

# MEPs approve updated rules to help contain transmissible animal diseases

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**Measures to prevent and halt outbreaks of animal diseases such as avian flu or foot and mouth disease, informally agreed by MEPs and the EU Council of Ministers in June 2015, were endorsed by Parliament on Tuesday. The draft EU law, on diseases that are transmissible among animals, and potentially to humans too, puts fresh emphasis on prevention and should help professionals to keep pace with scientific progress.**

"The adoption of the Animal Health Law is a great victory. This law makes three things possible. First, it links animal health and welfare and connects it to human health. This direct link, together with emphasis on responsible use of antibiotics, will help us fight growing antimicrobial resistance. Second, it enables the authorities and producers to focus more closely on prevention and control of transmissible animal diseases. And third, it merges around 40 legal acts into one basic act", said rapporteur Jasenko Selimovic (ALDE, SE).

## **Prevention: better husbandry and responsible use of medicines**

The new rules, in line with Parliament's long-standing position, put more emphasis on prevention and clarify the responsibilities of farmers, traders, animal professionals including veterinarians and also pet owners to this end.

All farmers, animal owners and traders will be obliged to apply the principles of good animal husbandry and prudent use of veterinary medicines. Vets will have to raise awareness of the interaction between animal health and welfare and human health and of antimicrobial resistance. The EU Commission, for its part, has pledged to monitor the actual use of animal antibiotics in member states and regularly publish comparable data to this end.

## **Fast, transparent, inclusive and science-based decisions**

The new law will empower the EU Commission to take urgent measures to tackle emerging diseases that could have a "highly significant impact" on public health and agricultural production. MEPs also ensured that European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) experts will be consulted when updating the EU list of potentially dangerous diseases and that farmers' organisations, veterinary associations, animal welfare movements and others will be involved in drafting contingency plans.

## **Improving animal welfare and fighting illegal trade in pets**

All disease control measures will have to take animal welfare into account and spare targeted animals, including stray animals, any avoidable pain, distress or suffering.

To help prevent strays or illegally traded pets transmitting animal diseases, MEPs inserted rules that would require all professional pet keepers and sellers to be registered and also empower the Commission to ask member states to set up national databases of dogs, cats and other pets, if need be.

## **Next steps**

The draft Animal Health Law was approved without a vote in an early second reading after being approved by the Council in December 2015. Following Parliament's endorsement,

# Press release

the regulation can now be published in the EU Official Journal. It will enter into force 20 days later and will be applicable five years thereafter.

## Facts

- Across the EU, the farming sector holds at least 2 billion birds (chickens, laying hens, turkeys, etc.) and 334 million mammals (pigs, sheep, goats, cattle, fur animals, etc.)
- There are 13.7 million animal holdings in the EU
- The value of livestock farming output in the EU is € 156 billion a year.

## Further information

- Adopted text will be available here (click on 08.03.2016)  
: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/texts-adopted.html>
- Video recording of debate (click on 07.03.2016)  
: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/ep-live/en/plenary/search-by-date>
- Video of the press conference (08.03.2016 at 15h00)  
: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/ep-live/en/other-events/schedule>
- The agreed text as adopted by the Council on 14.12.2015  
: <http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-11779-2015-REV-1/en/pdf>
- Procedure file  
: [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/popups/ficheprocedure.do?reference=2013/0136\(COD\)&l=en](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/popups/ficheprocedure.do?reference=2013/0136(COD)&l=en)
- EP Research Briefing: Animal Health Law - new EU rules on transmissible animal diseases  
: [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2016/577977/EPRS\\_BRI\(2016\)577977\\_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2016/577977/EPRS_BRI(2016)577977_EN.pdf)
- Audiovisual material for professionals  
: <http://audiovisual.europarl.europa.eu/default.aspx>

## Political groups

- News pages of the EPP group: <http://www.eppgroup.eu/press-releases>
- News pages of the S&D group: <http://www.socialistsanddemocrats.eu/newsroom>
- News pages of the ECR group: <http://ecrgroup.eu/news/>
- News pages of the ALDE group: <http://www.alde.eu/press/press-and-release-news/>
- News pages of the GUE/NGL group: <http://www.guengl.eu/news/archives/category/gue-ngl-news>
- News pages of the Greens/EFA group: <http://www.greens-efa.eu/press/70-press-releases.html>
- News pages of the EFDD group: <http://www.efddgroup.eu/newsroom/press-releases>

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