whether many people will have enough to eat. In a statement marking the 3rd International Day of Awareness of Food Loss & Waste* on Sept 29, the Cypriot Commissioner highlighted the “great pressure,” put on the food system by “the negative effects of climate change, environmental degradation, economic shocks & violent conflicts, which are endangering food security for millions of people around the world.”

“Against this backdrop, it is unacceptable that 20% of all food we produce in the EU is lost or wasted,” the trained child psychologist insisted. “Today is a reminder for all of us that we need to take bolder action against food losses & waste.” The EU was “already taking decisive actions to address global food security through international cooperation, supporting the establishment of sustainable & resilient food systems through our investments in partner countries.” The Union was “also mobilising humanitarian aid & support to those most affected by the crisis, in cooperation with our Member States,” she continued. “While food availability is not currently at stake in the EU, food affordability is becoming a growing concern for many households,” the Nicosia woman explained. “Today, over 36 million people in the EU cannot afford a healthy meal every other day.” “If we are to achieve a sustainable food system & enhance food security, we need to make the most of our food & the resources that go into producing it,” she stressed. “The EU’s Farm to Fork Strategy gives us a clear direction to drive food losses & waste out of our food system.”

The Democratic Rally politician made the point that the Commission was “now in the process of preparing the first ever EU legislation to set binding food waste reduction targets.” It would involve intensifying “food waste prevention actions on the ground & scale-up the EU’s contribution to the global target of halving food waste by 2030.” “We will also propose, by the end of the year, new rules on date marking to help consumers & avoid unnecessary food waste linked to misunderstanding of ‘use by’ & ‘best before’ dates,” the 66-year-old politician said. “We will also continue to integrate food loss & waste prevention in other EU policies & scale-up action across the EU, mobilising Member States, food businesses & civil society, notably through the work of the EU Platform on Food Losses & Food Waste,” which next meets on Oct 20** (hybrid event).

The Commission was “investing in research & innovation to support all players in accelerating the transition to sustainable, healthy & inclusive food systems,” through Horizon Europe, a process which included. “identification of solutions to prevent & reduce food losses & food waste.” The EU’s executive had also “joined international efforts as part of the global ‘Food is never waste’ coalition, in a process to transform the way the world produces, consumes, & thinks about food.” “Today, we are united with other public & private sector organisations across the globe in a common call to action against food loss & waste,” Kyriakides concluded. “Let’s stop food waste, for people & for our planet.”

*https://food.ec.europa.eu/safety/food-waste/international-day-awareness-food-loss-and-waste_en

**https://food.ec.europa.eu/safety/food-waste/eu-actions-against-food-waste/eu-platform-food-losses-and-food-waste/platform-meetings_en

NEKULA SAYS PUBLIC DOESN’T REALISE THE SERIOUSNESS OF ASF

Czech Farm Minister Zdeněk Nekula has told EU decision-makers that the public does not realise the seriousness of the African Swine Fever (ASF) outbreak & called for more information on the risks of the disease & the preventive measures that need to be taken.

Speaking to the ‘High-Level Ministerial Meeting on African Swine Fever’* that took place in Brussels on Sept 27 [see AF84-22], the current Council chairman noted that “Europe has been dealing with the African swine fever virus for 15 years,” but humans were “still one of the major factors responsible for the spread of the disease to new areas.” As evidence for that view, he cited “the quick spread of the disease over distances of hundreds of kilometres, as was the case in the Czech Republic.” “The subsequent eradication of African swine fever on our territory has been very costly & difficult,” the KDU-ČSL (Christian Democrat) politician said. He pointed out that “in the time we have been dealing with the virus in Europe, we have learned a lot about its characteristics, how it spreads & how to counteract the pathogen.” “Effective protection of domestic pig farms has been implemented in a number of areas,” he said, “& the Czech Republic had eradicated the disease, “yet we cannot relax our vigilance for a moment as the virus continues to spread through Europe.” “Unfortunately, the public is not very aware of the seriousness of the problem,” the man from southern Moravia said. “If we did not fight the disease, pig farming in Europe would be threatened with complete extinction.” He was also concerned that “even some farmers are not aware of the biosecurity rules for pig farms.” “Experience in a number of Member States shows that small pig farms in particular are at risk,” he said, warning that the introduction of the disease onto these holdings “has a strong negative impact on the whole pig sector in the region.” Calling for more to be done to inform different sections of the population, he also stressed the need for finance. “A successful fight against the disease is incompatible with the current reduction of financial support to Member States,” he said. “Ensuring adequate financial resources is absolutely essential in terms of implementing stringent measures, education campaigns & disease surveillance.” *[High-level Ministerial Meeting on ASF](#)

LINS, DORFMANN & MARKEY PRESS EXEC ON FERTILISER, OTHERS FOLLOW ON AMMONIA

There is an urgent need for an EU Strategy on fertilisers to ensure food security in Europe, according to three EPP MEPs, COMAGRI Chair Norbert Lins, Italy's Herbert Dorfmann & Ireland's Colm Markey. In an 'Oral Question' (dated Sept 23), they are asking for the EU's executive to say whether it will draft such a Strategy. They also want to know if the Commission plans to lift anti-dumping duties on fertiliser imports. Finally, they ask whether "the Commission provide clarity on whether it is more cost effective to import fertiliser from third countries or to import gas from third countries for the production of fertilisers in Europe?" Farm Commissioner Janusz Wojciechowski is expected to deliver a statement in response to this question at the plenary session in Strasbourg on Thursday morning (Oct 6). Kicking off at 9am, MEPs will first discuss an *'EU approach for Space Traffic Management – an EU contribution addressing a global challenge'*, to be followed by the statement & debate on the need for a Fertiliser Strategy, something that is also backed by the farm lobby organisation Copa-Cogeca.

"European agriculture is facing a looming crisis," the three like-minded MEPs say in a preamble to their questions, submitted last week. "This year the limited availability of fertiliser has led to the depletion of residual fertiliser reserves in soils, which poses a serious threat to European food production." They highlight an "urgent need to tackle current fertiliser shortages in the short-term & begin the transition of European agriculture away from its dependency on synthetic fertilisers in the medium to long-term," & note that "this transition will take time & will require a comprehensive & risk-assessed strategy." "In the short-term, we must secure an adequate supply of fertiliser for our farmers," they insist, suggesting there are "a number of options available, such as the sourcing of products outside the EU or the importation of raw materials necessary for fertiliser production, lifting anti-dumping measures, & financially supporting the transition to natural methods such as the use of clover & other nitrogen-fixing solutions." They urge the Commission to "act now to address the unsustainable input costs facing farmers," citing "economic forecasts," which "point to this issue worsening over the coming months, with further increases in costs to farmers in the midst of high inflation." "The current high food prices experienced are in no small way due to the impact of high fertiliser costs," they stress. "In order to avoid further inflationary pressures, a clear strategy to give confidence & security to the market is needed immediately."

Meanwhile, Czechia's Martin Hlaváček & Germany's Ulrike Müller (both Renew Europe) would like a formal statement from the Commission & Council related to the ammonia production crisis in Europe at the Oct 11 plenary session in Strasbourg (Oct 17-20). A working group within Renew is expected to finalise the internal procedure this week to include a request for a statement with debate on the agenda for the (second) session taking place later this month.

IN BRIEF: FR & Walloon aids; Infringements in AT & EE; NZ bans livestock exports by sea;

French aid agreed: The Commission confirmed on Sept 29 that it had approved a French aid worth €15.4 million designed to support livestock farmers on the context of avian influenza*. The scheme is designed to compensate large companies whose birds were slaughtered during the 2021-2022 epidemic of the disease. The beneficiaries operated in the gallinaceous (a group that includes chickens, pheasant, turkeys, grouse, partridges, & quail) & waterfowl production sectors. The support will be in the form of a direct grant of up to a maximum of 100% of the eligible costs.

According to the EU Animal Disease Information System (ADIS), there were 1 844 outbreaks of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI(P)) in 21 European (EU & non EU) countries between Jan 1 & Sept 25 this year. France was by far the worst affected, with 1 363 outbreaks, followed by Hungary with 205. France's latest dispatch to ADIS was on Sept 23. **For more information, once any confidentiality issues have been resolved, go to the [state aid register](#) & search under case number SA.103754;*

Green light for Walloon aid: The Commission confirmed this week (Sept 26) that it had approved a scheme in Wallonia worth €300 million to support companies affected by Russia's invasion of Ukraine, including by sanctions & counter sanctions. There will be €200m for aid in the form of guarantees; & €95m in the form of subsidized loans. A further €5m will be in a moratorium or debt forgiveness, guarantees, subsidized loans or equity investments. The guarantees & subsidized loans will have a maximum duration of eight years & the maximum coverage of public guarantees will be 90% of the principal. The amount per beneficiary will be limited to €62 000 for companies active in the primary production of agricultural products, €75 000 for companies in the fisheries & aquaculture sectors & €500 000 for other companies. The aid measures under this scheme cannot be granted beyond Dec 31, 2022. **For more information, once any confidentiality issues have been resolved, go to the [state aid register](#) & search under case number SA.103842;*

Estonia gets impact assessment letter: The Commission confirmed on Sept 29 that it was calling on Estonia to bring its legislation on environmental impact assessments into line with Directive 2011/92, which requires certain public & private projects likely to have a significant effect on the environment to be assessed before they are allowed to go ahead.* In July 2019, the Commission sent a letter of formal notice to Tallinn on the issue, after which, in Sept 2020, the Baltic State amended its national legislation, to address some of the grievances raised. According to its release, "the Commission analysed these amendments & found additional transposition issues related to projects for the use of uncultivated land or semi-natural areas for intensive

agricultural purposes,” which under the Directive “should be screened to determine if a full environmental impact assessment is necessary.” Estonia, however, introduced a threshold “so high that almost all of such projects would be exempt from screening,” according to officials, which have decided to send an additional letter of formal notice. Tallinn now has two months to respond. If it fails to do so, the Commission may decide to send a reasoned opinion. ***For more information go to the Commission’s infringement decisions [search page](#) & look under infringement number INFR(2019)2109;**

AT in trouble over conservation objectives: The Commission said on Sept 29 that it was urging Austria to improve its implementation of the Habitats Directive, the Birds Directive & the Directive on Public Access to Environmental Information, under national legislation.

Several 'Sites of Community Interest' notified to the Commission in the country have not yet been protected as 'Special Areas of Conservation', the EU's executive complains, while on many other sites, Austria has either failed to set conservation objectives & measures, set ones that are incomplete or too broad. A similar situation exists in 'Special Protection Areas' within the scope of the Birds Directive, making it “impossible to correctly assess projects that may have a significant effect on the protected sites,” according to the Commission, which underlines that “Austria has also failed to provide sufficient information about conservation objectives & measures to the public.” Vienna will be getting a letter of formal notice, & has two months to respond & address the shortcomings raised by the Commission. In the absence of a satisfactory response, officials may decide to issue a reasoned opinion. ***For more information go to the Commission’s infringement decisions [search page](#) & look under infringement number INFR(2022)2056**

NZ to end livestock exports by sea: New Zealand MPs voted on Sept 28 to end the export of livestock by sea, a move which Farm Minister Damien O'Connor said would protect the Southern Hemisphere country's reputation for world leading animal welfare standards. The new legislation is the 'Animal Welfare Amendment Bill', the third reading of which was approved by legislators by 77 votes to 43, with 33 of those against coming from the right-wing National Party. The new measure “future proofs our economic security amid increasing consumer scrutiny across the board on production practices,” Labour politician O'Connor said. Exports of live animals by sea from New Zealand will end on April 30, 2023.

“New Zealand’s remoteness means animals are at sea for extended periods, heightening their susceptibility to heat stress & other welfare-associated risks,” he noted. “Those involved in the trade have made improvements over recent years, but despite any regulatory measures we could put in place, the voyage times & the journey through the tropics to the Northern Hemisphere markets will always impose challenges.” The country's National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee had supported the ban. “Our commitment to these high standards has already shown its value where animal welfare discussions have been brought up in Free Trade Agreement negotiations with the United Kingdom & the European Union,” the Minister said. “This Bill reinforces & builds on New Zealand’s reputation as a safe & ethical producer of high-quality food products.”

Four Paws says NZ bill ‘milestone for welfare’: Global animal welfare organisation Four Paws has urged the EU to follow suit after New Zealand MPs voted through a ban on all live animal exports. Pierre Sultana, Director of the European Policy Office (EPO) at Four Paws, said that “the signals from New Zealand are a ray of hope & a milestone for animal welfare,” adding that “it clearly shows that such political decisions can be implemented within a shorter period of time.” He urged Member States to “ban the live export of animals to third countries for slaughter, breeding & fattening.” “These exports must be replaced with transport of carcasses, finished products & genetic material rather than live, sentient beings,” he concluded.

TIMETABLE: Week ahead (in Brussels unless otherwise stated), all Councils held in Luxembourg;

Oct 3 EP plenary session in Strasbourg (until Oct 6) *inc.* Russia’s escalation of violence against Ukraine, a resolution on soaring energy prices, suspension of EU funds for Hungary & division of competences between COMAGRI & COMENVI on the Sustainable Use of Pesticides (SUR) file, with some suggesting COMAGRI Chair Norbert Lins will be named rapporteur on the AGRI opinion on the dossier (all details still to be confirmed); Executive Vice-President **Frans Timmermans** in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo (until Oct 4) for the pre-COP27: participates in the opening ceremony & in the Ministerial roundtable discussion ‘*Looking ahead to COP 27: Key Priorities and Challenges*’ & plenary debate; joins a political session on loss & damage and two thematic discussions on adapting to climate impacts & mitigation; and attends a Ministerial working dinner, hosted by the President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo; Executive Vice-President **Margrethe Vestager** in Denmark, visits the Novo Nordisk Research Centre (in Måløv); participates in the Citizens’ Dialogue organised by Danish media Ræson (in Copenhagen); Agriculture Commissioner **Janusz Wojciechowski** speaks, via video conference (via VC), with representatives of the Lithuanian Farmers’ Union & the Lithuanian Association of Agricultural Companies; speaks via VC with representatives of Slovak farming organizations; Health & Food Safety Commissioner **Stella Kyriakides** delivers the opening remarks at the ‘Investing in Health for All’ event, organised by the European Investment Bank (EIB) & the World Health Organization (WHO);

- Oct 4** Commission College *inc.* Youth Action Plan in EU external action; **Timmermans** in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo for the pre-COP27: participates in the Ministerial meeting with the High Ambition Coalition (HAC); joins two thematic discussions on climate finance & loss and damage; attends the pre-COP27 plenary debate & closing & the high-level meeting forum of vulnerable nations;
- Oct 5** **Vestager** meets with Christa Schweng, President of the European Economic & Social Committee (EESC); Commissioner for Cohesion & Reforms **Elisa Ferreira** in Cluj & Alba Julia, Romania (until Oct 6): participates in the Launch Event of the 2021-2027 Partnership Agreement; meets with Nicolae Ciucă, Prime Minister & other local authorities; and visit several projects supported by the Cohesion Policy;
- Oct 6** Executive Vice-President **Valdis Dombrovskis** receives Mirek Dušek, Managing Director of the World Economic Forum (WEF); Commissioner for the Economy **Paolo Gentiloni** holds a VC with Beata Daszyńska-Muzycka, President of the board of Polish Development Bank (BGK); receives Amy Gutmann, U.S. Ambassador to Germany & Mark Gitenstein, U.S. Ambassador to the EU; **Wojciechowski** participates in the Rural Inspiration Awards Ceremony & official launch of the European CAP Network, in Brussels; receives Kettel Thomsen, Vice-President of the European Investment Bank (EIB); Commissioner for Internal Market, **Thierry Breton**, in Paris, meets with French Prime Minister Élisabeth Borne; Environment Commissioner **Virginijus Sinkevičius** holds a VC with Steven Guilbeault, Canadian Minister for Environment & Climate Changes, to prepare COP15; Commissioner for Financial Markets & Financial Services **Mairead McGuinness** delivers a pre-recorded speech at the opening session of the conference '***The Bioeconomy - Enabling the European Green Deal in Challenging Times***' organised by the European Commission (DG RTD); First meeting of the European Political Community in Prague - ***Meeting of the European Political Community - Consilium (europa.eu)***;
- Oct 7** **Wojciechowski** in Pezinok, Slovakia; participates in the meeting of the Ministers for Agriculture of the Visegrád Group, extended by Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania & Slovenia; meets with representatives of Zeleninarska s.r.o. & PD Šenkvice producer associations; **Kyriakides** in Limassol, Cyprus (until Oct 8), delivers a keynote speech at the conference '*The way forward after the pandemic*', organized by the Ministry of Health of Cyprus & visits the German Oncological Centre; ***Informal meeting of heads of state or government, Prague - Consilium (europa.eu)***;
- Oct 8** **Kyriakides** in Nicosia, participates, under her auspices, in the 20th March of EUROPA DONNA Cyprus (Breast Cancer Awareness Movement) ***<https://europadonna.com.cy/>***

Management & Regulatory Committee meetings

- Oct 3** Standing Committee on Zootechnics;
- Oct 6** Standing Committee on Plants, Animals, Food & Feed (PAFF Committee) on Biological Safety of the Food Chain; Standing Committee on Biocidal Products;

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