



Report subcommittee animal health and welfare 2022-2023

Since the previous annual congress in Bosnia Herzegovina in May 2022, our animal health and welfare committee, consisting of: Hristo Lukanov (Bu), Eduard Gendrin (Fr) Wim Halsema (NI), Gunther Anthonissen (Be), Peter Supuka (Sk.) , Andy Verelst (Be) and Erik Apperlo (NI), dealt with a number of topics. We consulted each other in 4 digital meetings. In addition, a lot of time and work has been put into dealing with these topics.

An important subject that has been discussed several times concerns bird flu. As is known, it is endemic in Europe, which means that it occurs all year round in nature and therefore poses a risk to kept AI sensitive birds. To deal with this new situation, hopes are pinned on a vaccine that offers protection. Everyone is working hard on this and the first tests of the first vaccines seem positive, but it may take a long time before vaccines are actually available for our animals and, in addition, for the exhibition of the animals, the vaccine must not only protect the animals at home but also provide so much safety that transport and bringing animals together are allowed again.

In addition to bird flu, we also discussed a number of issues with a view to a future European show. For example, we started developing housing advice for the various animal species during this event to prevent any problems with animal welfare due to incorrect housing or care by providing the correct advice in advance.

As you know, at the 2021 congress in Denmark, a power for our subcommittee was adopted whereby we can decide, in consultation with the main jury per animal species, to exclude animals from the event. This is due to compromised animal welfare due to excessive overtyping or other characteristics. To be clear about this, we want to talk to the standard committees to determine whether harmful characteristics are reflected clearly enough in the variety descriptions so that it is clear to breeders by reading the standard what is acceptable and what is not.

Examples of social threats from member countries have also been reviewed. This includes, for example, positive lists of permitted animal species to be kept. It often appears that a number of animal species kept within the EE are not listed here, which means that they may no longer be kept. Attacks by animal welfare organizations also occur in various countries and are very difficult to combat. Last year, the ZDRK already pointed out in the rabbit section that a media attack on lop-ear breeds had started in Germany. With a lot of effort and by refuting empty arguments with facts, research and literature, the ZDRK succeeded in refuting these charges. In the Netherlands, bills are being drafted that prohibit the slaughter of one's own animals. This can also make our hobby very difficult.

The most important efforts have been made by the committee in the area of European legislation where the 429 regulation requires more registration and the biggest problem is formed by the 688 regulation, which requires additional



requirements for pigeons and poultry during cross-border transport. At the time of the previous conference, a public consultation was underway in which the necessary input was provided from our side. This public consultation has given thought to those responsible in Brussels and the first consequence was that the exceptions that should apply to the 429 regulation are being reviewed. Without us being aware of it, the public consultation was also a reason for the European Commission to implement a relaxation of the 688 regulation, which allows animals to be collected from February this year so that larger groups of animals instead of each individual breeder a separate TRACES certificate can be drawn up. This saves a lot of costs.

To address another problem of the 688 regulation, Andy Verelst and Erik Apperlo had a meeting in Brussels on 6 February. In a technical meeting with officials there, it was indicated that it is very disadvantageous for our European shows that animals are not allowed to leave for another country when they are sold. It seems to have succeeded in making this clear and debunking the fact that this entails many major risks. The first signals from subsequent consultations between the European Commission and representatives of the national governments indicate that the arguments from our discussion are being taken seriously. Hopefully this will lead to sales being possible again in the future. Transport of animals will always be accompanied by a TRACES certificate. There is no discussion about this.

As can be heard in this short report, the subcommittee is fully active and will have to remain active to help preserve the future for our hobby.