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Plenary sitting

B8-0489/2018

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MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

further to Question for Oral Answer B8-0410/2018

pursuant to Rule 128(5) of the Rules of Procedure

on animal welfare, antimicrobial use and the environmental impact of industrial broiler farming
(2018/2858(RSP))

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on behalf of the ALDE Group

B8-0489/2018

European Parliament resolution on animal welfare, antimicrobial use and the environmental impact of industrial broiler farming
(2018/2858(RSP))

The European Parliament,

– having regard to its resolution of 26 November 2015 on a new animal welfare strategy for 2016-2020[1],

– having regard to the 2017 EU One Health Action Plan against Antimicrobial Resistance,

– having regard to the Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council of 13 April 2018 on the application of Directive 2007/43/EC and its influence on the welfare of chickens kept for meat production, as well as the development of welfare indicators (COM(2018)0181),

– having regard to the agreement on the Veterinary Medicinal Products Regulation reached on 5 June 2018,

– having regard to Regulation (EU) 2016/429 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 9 March 2016 on transmissible animal diseases and amending and repealing certain acts in the area of animal health ('Animal Health Law')[2],

– having regard to Regulation (EU) 2017/625 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 March 2017 on official controls and other official activities performed to ensure the application of food and feed law, rules on animal health and welfare, plant health and plant protection products[3],

– having regard to the European Convention for the Protection of Animals kept for Farming Purposes,

– having regard to Commission implementing decision (EU) 2017/302 of 15 February 2017 establishing best available techniques (BAT) conclusions, under Directive 2010/75/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council, for the intensive rearing of poultry or pigs[4],

– having regard to the question to the Commission on animal welfare, antimicrobial use and the environmental impact of industrial broiler farming (O-000095/2018 – B8-0410/2018),

– having regard to Rules 128(5) and 123(2) of its Rules of Procedure,

A. whereas Directive 2007/43/EC (the Broiler Directive) lays down minimum standards

[1] OJ C 366, 27.10.2017, p. 149.
[2] OJ L 84, 31.3.2016, p. 1.
[3] OJ L 95, 7.4.2017, p. 1.
[4] OJ L 43, 21.2.2017, p. 231.

for the protection of chickens kept for meat production;

B. whereas enforcement of the 2007 Directive is not uniform and the Commission's recent implementation report showed that enforcement is at best inconsistent across Member States;

C. whereas overuse of antimicrobial veterinary medicines, especially as growth promoters and for metaphylaxis and prophylaxis, has been one of the major factors influencing the development of antimicrobial resistance bacteria;

D. whereas animal welfare rules should be updated on the basis of new scientific findings and with due regard for the efficiency and competitiveness of agricultural livestock husbandry; whereas consistent animal welfare standards across the EU would benefit from a definition of good animal husbandry;

E. whereas EU legislation in the field of animal welfare contributes to a level playing field within the Union and thereby to a well-functioning internal market;

F. whereas European citizens have a strong interest in animal welfare and wish to be able to make more informed choices as consumers;

G. whereas animal welfare is interrelated with animal and public health;

H. whereas the EU increased its broiler production by 18.6 % from 2009 to 2014 reaching 11.3 % of global production; whereas over a quarter of a million people are employed in the EU poultry sector, with 62 % employed in slaughter/processing and almost a fifth (19 %) employed in primary production, mainly on the 23 360 large broiler farms;

I. whereas on a yearly basis the EU imports 25 % of the breast poultry meat consumed in the EU from third countries with less strict legislation on animal welfare; whereas most of the imported poultry meat is used in food services or food processing, where information on the origin of the meat is not mandatory;

J. whereas recent estimates of the environmental impact of animal production show that poultry has the lowest NH_3 and GHG emissions; whereas agricultural production has one of the lowest emission intensities in terms of emissions per unit of product, with chicken products having a global average emission intensity of below 100 CO_2-eq/kg;

1. Welcomes the agreement on the Veterinary Medicinal Products Regulation reached on 5 June 2018; welcomes the provisions laid down to restrict the use of antibiotics for meta- and prophylaxis; hopes that the Regulation will facilitate much-needed innovation in the field of veterinary medicines thus contributing to combating antimicrobial resistance;

2. Stresses that improving animal husbandry techniques will lead to a better quality of life for poultry and reduce the need to use antimicrobials, examples of such improvements being providing natural light, clean air and more space, and reducing ammonia;

3. Stresses that animal welfare serves as a preventative measure in itself, contributing to reducing the risk of the animal becoming ill and thereby lowering the use of antimicrobials;

4. Reminds the Commission of the statement set out in the Animal Health Strategy and the significant promotion that prevention is better than cure;

5. Calls on the Commission to ensure that preventative measures such as disease surveillance, controls and research are carried out by the Member States;

6. Calls on the Commission to develop the exchange and dissemination of scientifically based best practices and to boost AMR research, development and innovation through the different European programmes already in place;

7. Calls on the Commission to strengthen compliance with Directive 2007/43/EC to ensure that the measures and objectives set out in the Directive improve the welfare of chickens kept for meat production; stresses that provision should be made for penalties in the case of non-compliance;

8. Calls on the Commission to reinforce controls performed at borders on imported poultry meat from third countries to make sure these imports comply with EU legislation on animal welfare, food safety and the environment;

9. Calls on the Commission to take action regarding the need for measurable harmonised animal welfare-based indicators among Member States;

10. Calls on the Member States to make full provision for appropriate and sufficient training courses for keepers, as set out in Directive 2007/43/EC;

11. Reminds the Commission, as already stated in its report on the impact of animal welfare international activities on the competitiveness of European livestock producers in a globalised world (COM(2018)0042), of the fact that improved animal welfare often results in higher production and therefore has positive impacts for actors throughout the agricultural production chain; stresses, therefore, that improvements through measures such as those set out in this resolution are of high economic, human, animal health and environmental importance;

12. Calls on the Commission to establish an EU labelling scheme for animal welfare on agri-food products based on the EU harmonised indicators for animal welfare in order to create a harmonised system of animal welfare standards within the EU, thereby improving communication to consumers on animal welfare in agricultural production;

13. Calls on the Commission to propose legislation on mandatory labelling of the origin of processed products containing poultry meat in the retail, catering and food services so that consumers can make an informed choice;

14. Notes that indoor-reared poultry meat has lower emission levels due to a better conversion of the feed intake into protein, and that a shift of poultry production in Europe to ‘extensive farming’ or ‘organic’ production would lead to serious economic and environmental consequences;

15. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Commission and to the Member States.