Expenditure in the veterinary field: measures to combat avian influenza, Community financial assistance (amend. Decision 90/424/EEC)

2005/0063(CNS) - 28/04/2005 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: to update current Community measures on Avian Influenza (AI), with the objective of achieving better prevention and control of outbreaks and to reduce the health risks, the costs and losses and the negative impact to the whole of society due to this disease.

PROPOSED ACT: Council Decision

CONTENT: AI is a serious, highly contagious disease of poultry and other birds caused by different types of viruses included in the very large virus family called *Influenzaviridae*. AI viruses may also spread to other animals and humans, usually following direct contact with infected birds.

The Commission is proposing to replace Directive 92/40 by a new Directive updating the measures in force with the aim of ensuring a better control of AI, taking into

account the need to reduce as much as possible the need for massive slaughter of birds (see CNS/2005 /0062). In parallel, it is proposing to amend Council Decision 90/424/EEC on Community expenditure in the veterinary field, to bring it in line with this proposal and ensure adequate financial support to the Member States (MSs) in relation to some of the newly envisaged control measures.

This proposal sets out to:

- to foresee a financial contribution (up to 50%) for the Member States surveillance programmes to be implemented annually.

- to foresee a financial contribution (30%) to MSs, for the costs which they incurred in case of a stamping out policy being applied following low pathogenic AI (LPAI) outbreaks. The reduced contribution compared with high pathogenic AI (HPAI) outbreaks is justified by the fact that MSs should keep the option not to apply a stamping-out policy in case of LPAI, and a higher Community contribution might induce them not to make adequate use of this option. On the other hand, the Community cofinanced surveillance programme should allow the detection of LPAI in a timely manner and thus the need for extensive stamping out should be reduced, with a positive impact also on MSs budgets.

- as regards vaccination, Community financial support as specified above would continue to be granted only in case of emergency vaccination. In a similar manner, no changes would be introduced to existing provisions on co-financing of HPAI control measures.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

Budget lines: 17 01: Administrative expenditure of health and consumer protection policy area; 17 04 02: Other measures in the veterinary, animal welfare and public-health field; and 17 04 03: Emergency fund for veterinary complaints and other animal contaminations which are a risk to public health.

Total allocation for action: EUR 33 million for commitments over six years (EUR 5.5 million per year from 2006), broken down as follows:

- Operational objective 1 (extension of surveillance programme): EUR 9 million;

- Operational objective 2 (extension of emergency measures to LPAI): EUR 15 million;

- Operational objective 3 (establishment of an AI vaccine bank): EUR 9 million.

Impact on human resources: EUR 1,170,000 (EUR 0.216 per year from 2006).

Total cost of measures: EUR 34.296 million (EUR 3.33 million per year from 2006).

BUDGETARY IMPACT: The current proposal entails additional costs for the MSs and the Community budget, due to the measures being introduced for the surveillance and control of LPAI.

The estimates of the approximate amount of expenditures are broken down as follows:

- surveillance of LPAI: EUR 1-2 million per year; these figures include the expenditures incurred for the surveillance of AI implemented in the Member States in 2003 and 2004. However, it is possible that it will be necessary to consolidate these programmes in the future which would involve additional costs.

- the stamping out of HPAI by slaughtering: EUR 1-4 million per year approximately;

- in addition, if the decision to introduce an AI vaccine bank is finally taken, the establishment and maintenance of this bank will cost approximately EUR 1-2 million per year.