

General News

Farmers Protest Across the EU

February has seen further escalating protests from farmers across the EU. Farmers have taken to the streets in numerous member states and many politicians have been feeling the heat. French President Emmanuel Macron faced an angry farming audience who jeered and booed him at the annual Salon de l'Agriculture farming event on 24 February. At the end of the month EU Farming Ministers met in Brussels amid aggressive protests from the Belgian Farming Unions who blockaded the streets, took on the riot police, burned tyres outside the meeting and sprayed buildings with slurry. It is clear that the issues sparking the protests vary from country to country but many are linking it to the extra burden and pressure that environmental regulation is placing on the sector. The EU farming organisation has appealed to 'put agriculture back at the core of the EU strategy' adding the decision makers are 'neglecting the strategic importance of agriculture within the European project'.

In Poland, the ongoing issue of imports from Ukraine has exacerbated the protests. There were four separate incidents in February where grain from Ukraine was damaged and spoiled by protestors. The Polish Agriculture Minister has apologised and appealed for calm, adding that all of the agricultural products are not remaining on the Polish market but in transit to other places. Commissioner President, Ursula von der Leyen, met with Polish leaders and said she will do more to help the situation in Poland. She emphasised that exports from Ukraine via the Black Sea route are significantly picking up which should help relieve the pressure on land borders.

Change in CAP Rules for 2024

It was agreed in mid-February that for 2024 there would be a derogation available from the CAP measure to keep 4% of land fallow for biodiversity. The measure was tabled as a response to the recent challenging conditions faced by farmers in the EU related to weather and market conditions. It means that farmers growing nitrogen fixing crops such as lentils, peas and favas or catch crops without plant protection products on this land will be considered to have met the CAP requirement. Some have welcomed the move, but others have criticised that the decision has come too late in the agriculture calendar. The regulation entered into force on 14 February and member states wishing to implement the derogation at the national level are required to notify the Commission within 15 days. The derogation will be retroactively applied as of 1 January 2024.

New Genomic Techniques (NGTs)

The European Parliament adopted its position on the regulation on plants obtained by certain new genomic techniques at the start of February. The feed sector has welcomed the direction of the report but said that there are still some improvements to make on traceability, labelling and patents if the regulation is to be a successful tool for the future.

Plants developed using NGTs are currently subject to the same rules as GMOs. Under the Parliament report, plants considered equivalent to conventional varieties (called NGT 1 plants) would be exempt from the GMO legislation, but other NGT plants (NGT 2 plants) would need to follow stricter rules. MEPs also want both types to be labelled. Industry has hit back on the compulsory labelling for all NGT products saying that it undermines moves to distinguish between Category 1 (conventional-like) NGTs and other NGTs. They add that mandatory labelling would stigmatize Category 1 NGT products, even though EFSA has on multiple occasions declared that Category 1 NGTs do not pose

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Farmers Protest	1
Change in CAP Rules 2024	1
New Genomic Techniques	1
Pesticides Regulation (SUR)	2
Climate Change Targets	2
Green Labelling Code	2
Trader Notice 03-23	3
B12 Shortage Concerns	3
Undesirable Directive	3
Medicated Feed	3
On-Farm Use of VMPs	4
RASFF 2023	4
Avian Influenza	4

RASFF 'S FEB 2024

Total Food & Feed	435
Total Feed	29
Feed Materials	16
Compound Feed	3
Pet Food	-
Feed Premixture	10
Feed Additives	-
Animal by products	-
Miscellaneous	-

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additional risks to those of varieties obtained through conventional breeding methods.

Member states have been working on agreeing their final position on NGTs so that they can negotiate a final deal with the Parliament. However, aligning member state positions on various aspects of the regulation is proving difficult. Stakeholders are concerned that the file will not be finalised before the European Parliament elections in June and fear that if negotiations fail, the dossier faces an uncertain future with a new Parliament and Commission in 2024. They are therefore working to ensure an agreement is reached as soon as possible.

Environment News

Commission to Withdraw Sustainable Use of Pesticides Regulation (SUR)



Originally proposed by Commission in June 2022 as part of its Green Deal, the SUR has been controversial from the start and divided MEPs, member states and stakeholders. Amongst other things, the regulation proposed legally binding targets at EU level to reduce by 50% the use and the risk of chemical pesticides as well as the use of the more hazardous pesticides by 2030. In November 2023, after heated debate, the SUR was rejected by the European Parliament and as a result, the Commission intend to redraft

the proposal. It was a surprise when Commission President Ursula von der Leyen announced in early February that the proposal would be withdrawn describing it as ‘a symbol of polarization.’

Farming groups, some politicians and others have welcomed the move, but NGOs are accusing the Commission of ‘caving in’ to farmer protests. President von der Leyen said that she understood the challenges and the frustration of farmers and added that “to move forward, more dialogue and a different approach is needed.” She added that maintaining high yields go hand in hand with environmental performance and although many farmers are on the right path, a more sustainable model of production is necessary.

Future Climate Change Targets

With farmer protests across the EU and European elections approaching in June, the press has talked about ‘Green fade’ in EU Policy and concessions being made to the farming sector. Alongside the withdrawal of the SUR, a Communication published by the Commission in early February on 2040 climate change targets did not include specific targets for the agriculture sector. Entitled ‘Securing our future - Europe’s 2040 climate target and path to climate neutrality by 2050’, the communication recommends targeting a 90% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2040 saying that this will put the EU on a firm path to climate neutrality. Earlier drafts of the communication were thought to include specific reduction targets for agriculture, but the final version did not contain these. Instead, it mentions a ‘whole-of-food sector’ approach to reducing emissions, the importance of EU food sovereignty and that the EU should ‘work to prevent unfair competition and to ensure a level playing field with non-EU producers’. The document will now be discussed by the European Parliament and member states and the new Commission (November 2024) will progress legislative proposals.

Commission welcomes Green Labelling Code of Practice

Commission Environment officials have welcomed the initiative of the feed chain to develop good practices. They reminded us that, while there is no specific legal requirement regarding environmental communication in a Business to Business (Feed Mill to Farmer) situation, the Green Claims Directive, whose scope is limited to Business to Consumer (B2C) communication, “will have a positive effect along the whole supply chain contributing to generate and communicate environmental related information”. This therefore provides us with confidence that the draft code of practice IGFA has been working on with FEFAC will be validated by the EU Commission by October 2024 as planned.

Green Claims Directive

The draft report on this Directive was voted in the ENVI and the IMCO (Internal Market) Committees of the European Parliament on 14 February. MEPs broadly supported the initiative, in particular, that any environmental claims should be subject to approval based on an assessment by accredited verifiers.

The two Committees asked for the drafting of a list of less complex claims and products that could benefit from faster or simpler verification and proposed that micro-enterprises be excluded from the new obligations and that SMEs get one extra year before applying the rules. They also proposed to empower the EU Commission to prohibit/restrict green claims for products containing hazardous substances. Among other provisions, companies should demonstrate they have used

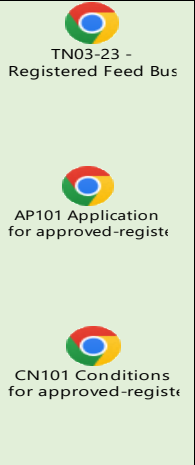
the same methods to compare relevant aspects of the products for comparative claims and that these should be based on data that are no more than five years old. An AGRI Committee amendment to exempt eco-scheme-based claims from additional verification did not receive support from the ENVI and IMCO Committees. The whole European Parliament is expected to vote on the draft report in March. Member States are planning to agree their position in the coming months under the Belgian Presidency.

Technical News

Trader Notice 03-23 on using Animal By Product (ABP) Ingredients

On 14 August 2023 members received Trader Notice ABP No. TN 03/23 from DAFM. This notice called on Feed Business Operators to Register to Use Animal By-Products as Ingredients if they are using Category 3 Animal By-Products (ABPs) and derived products as feed ingredients. Following this, IGFA had an online meeting with DAFM where we asked for clarifications.

We have prepared a briefing with the answers to all the questions we posed which can be viewed by members [here](#). The main message is that if a feed business has an ABP ingredient e.g. whey or lactose on their premises then they have to register with ABP DAFM as a user. However, if a company has a compound feed containing e.g. whey or lactose they don't have to register as a user as the final product is exempt from ABP regulations. DAFM has also clarified that additives that are coated in an ABP (gelatine) or made from an ABP (sheep's wool) will not be considered as ABP at this time so registration as users of ABP is not required in these cases.



Vitamin B12 Shortage Concerns

The current situation is that all forms of Vitamin B12 with the exception of one form 3a835, will be withdrawn from the market by 6 July 2024. This has led to shortage concerns which could result in animal welfare issues. FEFAC wrote to the EU Commission and advised of our concerns. IGFA also alerted DAFM of the concerns and they subsequently raised it at the specialist SCoPAFF meeting on 15-16 February 2024.

Following that meeting FEFAC met with a few industry representatives including IGFA's Cornelia O'Connell to evaluate the specific EU demand for Vitamin B12. It was noted at this meeting that all animals require supplementation of their diet with vitamin B12, except ruminants. The amount of industrial compound feed for food producing animals other than ruminants in 2022 in the EU-27 was around 100 million tonnes, all of which has to include Vitamin B12. This figure is an underestimation as it does not include the feed produced by farmers nor does it include petfood. The information gathered at this meeting was sent to the Commission and we are waiting to hear back from them. We will keep members updated.



Update on Undesirable Substances Directive

The draft delegated act amending undesirable substances Directive 2002/32 has now gone through [public consultation](#). The next stage is for the EU Commission to assess the comments that were made and then it will go through scrutiny by European Parliament for 2 months. Therefore, we expect to see the final publication in May this year.

Medicated Feed

As noted in IGFA [Jan Feed Issues](#) the EU Commission is expected to adopt the delegated act setting the maximum carry-over limits in a few weeks.

Collection or discard systems of unused or expired products

On the request of some members, FEFAC asked for feedback on where national authorities stand with the development of a collection from farm and disposal system for past-the-date or surplus medicated feed ([article 18 \(EU\) 2019/4](#)). Based on the information provided by industry representatives from 10 countries, the situation is as follows

- Belgium, Germany, France, Ireland, Sweden, and the United Kingdom advised there is no formal system in place in their countries.
- Spain, Portugal, Poland and The Netherlands have systems in place. These are defined by law in Spain, Portugal, and Poland (planned) and The Netherlands has professional rules.
- The Spanish legislation includes in the scope of these collection rules non-medicated feed with carry-over levels of antibiotics exceeding the maximum permitted limits and orders that this feed should be dealt with as waste.

- The holder of the medicated feed (i.e. the farmer if the medicated feed is in store on farm) is responsible for the collection and disposal in Portugal and Poland. The supplier of medicated feed is also involved in the system in Poland.
- The costs of collection and disposal are borne by the holder of the surplus or passed-the-date medicated feed in Portugal and Poland, whereas in The Netherlands, the suppliers take care of the costs.

Delegated Act on-Farm Use of VMPs For Group Treatment (Top Dressing)

The [delegated act](#) for the on-farm use of veterinary medicinal products in drinking water or top-dressing has been adopted. The final text is unchanged from the version put to consultation in December as noted in IGFA [Jan Feed Issues](#).

Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF) - 2023

FEFAC publishes an overview of the notifications related to feed safety to the RASFF every year. In total there were 4,677 notifications (food and feed) to RASFF in 2023. 295 related to animal feed, 214 of which were for food producing animals the rest were for petfood. Below are the main findings for the notifications relating to feed for food producing animals

- The 214 RASFF relating to feed for food producing animals, represents an increase of almost 50% compared to the period 2020-2022 (where fewer official checks were performed) and a 12% increase to the period 2018-2019. Part of this increase is due to a surge of notifications of border rejections regarding the presence of mould in feed materials imported from Ukraine and Angola.
- Among the 214 notifications, 23 triggered alerts, whereas 143 gave rise to information and 48 to border rejections.
- 35% of the notifications were linked to Salmonella contamination (75 out of 214). This is equivalent to the average number of notifications during the period 2020-2022 and 30% less than in 2018-2019.
- 91% of notifications concerned feed ingredients, of these 84% for feed materials and 7% for feed additives/premixtures.
- The number of notifications concerning non compliances with MRLs for pesticides and biocides is equivalent to 2022 (18 vs.16) but twice as much as in the period 2020-2021. 4 of them were alerts. 11 different substances were at stake, including 7 non-authorized in the EU, such as ethylene oxide (in xanthan gum leading to border rejection) chlorpyrifos and chlorpyrifos methyl (5 notifications) or paraquat (1 notification). 7 notifications concerning aflatoxin in maize from the 2022 harvest in Southeast Europe were issued.
- An increasing number of notifications was also noted regarding inorganic contaminants (especially lead and arsenic) and Dioxins & Dioxin-like PCBs (12 vs. 4 for the last years).
- The number of notifications concerning non-authorized substances and non-authorized animal proteins decreased by 40% compared to previous years.

The majority of the notifications concerning feed for farmed animals present on the EU market result from own checks performed by operators. Some of the notified incidents triggered investigations by FEFAC in cooperation with members of the Feed Safety Incident Management Team composed of experts from national associations and the Feed Safety Management Committee. However, none of them required specific action. In reality, the most critical issue that FEFAC had to deal with in 2023 was not notified to the RASFF: it was about the relationship between the use of fishmeal and the presence of PFAS at a relatively high level in organic eggs in Denmark and Finland. The issue has now been addressed.

Animal Health

Avian Influenza

There have been no outbreaks of [Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza \(HPAI\)](#) in poultry in Ireland during 2023. However, farmers and veterinary practitioners and other relevant stakeholders should continue to remain vigilant for any signs of disease in their flocks, and report any disease suspicion to their nearest [Regional Veterinary Office](#). The epidemiological situation has also improved in most of the EU Member States since the second quarter of 2023. However, during the summer months, outbreaks in wild birds continued to be confirmed by several Northern EU Member States. A new epidemic season started in October 2023 with new introductions of the HPAI virus by migratory wild birds. [This map](#) represents the distribution of the HPAI detections in the current epidemic season (01/10/2023 – 06/02/2024). Hungary was the Member state impacted the most, followed by Bulgaria, Poland and Germany.

Several Third Countries currently impose import bans on EU poultry due to HPAI outbreaks:

Country-wide bans

The Philippines, South Korea, Thailand, China, Japan, South Africa, Morocco, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates

Regionalisation accepted (either for all MSs or to some MSs—either for all or some products)

Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, the United Arab Emirates, North Macedonia, Turkey, Thailand, Japan