



MINISTÈRE
DE L'AGRICULTURE
ET DE LA SOUVERAINETÉ
ALIMENTAIRE

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**The General
Directorate for Food
IN ACTION**



EDITORIAL

Throughout 2022, the teams at the General Directorate for Food (DGAL), both at central level and in its decentralised departments, have continued their efforts for their fellow citizens and consumers in favour of food that is healthy, of good quality and environmentally friendly.

They endeavour to implement the measures contained in the DGAL's 2021-2023 Strategic Plan, especially those directed at greater transversality in our teamwork and the overarching "One Health" approach to the issues and the policies to be applied.

Several major events marked 2022.

Firstly, there was the French Presidency of the Council of the European Union, which mobilised staff before and during the first half of the year. With good results to show for it!

Next, the launch of the food sanitary security reform for a "single policing authority" was an important development in the past year, involving the directorate as a whole: this mission reorganisation, by transferring to DGAL the powers of DGCCRF in this domain, puts in place single management for the officers responsible for ensuring the safety of the consumer, giving greater clarity and efficiency to the system. Those changes have been under way since 1 January 2023 and will go forward in a number of phases.

And finally, we have handled several sanitary crises, notably avian influenza, which returned to high intensity in the summer of 2022 after a brief respite, a situation in which staff are to be congratulated on their personal commitment.

The present report describes what has been central to our action along with the latest developments for our Directorate: not only the management of emergencies but also the building of systemically important projects over the course of 2022.

Happy reading!

Maud FAIPOUX

Head of the General Directorate for Food



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Design, text and coordination
DGAL Strategy and Action Promotion Unit (MIVAS) in conjunction with all teams

Graphic layout and production
Agence Linéal

Photo credits
Ministry of Agriculture and Food (Cheick Saidou, Xavier Remongin), Eric Chapin, G.Sanmartin, France Diplomatie-MEAE, GettyImages, Adobe Stock, ThinkStock.

General Directorate for Food
251, Rue de Vaugirard
75732 Paris cedex 15

This publication has been produced using plant-based inks on PEFC paper 100% sourced in responsibly managed forests

February 2023

THE DGAL: A COMMITMENT TO PUBLIC SERVICE

The DGAL acts to ensure the safety and quality of foodstuffs at every point in the food chain, as well as the health and protection of animals and plants, working alongside the various stakeholders involved: professionals in the farming and agrifood industries, veterinarians, non-profit associations, and others. It acts by building regulations in line with its remit. Its decentralised offices in the départements and regions ensure adherence to those regulations. It also implements a range of public incentive policies. It contributes to the agroecological transition.

The DGAL is also active at the EU and international levels to promote French food, sanitary and phytosanitary models. And it acts under the “One Health” approach in coordination with the other ministries with an interest in these subjects.





RISK MANAGEMENT TASKS RELATED TO FOOD AND PUBLIC HEALTH

The DGAL's mission is to protect the health of consumers, animals, plants and the environment by determining and verifying the sanitary conditions in which animal and plant products are made and marketed or brought into the country. To do this, it needs to anticipate the risks, assess them and define appropriate preventive measures and regulations.

The complexity of the issues raised requires integrated, transversal risk management that calls upon a range of technical, scientific and organisational skills, in addition to the adoption of a more international vision of the risks.

BUDGET AND HUMAN RESOURCES

The budget of the General Directorate for Food (DGAL) and its decentralised departments (budget programme 206 "Food sanitary safety and quality") responsible for implementing public policies on the health and protection of plants, animals, food safety and national food policy for 2022 stood at €837.6m in commitment authorisations and zt €814.1m in payment appropriations, compared with €599m in 2021.

The change in the budget can be explained by the topping up of funding for programme 206 through two rectificatory finance acts in the amount of €230.8m in commitment authorisations and €210.1m in payment appropriations to allow for the expenditure made necessary by the avian influenza crisis.

The cap placed on headcount by programme 206 was set at 4,909 full time equivalent worked hours (FTEs) for 2022. Programme 206 benefited in 2022 from a staffing structure including 10 extra FTEs in order to reinforce national teams responsible for animal welfare, in addition to a long-term strengthening of the resources (106 FTEs) to cope with the deployment of sanitary and phytosanitary border checks in the wake of Brexit.

The DGAL uses an **overhauled network of 49** experts of reference (100% of whose time is devoted to national-level tasks) and **124** resource individuals (20-30% of their time devoted to national-level tasks) based across the whole of France.

These staff members carry out a variety of tasks in the areas of animal and plant health and provide technical support for the central administration in its implementation of public policies.

FOOD SANITARY SAFETY: TOWARDS SINGLE MANAGEMENT BY DGAL

After years of shared management between DGAL and the General Directorate for Competition Policy, Consumer Affairs and Fraud Control (DGCCRF), on 6 May 2022 the government chose to put the policing of food safety under undivided management, placing it under the aegis of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Sovereignty. This major reform, which creates a single sanitary policing authority, will be phased into place over the course of 2023.

DGAL'S NEW REMIT FOR ACTION

This reform entrusts to DGAL the whole range of tasks relating to food safety for health, and specifically:

- Checks on the sectors producing animal foodstuffs and products of animal origin.
- Checks on the sectors producing plant foodstuffs and products of plant origin.
- Checks on premises in the direct distribution sector, which includes retail businesses (e.g. shops, super- and hypermarkets, etc.), commercial catering (e.g. restaurants) and institutional catering (e.g. school canteens, in-company restaurants).
- The monitoring and application of regulations on the sanitary safety of specific products such as food supplements, enriched foods, food improvers (e.g. additives, flavourings, enzymes), novel foods, and allergens.
- Application of sanitary regulations and controls relating to animal feed.

Where the DGCCRF is concerned, it retains responsibility for checks on quality and fair trading practices relating to food products and livestock feed.

A PHASED REFORM

The timetable for the reform was set out by the Prime Minister's office on 10 October 2022.

On 1 September 2023, the DGCCRF will completely relinquish all food safety tasks with the exception of those relating to checks and sampling for surveillance and inspection plans (PSPC) whose purpose is to verify adherence to hygiene requirements in direct distribution premises (restaurants, retail food outlets). For this type of establishment such checks will continue to be carried out jointly with DGAL until 31 December 2023.

PRINCIPAL ACTIONS UNDERTAKEN IN 2022, A YEAR OF TRANSITION

Interministerial governance was put in place with nine thematic working groups co-chaired by the DGAL and DGCCRF whose purpose is to determine the steps to be taken for the successful implementation of the food sanitary safety reform.

The transfer of tasks and powers to DGAL goes hand in hand with **reinforced staffing** at the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Sovereignty: 150 FTEs (23 FTEs in central administration and 127 FTEs in the decentralised departments). Recruitment of this staff was conducted at the end of the year, and virtually all the posts were filled, including the appointment of a DGAL project manager for the food sanitary safety reform in early October.

The timetable for the reform and the work done by IN-FOMA (Ministry of Agriculture staff training institute) allow **training to be offered** in the first half of 2023 with a duration of several months, covering all domains relevant to food sanitary safety. This will allow the recruits to acquire all the expertise needed to carry out a task that is of importance for the government and our fellow citizens.

The thematic working groups have identified and validated the use of the DGCCRF's **information systems** for management of alerts, food supplements and export certificate issuance. Work is currently under way on the transfer of some of these resources to the Ministry of Agriculture's own management.

Inspection scheduling for 2023 in the human food domain, and notably task allocation between the DGCCRF and the DGAL, have been clarified, as have the expectations for inspection management and the final overview report.

Lastly, a working group has been set up at the Ministry in order to propose a defined scope for **task delegation** and the arrangements for its implementation. The objective is to delegate on 1 January 2024 part of the inspection programme for direct distribution premises, checks on effective execution of product withdrawals and recalls, and some PSPC sampling (surveillance and inspection plans).

JANUARY 2023 MISSION TRANSFER TO DGAL CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION

Management of all food sanitary safety tasks was taken over by DGAL central administration on 1 January 2023. Work has been done specifically on alert management, with a transfer of management from 15 February 2023 (guide to alert management, use of the SORA Alert information system, technical instruction document).

THE EXPECTED BENEFITS OF THE REFORM

The reform will give greater clarity and efficiency to government action with, firstly, a single chain of command between the minister responsible for food sanitary safety and the Prefects and, secondly, the officers carrying out food safety checks will be gathered together under the oversight of a single ministry. This new organisational structure will facilitate the management of sanitary crises and allow quantitative and qualitative reinforcement of control on the basis of a uniform system for scheduling, inspection methodology and administrative follow-up, along with the delegation of certain inspection tasks.

THE STRATEGIC PLAN: TRANSVERSALITY, SYNERGY, COLLECTIVE EFFICIENCY

A feature of 2022 was the continuation of the operational implementation of the DGAL's 2021 – 2023 Strategic Plan. This plan has led to the setting up of a new organisational structure whose objective is to permit a more transversal, integrated approach to public policy aligned with the "One Health" stance central to the DGAL's programmes.



CORE PRINCIPLES

Consideration of the issues led to the emergence of a number of principles with a view to proposing a new way of working at central level and with the decentralised departments.

- Harmonisation of methods, simplification of procedures and greater clarity for the activities conducted.
- Defence of our positioning internationally and at EU level and implementation of regulations at national level to match our capacity for action.
- Decentralisation of sectors and activities and making transversality fundamental to our operations.
- Reconciliation of the capacity for expert analysis and a more overarching vision in order to provide the most relevant solutions for our interlocutors (project mode).
- Development of an internal methodological underpinning to foster consistency and synergy in the implementation of public policies.

THE PRINCIPAL ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN

- Provision of a dashboard to monitor the DGAL's financial agreements and a guide to good financial practice.
- Implementation of transversal risk analysis and its embodiment, in conjunction with the other government departments and agencies involved, in inspection and surveillance plans (PSPC).
- The launch of strategic management of the information systems.
- Continuation of ambitious work to foster the emergence of truly effective sanitary governance in the French regions.
- Reflection on dialogue and consultation with representatives of civil society.

GENERALISATION OF A PROJECT-ORIENTED CULTURE

Project mode is essential if greater transversality, collegiality and efficiency is to be achieved for the management of complex projects in which the stakes are high.

The “project mode” label is intended to ensure robust management for issues that have particular importance for the Directorate. The food sanitary safety reform and the vaccination of poultry against avian influenza benefited from the appointment of a project manager in 2022 given that revision of a particularly sensitive public policy and a structurally important change in DGAL organisation were involved.

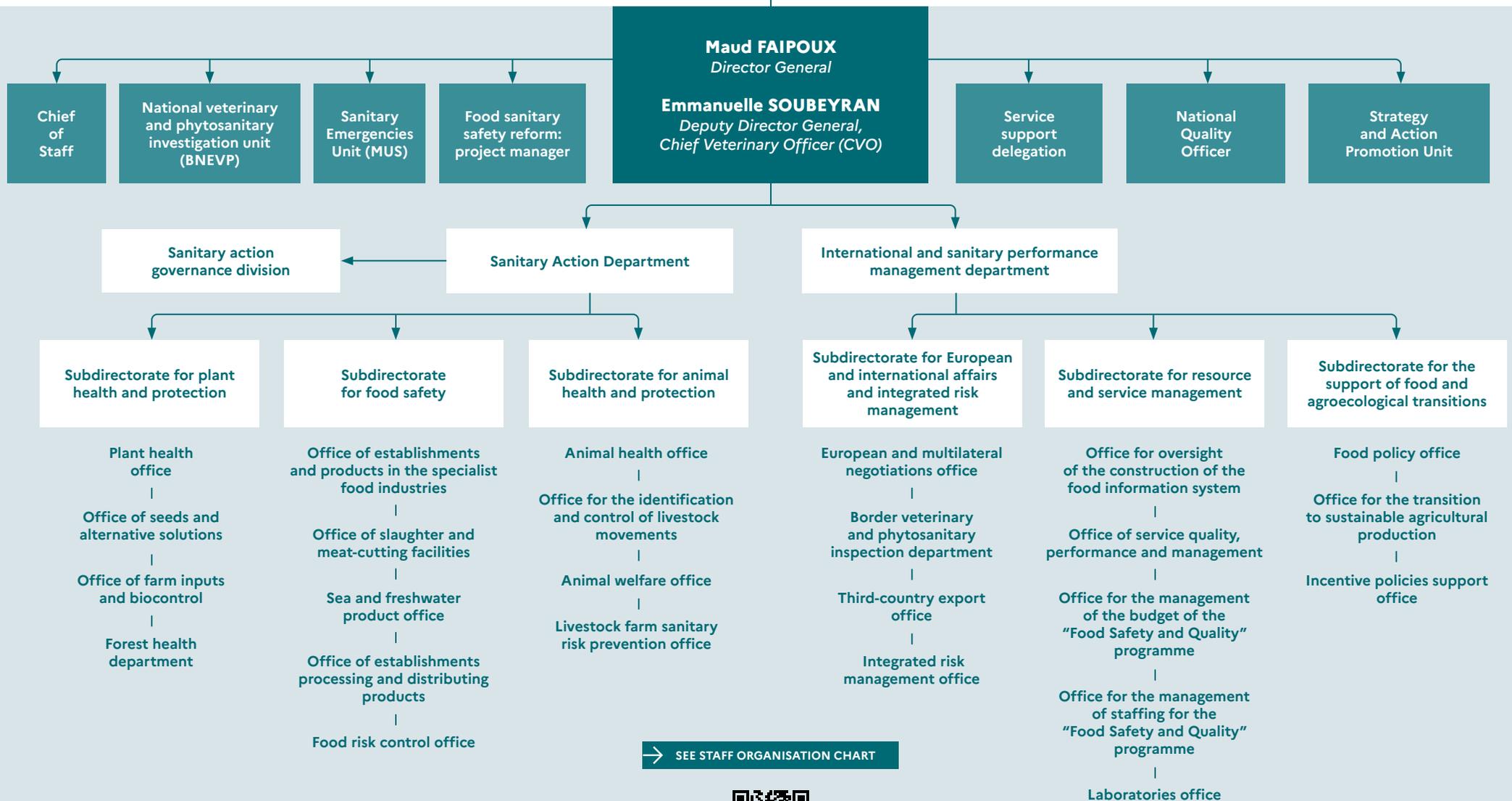
A CLOSER LOOK AT TRANSVERSALITY

The objective of the working group on transversality is to arrive at a list of relevant steps to ensure more fluid information flows and decision-making on common issues, and to enhance the directorate's internal efficiency.

The aim is also to reinforce a collective structure across the central administration and the decentralised departments and to establish links between them, notably through the monthly webinars. Eleven webinars were held in 2022, providing introductions to topics of transversal relevance as well as exchanges of methods.



THE DGAL ORGANISATION CHART





1



“One Health” in practice

The interdependence of human, animal and plant health and environmental protection is now universally acknowledged and is at the forefront of many public policies. The DGAL has made it an integral part of the definition of its programmes, which are founded on a holistic approach to the goals and issues.

CHLORDECONE: A VISIT TO THE FRENCH WEST INDIES BY THE DIRECTOR GENERAL

Maud Faipoux, head of the General Directorate for Food, travelled to Guadeloupe and Martinique in December 2022. The agenda for her first trip overseas covered chlordecone, visits to agricultural holdings (sugarcane, livestock farming, bananas) and meetings with staff in the decentralised departments. The holding of a scientific colloquium aimed at defining the progress to date on the ongoing scientific research into the impact of chlordecone and future prospects for management measures testifies to the priority importance attached to control of the risks caused by this insecticide, in use in banana plantations for over twenty years.

Maud Faipoux began her tour in Guadeloupe and spoke at the close of the scientific colloquium on chlordecone. She saluted the energy and progress of the efforts of researchers since the previous session in 2018. This encouraging work enables prospects to be defined for changes in management procedures in the short and medium terms and control of contamination risks with a view to a “zero chlordecone” diet.

The Director General recalled that the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Sovereignty had been fully engaged for several years in the effort to provide a **comprehensive, consistent response** to the food-related issues arising from chlordecone:

- Firstly, with an increase of more than 75% in the numbers of food samples between 2018 and 2020 across all sensitive sectors in order to verify the compliance of marketed foodstuffs with the maximum levels permitted by regulations. A decision has been taken to maintain this intense control pressure on food products with the scheduling of over 4,000 samples each year under the fourth chlordecone programme.

- Secondly, by making use of the research projects by facilitating, starting in 2023, the operational deployment of a decision-aid whose purpose is to ensure the safety of bovine production in Guadeloupe and Martinique in an environment partly contaminated by chlordecone.



ASSISTANCE FOR LIVESTOCK FARMERS

The overseas visit continued to **Martinique** with a meeting with a **banana grower** and owner of bovine livestock, followed by a meeting with a **bovine livestock farmer** (holding around twenty cows). In both these cases, **the GDSM** (the sanitary defence group for Martinique) described a support scheme based on precise diagnostic analysis of the sources of contamination (water, soil, fodder) connected with chlordecone. Action by the GDSM was **intensified** at the end of 2022 with an increase in the number of mobile decontamination units offered to livestock farmers and the identification of non-contaminated plots.

SUPPORT FOR THE BANANA INDUSTRY

On the last day of the visit the DGAL delegation was welcomed by **Banamart**, a company in the Martinique banana producers’ federation. Banana production is the leading form of agricultural production on the island, the biggest agricultural employer and occupies 25% of the Utilised Agricultural Area (UAA). This sector is exposed to frequent **severe climate events** (droughts and storms) and sanitary problems (black sigatoka and fusarium wilt affecting bananas). Several plant protection products authorised by derogation are currently being assessed by ANSES with a view to issuance of a marketing authorisation, which will give the industry more forward visibility. The Ministry wishes to be certain of the roll-out of a strategy that will ultimately enable the phytosanitary issue to be managed over the longer term.



In connection with the **INSSICCA** project (innovative strategies for the safety of livestock farming in chlordecone-contaminated areas), the University of Lorraine has developed a tool to allow farmers to determine the timeframe in which livestock slaughter becomes possible after a period of decontamination defined in light of the results of blood tests or even analysis of faeces. The researchers have demonstrated that the level of chlordecone in the meat of a contaminated animal declines over time if the husbandry methods used allow the animals to be isolated from all sources of feed-borne contamination.

Sanigwa (an equivalent body to GDS in Guadeloupe) has helped with the experimentation, which included participation by 14 livestock farmers and 39 animals, leading to very satisfactory results.

A ROADMAP FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF BRUCELLOSIS

A roadmap derived from work done collectively under the aegis of the DGAL was presented in October 2022 for the management of brucellosis, a bovine disease transmissible to human beings.

It aims to safeguard consumer health by protecting livestock farms and combating the disease when present in wild fauna (Bargy ibexes).

Brucellosis is a highly contagious bacterial disease in bovine animals and small ruminants. It causes abortions, reduced fertility and declining milk production. Where an outbreak is detected, only complete culling of the herd can guarantee its eradication. Detected in the ibex population in the Bargy mountains in 2012, it poses a constant threat to bovine livestock in summer pastures where infected ibexes are also present. Two outbreaks of bovine brucellosis were identified in Upper Savoy in France in 2012 and 2021 in herds on summer pastures in the Bargy mountains, resulting in the culling of the livestock involved. In July 2022, a young female ibex tested positive for brucellosis in the Aravis mountains which are close to the Bargy range and an important summer pasturage area for herds in Savoy and Upper Savoy.

The disease is also transmissible to human beings following consumption of products made with raw milk from animals infected by the bacteria or contact with animals suffering from brucellosis. The Bargy mountains are at the heart of the production area for Reblochon, a cheese produced under a PDO high value-added label. This means

that avoidance of all risk of transmission of the disease to consumers requires the milk from infected herds to be used exclusively to produce pasteurised products.

A roadmap was presented in October 2022: this provides for reinforced surveillance measures for farms with livestock on summer pastures and wild fauna, i.e. not only ibexes but also game species (e.g. chamois, deer). Early detection is absolutely essential. The combat against the disease in ibex populations necessarily involves culling and capture: in 2022, 135 ibexes were captured and 61 culled. These animals were all subjected to sampling for laboratory testing for the bacterium.

For the 2022-23 hunting season, surveillance of chamois in the Bargy and Aravis mountain regions is currently ongoing.

The government is also providing a 70% subsidy for a €400,000 research programme directed at improving the detection of the Brucella bacterium in milk and cheese and to monitor its survival throughout the maturation process in potentially contaminated cheese. A monitoring committee for the roadmap has been set up with local stakeholders.

[GO TO THE ROADMAP](#)



ECOANTIBIO: GOOD RESULTS ACHIEVED OVER THE LAST TEN YEARS - TO BE MAINTAINED

Throughout the months of November and December 2022 the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Sovereignty drove a communication campaign on the need to control antimicrobial resistance, of which the core slogan was “Antibiotics, the right way at the right time”, highlighting the good results that have been achieved.

MINISTÈRE DE L'AGRICULTURE ET DE LA SOUVERAINETÉ ALIMENTAIRE

Écoantibio, réduire l'utilisation des antibiotiques vétérinaires

LE PLAN ÉCOANTIBIO: CONTINUER À RÉDUIRE L'UTILISATION DES ANTIBIOTIQUES CHEZ LES ANIMAUX ET AINSI PRÉSERVER LEUR EFFICACITÉ THÉRAPEUTIQUE.

En dix ans, nous avons réussi ensemble à diminuer de **-47% l'exposition de nos animaux aux antibiotiques.**

L'ANTIBIORESISTANCE
 C'est la capacité des bactéries à résister aux antibiotiques. Ils ne détruisent plus les bactéries et ne permettent plus la guérison. L'utilisation abusive et non responsable des antibiotiques par les vétérinaires et les éleveurs favorise les risques d'antibiorésistance.

5 500 EN FRANCE
700 000 DANS LE MONDE
 NOMBRES DE DÉCÈS IMPUTÉS PAR AN CÉLÈS À L'ANTIBIORESISTANCE

C'EST UN ENJEU MONDIAL POUR LA SANTÉ HUMAINE ET ANIMALE

EN 10 ANS, TOUTES FILIÈRES ANIMALES CONFONDUES.

Le 1^{er} plan écoantibio 2012-2016
 visait à réduire de **25 % en 5 ans** l'utilisation des antibiotiques chez les animaux.

Le 2^e plan écoantibio 2017-2022
 vise à consolider ce résultat en poursuivant les efforts.

Depuis 2013, plus de **200 projets de recherche** ont été financés dans le cadre du plan écoantibio (développement d'outils pour les professionnels, formation, recherche appliquée, etc.)

SOURCE : ODA, NOVEMBRE 2022

This awareness-raising campaign, which is repeated every year, targeted livestock farmers in the various animal production sectors, along with veterinarians and pet owners. The objective is to preserve the efficacy of antibiotics in both veterinary and human medicine by encouraging their rational use.

The ten-year mark of the Ecoantibio Plan provided an opportunity to highlight the good results achieved, notably a reduction of nearly 50% in the exposure of all farm livestock and pets to antimicrobials.

This diminution of exposure is even more striking in the case of antibiotics of critical importance. Under pressure from regulatory constraints and thanks to the commitment of veterinarians and livestock farmers, their use has fallen from 8% for all antimicrobials administered in 2011 to 1% in 201. It has levelled off since 2017 to around 1%.

These good results need to be maintained in the run-up to the new Ecoantibio plan starting in 2023.

LES ANTIBIOS, COMME IL FAUT, QUAND IL FAUT.

En 10 ans, nous avons réussi ensemble à diminuer de **47%** l'exposition de nos animaux aux antibiotiques.

En vaccinant mon animal, je limite les risques d'infections bactériennes et je réduis le recours aux antibiotiques. Découvrez toutes les bonnes pratiques sur agriculture.gouv.fr/eoantibio.

ÉCOANTIBIO
 POUR CONTRÔLER L'USAGE DES ANTIBIOTIQUES VÉTÉRINAIRES

GO TO THE DOSSIER, COMMUNICATION KIT & RADIO SPOTS



A CASE OF RABIES IMPORTED INTO ESSONNE: VETERINARIANS IN THE FRONT LINE

France is free of rabies, but cases are regularly detected in domestic carnivores imported from countries where the disease is present. This occurred on 25 October 2022 in the Essonne département: the sanitary veterinarian at an animal shelter notified the DDPP of a suspected case of rabies in a Husky dog.

The DDPP (departmental directorate for the protection of the public), the DGAL (Animal Health Office, Sanitary Emergencies Unit and the National Veterinary and Phytosanitary Investigation Unit (BNEVP)) and the Ministry of Health worked closely together to identify human and animal "exposure cases". The diagnosis was confirmed on 27 October 2022 by the National Rabies Reference Centre, which identified a strain of rabies of Moroccan origin. The dogs at the animal shelter were placed under surveillance for a period of six months in accordance with the recommendation of ANSES, to which the matter was submitted.

The ARS (regional health agency) for the Paris area itself identified 32 individuals as "exposure cases" and all were given treatment. The disease is transmitted to human beings via saliva, scratches or bites from an infected animal. **It is a disease that is fatal if not treated before the appearance of symptoms.**

The investigation to identify the precise provenance of the animal and the source of the infection was conducted by the Essonne DDPP. Canine rabies is indeed absent from France, but it continues to be present in numerous countries. **Enquiries by the DGAL's BNEVP in conjunction with the public prosecutor's office confirmed that the rabies case had indeed been imported.**



This case comes as a reminder that **the combat against canine rabies is reliant on constant vigilance on the part of the network of veterinarians who are fully mobilised as part of their public health duties**, working with the public, professionals rearing dogs and animal shelters. **The importing of animals, especially from countries where the rabies virus is present, is subject to strict regulatory controls.**

Une nouvelle campagne de prévention "[Gare à la rage / Beware rabies](#)" was launched in June 2022 by the DGAL to target the general public and travellers. It reminds travellers of important recommendations for before, during and after their journey.

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GARE À LA RAGE

Voyageurs, ne ramenez pas un animal d'un pays touché par la rage.

Pensez à faire vacciner votre animal lorsque vous partez à l'étranger.

Absente en France, la rage existe encore dans de nombreux pays.

Les cas de rage en France proviennent tous d'animaux contaminés à l'étranger.

Une fois les symptômes apparus, la rage est toujours mortelle.

 garealarage.fr

→ READ THE PRESS RELEASE HERE



FRANCE 2030: INVESTMENT IN HEALTHY, SUSTAINABLE AND TRACEABLE FOOD

Launched in October 2021 by the President of the Republic, the “France 2030” investment programme sets 10 goals for better understanding, better living and better production in France out to a 2030 horizon. It contains goal no. 6, which has funding of €2.9bn for investment in healthy, sustainable and traceable food. The DGAL was involved in the definition of the measures to be focused on actors within the DGAL “ecosystem”. Those measures were initiated in 2022:

- A call for project proposals headed “**Innovation for successful agroecological and food transitions**”, with €200m in funding and driven by BPI France, seeks to identify projects notably involving smart, connected agricultural systems, technological solutions for sanitary high performance and animal welfare, biocontrol, food quality and safety, development of healthier, more sustainable foodstuffs, and packaging and containers free of health hazards, particularly in institutional catering.
- A call for declarations of interest headed “**Regional demonstrators for the agricultural and food transitions**”, with €152m in funding and driven by the bank of the regions, seeks to identify collective regional projects relating to local foods and procurement in institutional catering, the circular economy, farming methods and, most notably, reductions in the use of plant protection

products, projects that may include PATs (regional food projects).

- A call for project proposals headed “**Agrifood resilience and capacity 2030**”, with €300m in funding and driven by BPI France and FranceAgriMer, relating to industrialisation projects focused on the onshoring of strategic links in industrial supply chains, responding to tomorrow’s food requirements, and the success of the agroecological transition, as well as projects for the organisation of sectors aiming to implement collective approaches to transitions and resilience in agricultural and agrifood sectors;

- A scheme headed “**Agricultural systems for the 3rd agricultural revolution**”, with €400m in funding and driven by BPI France and FranceAgriMer, one component of which is a call for declarations of interest targeting equipment manufacturers, and a scheme for support to farmers and growers, either individually or in collective groups, with their projects for investment and purchases of innovative equipment to enable speedier transitions.





2



Food and food sanitary safety

Inspections, checks, alert management and detection of fraud: all contribute to safeguarding the sanitary safety of food and the health of consumers. These DGAL duties are supplemented by the task of driving public policy on food and in particular the national food programme (PNA).

Assisted by the “France Relance” economic recovery plan, the PNA is reliant on institutional catering and regional food projects, which underwent major development in 2022.

THE NATIONAL FOOD PROGRAMME: ACHIEVEMENT OF THE TARGET OF AT LEAST ONE FOOD PROJECT PER DÉPARTEMENT IN 2022

A year of consolidation and increasing capacity for France's national food programme (2019-2023) "Regions in Action": the deployment of PATs (regional food projects) continued in 2022 in line with the France Relance economic recovery plan, and the institutional catering sector, assisted by central government, confirmed its quality improvement.

Some statistics are so eloquent as to need no explanation: as of 31 December 2022, nearly 400 regional food projects were registered under the PAT label in France, compared with 41 in 2020. This is an increase by a factor of 10 in the number of PATs in the space of three years. **The target of at least one PAT per département was therefore achieved over the course of 2022.**

The annual national call for project proposals under the national food programme (PNA) contributed to this striking success: it allowed 25 new, emerging PATs to be supported in 2022, along with 4 projects to assist actors in the institutional catering field, with support from the Ministry of Agriculture of €1.15m, in addition to €660,000 from ADEME (the French agency for the ecological transition) and €200,000 from the Ministry for Solidarity and



Health. The funding envelope was also topped up with €400,000 from the France Relance economic recovery plan in order to maintain the dynamic of the PAT roll-out.

Consolidation of the overall PAT ecosystem entails a constantly increasing need for support, especially for leadership activities within each PAT and interaction between PATs (e.g. sharing of experience, development of new resources), project follow-up, notably by government, assessment and measurement of PAT impacts, raising the profile of project accomplishments, and more.

With all this in mind, **a new work programme was put in place at the end of 2022**, driven by two co-leaders for the national PAT network, Terre en villes and Chambres d'Agriculture France (formerly APCA) to foreshadow a "redesigned" future national network. This will allow account to be taken of the provisions contained in France's Climate and Resilience law.

Discussions began in the second half of 2022 with the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Ecology with a view to building the future **national food, nutrition and climate strategy (SNANC)** by 1 July 2023, as stipulated in the Climate and Resilience law.

In this context, the partnership established with the ministries for health and solidarity and ADEME for the **2022-2023 edition of the PNA's call for project proposals already foreshadows what one of the tools implemented by SNANC might be.**

The three core focuses of the National Food Programme (PNA) for 2019-2023

The national food programme – PNA (2019-2023) “Regions in Action” is organised around three core themes: social justice, combating food waste, and food education, plus two transversal levers for action: regional food projects (PATs) and institutional catering.



→ TO FIND OUT MORE



PATs: a resource for enhanced regional resilience

PATs represent an innovative regional approach that brings together all actors with an interest in food. As the Covid pandemic demonstrated, PATs foster increased resilience in local regions. These projects may cover several forms of action:

The economic dimension: the structural organisation and consolidation of regional sectors, especially in conjunction with agrifood companies present locally; matching supply with demand; helping preserve local value-added; helping new farmers set up in the industry; or possibly contributing to the conservation of agricultural land.

The environmental dimension: support for changes in dietary habits (e.g. diversification of protein sources, product seasonality, consumption of sustainable products of good quality); support for agroecological modes of production (e.g. organic farming, high environmental value farms, soil and water conservation, climate change mitigation and adaptation); improvements in the efficiency of logistics, the production chain, product processing and product distribution; and contributions to combating food waste.

The social/health dimension: participation in food education; fostering social involvement, creating inclusive cooking facilities; showcasing heritage assets and, another example, combating food poverty.

ma cantine

INSTITUTIONAL CATERING: “MY CANTEEN” PICKS UP SPEED

Launched in 2021, this digital platform created by the Ministry of Agriculture is a strategic resource for supporting and monitoring the EGalim legislation on sustainable and high-quality products in canteens. A feature of 2022 was the roll-out of numerous schemes and communication efforts aimed at accelerating its development.

France’s EGalim law provides for ambitious measures to improve the quality of the meals served in institutional catering, one particular objective being to ensure a minimum 50% level for sustainable, high-quality products, of which at least 20% must come from organic farming.

With the intention of assisting managers of institutional catering facilities in implementing the above measures, a digital platform was set up by the Ministry of Agriculture with the help of DINUM (interministerial directorate for digital technology): <https://ma-cantine.agriculture.gouv.fr>



This platform provides a comprehensive toolbox for the managers of premises, cooks, catering directors and buyers. Specifically, it offers:

- **Assistance in meeting the obligations imposed by the legislation:** the “EGalim”, “Combating waste for a circular economy” and “Climate & Resilience” laws.
- **Practical guidance and management tools** (e.g. self-testing, tracking food purchases, an EGalim score calculator).
- **Communication and information documents** to highlight for users the commitments and initiatives undertaken.
- **Access to guides and documentation** produced by the CNRC (national council for institutional catering).
- **A tool for making the annual declarations of the values of food purchases** that enable central government to monitor achievement of the targets imposed by legislation.

A government communication campaign was launched in mid-September in the specialist press to encourage canteen managers to register on the platform. **They were also invited to take part in a trial of a meal booking system** aimed at adjusting procurement to match the number of meals actually required, thus limiting food waste. Similarly, another trial was conducted during 2022 allowing volunteering local government bodies to offer a daily vegetarian option in cases where the menu offers a range of meal choices.

[→ SEE THE DOSSIER HERE](#)





The national council for institutional catering: a new working group on the impact of inflation

Food prices rose sharply over the course of 2022, triggered by the global economic recovery following the Covid pandemic and then worsened by the war in Ukraine. At the plenary session on 1 April 2022, the CNRC (national council for institutional catering) decided to set up a working group specifically on these economic issues. This "Economic WG", chaired jointly by the government purchasing directorate at the Ministry of Finance and the French wholesalers' confederation, met throughout the second half of 2022, resulting in the adoption of several measures in conjunction with the actors in the sector, the intention being to throw light on possibilities that could enable account to be taken of price rises that were unforeseeable at the time of the signing and awarding of the contracts for public institutional catering procurement.

"Practical" deliverables intended for buyers were jointly drafted and published on the "My Canteen" digital platform, in particular a reference document for price indicators and a practical guide to adjustment of procurement based on concrete cases.

The "My Canteen" digital platform at the Mayors' Fair

It had not happened for several years: the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Sovereignty was present at the Mayors' and Local Government Fair (22-24 November 2022 in Paris) at an exhibition stand entirely devoted to promoting the "My Canteen" digital platform developed by the DGAL.

As key interlocutors for the implementation of public policies, elected representatives and local government staff were able during these three days to discover for themselves all the details of what the digital platform offers: useful information for implementing the EGAlim legislation, as well as the AGECE and Climate & Resilience laws; a toolbox; a tool for online completion of declarations of sustainable, quality products used, and so on.

The objective: to provide ongoing assistance to managers of institutional catering facilities (in schools, nurseries, retirement homes, welfare centres, etc.) in taking their sustainable catering projects forward.

Accompanied by Maud Faipoux, the Minister of Agriculture and Food Sovereignty, Marc Fesneau, took part in a round table entitled "My Canteen - ensuring the success of the food transition on the plates of our children and students" on 22 November, in the company of four elected representatives who shared their experience of the initiatives implemented in their municipalities. The minister reminded those present of the importance of this form of catering, and of school canteens in particular, in ensuring access for all to food that is healthy, sustainable and varied, especially for the most vulnerable in society.



→ TO FIND OUT MORE



→ PRESS RELEASE



THE NATIONAL SLAUGHTERHOUSE INSPECTION FORCE (FINA): SUPPORT FOR THE DGAL'S DECENTRALISED DEPARTMENTS

In 2022, at their request, FINA provided expert assessments and follow-up for 12 slaughterhouses requiring special measures in 6 regions. Set up in October 2021 at the instigation of the DGAL, FINA provides support to decentralised departments needing to address the issue of slaughterhouses in difficulty.

The first quarter of 2022 enabled the FINA to organise itself, specifically by establishing its working methods, finalising its qualification pathways and harmonising inspection methods to be used by all its inspectors. This period also led to the publication of the technical specifications for its operations and the use of the Ministry's databases to identify slaughterhouses in difficulty.

During the remainder of the year, the support provided by the FINA was much appreciated by the decentralised agencies in the départements responsible for the management of public health in slaughterhouses. In all cases, intervention by the FINA allowed local staff to regain the initiative and move forward in situations that had in some cases been in an impasse for some considerable time.

The FINA also contributed its expertise to meeting a diverse range of needs of the Ministry of Agriculture and its decentralised departments. Its inspectors participated for example in the start-up and inspection of a mobile slaughterhouse and in a sampling programme for a large-scale sanitary culling programme. They also assisted quality auditors working in a slaughterhouse and took part in enquiries relating to a dispute.

And lastly, along with the national slaughterhouse referent network, they were also involved in creating a training kit for new job entrants and in coaching and tutoring activities for inspectors working in slaughterhouses.



FOOD ALERTS: THE CENTRAL ROLE IN INVESTIGATIONS OF THE SANITARY EMERGENCIES UNIT (MUS)

In 2022, in addition to the constant watch on listeriosis, the DGAL's Sanitary Emergencies Unit (MUS) and Public Health France (SpF) addressed some twenty clusters of salmonella infection and around fifteen clusters of other foodborne illnesses in cooperation with the DGCCRF where processed plant products were suspected, as well as with the reference laboratories (CNR, LNR) and the General Directorate for Health (DGS). The MUS handles more than a thousand food alerts every year.

Salmonellosis, haemolytic and uraemic syndromes... What is the role of the Sanitary Emergencies Unit of the DGAL in combating food alerts? We take a close look below at how a Unit unlike any other actually operates.

The first step is the responsibility of SpF, or Public Health France. The SpF is charged with surveillance of clusters of cases of illness and calls on the MUS immediately a common food-related cause is suspected. There then begins a careful process of enquiry in the search for the foodstuff, the ingredient or the food outlet common to all the cases involved.

The investigation relies on SpF diet questionnaires completed with patients and their families in order to arrive at a description of their dietary habits, the catering outlets they frequent, and the food consumed in the period preceding the appearance of the symptoms. With the agreement of those involved, loyalty card numbers are used by the MUS to obtain detailed lists of their purchases from retail chains in the preceding weeks and months. The menus of the meals served in institutional catering facilities are collected by the DGAL's decentralised agencies in the départements (DDecPP).

Then, taking this mass of data, the MUS and the SpF endeavour to find a common thread they can follow up. The situation will be highly fluid: the list of cases to be considered will lengthen or shorten as and when addi-

tional patients are notified and test results for them are obtained (ranging, for example, from straightforward confirmation of a salmonellosis diagnostic to bacterial genotype comparisons).

The investigation may in some cases extend outside France when data is shared over dedicated networks (Epi-Pulse and EFSA OH WGS System). When a foodstuff or a food outlet is suspected, the MUS seeks help from the relevant bodies in the département or regional government authority in order to carry out the necessary inspections and sampling. Lastly, once the source has been identified, appropriate corrective and preventive measures are initiated under close central government oversight.



It also sometimes happens that the epidemic peters out without a source having been identified. The information obtained is nonetheless kept on hand to support enquiries if it returns. Indeed, where listeriosis is concerned, the SpF maintains a constant watch on all identified genomic clusters, and on several occasions each year the MUS will put its staff on alert due to a worrying resurgence of a strain of pathogenic listeria linked to one of the food outlets they monitor. These indications are invaluable and enable new epidemics to be avoided.

In addition to handling food-related alerts, the MUS also helps manage those linked to the detection of an animal or plant disease as well as contributing to the DGAL's crisis organisation.

Food alerts: the operator's guide is now out!

A new version of the Guide for assistance on handling food-related alerts for use by professionals in the sector and government departments was finalised in 2022 by the MUS team.

→ [DOWNLOAD HERE](#)



Pizzas: a difficult investigation

On 11 February 2022, the SpF alerted the MUS to a suspicious increase in the weekly number of paediatric cases of haemolytic uraemic syndrome (HUS). There then began a hunt for the source lasting five weeks and involving a major collective effort, analysis of over 100 store loyalty cards, 1,500 minced meat traceability pathways, the tracking of batch numbers placed on sale from the beginning of January back in time up to the slaughter dates and locations. The joint enquiries of the DGAL and the DGCCRF also focused on fourth range salad products, on a fast-food chain and on *Escherichia coli* O26 stx2 strains identified in France in the preceding months, none of which resulted in the identification of a source.

Early in March, the SpF observed a high frequency of pizza purchases, and specifically frozen pizzas with uncooked pastry, by the families of certain patients. Additional epidemiological enquiries and pizza testing resulted in a successful conclusion to the investigation. The procedures for withdrawal from sale and recall of the pizzas concerned were initiated by DGCCRF staff on Friday 18 March. Extensive media coverage and over 10,000 checks in retail outlets led to certainty by the first weekend that sales had been effectively halted, thereby bringing an immediate and complete end to the epidemic. In total, 57 individuals had been infected, including 50 children and adolescents suffering from HUS. These five extremely tense weeks have left an indelible trace in the memories of all concerned.



OPERATION “BUSHMEAT TRAFFIC”

An operation was conducted in July 2022 at Orly airport in Paris by several different sections of the Gendarmerie and the DGAL’s BNEVP (national veterinary and phytosanitary investigation unit). Surveillance of flights originating in Côte d’Ivoire revealed trafficking involving suspect baggage supposedly accompanying passengers and containing products whose importation into the European Union is prohibited.

The airport and sanitary authorities were alerted by fluids leaking from the baggage. Substantial numbers of personnel from the Gendarmerie¹ and the BNEVP participated in the operation. Several individuals collecting or transporting the suspect bags were detained. A comprehensive search of the contents of the baggage revealed animal foodstuffs and products of animal origin. The processing of the products (smoked, marinated, fire-cured) prevented definite identification of the source species of the animals and around twenty samples were therefore taken for DNA testing.

An approximate quantity of 70kg of foodstuffs (honey and fisheries products, in addition to gastropod, ruminant, pig and poultry meat) was seized and destroyed on orders from the public prosecutor to forestall any possible harm to public health.

The introduction of foodstuffs by travellers coming from outside the European Union is prohibited on sanitary grounds (notably the risk of introducing animal diseases), and especially where species protected by the Washington Convention are concerned.



¹ - OCLAESp - (French central office for the fight against threats to the environment and public health), GOS – (surveillance operations group), PSIG – (Gendarmerie surveillance and intervention unit), BTA – (air transport brigade), IRCGN – national gendarmerie criminal research institute)



3



Animal health and protection

Prevention and control of animal diseases, stronger protection for livestock on farms and for pets, addressing the lack of veterinary services in rural areas, reorganisation of the veterinary medicines sector: these are all major areas for livestock-related action by the DGAL.

VACCINATION, AN ADDITIONAL TOOL IN THE COMBAT AGAINST AVIAN INFLUENZA

The scale of the epizootic of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) we experienced in 2021-2022 was unprecedented: all records were broken, for numbers of outbreaks, with over 1,300 farms affected, or numbers of animals culled, or cost, or duration. And another episode began in the summer of 2022. The implementation of a vaccination strategy in the autumn of 2023 is eagerly awaited by livestock farmers who have been living through a succession of crises for many years.

Following an initial wave that began in November 2021 in south-western France, a second hit France's Grand Ouest, beginning at the end of February 2022. There then followed a brief respite at the end of May 2022 with a final outbreak on a livestock farm confirmed in mid-May, but the situation then once again took a turn for the worse during the summer with massive mortality due to highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) among wild birds on France's northern and Atlantic coasts.

[The 2021 roadmap was updated again in July 2022](#) based on the experience built up by those in the field. Given the existence of a risk that the virus would persist in the environment, there was a need to revise the indicators used to define high-risk periods and give greater consideration to the specific characteristics of local areas and systems of production. In particular, the emphasis was put on intensified surveillance for earlier detection of outbreaks as well as on poultry traceability in order to be in a position to achieve greater control over the epizootic and over application of the biosecurity measures. The latter were notably the subject of recommendations made by European Commission auditors (DG SANTE audit, 12-26 September 2022).

A further episode commenced during the summer of 2022 in wild fauna, followed by livestock farms, mainly

in northern and western France, in the autumn, with the south-west being spared largely due to the steps taken to reduce stock densities as stipulated in the interbranch agreement reached by the ducks and geese foie gras sector (the Adour Plan).

In early February 2023, the number of outbreaks on farms was nearing 300, three-quarters of which were concentrated in the Loire region in a zone at risk of spread of the disease and with a high poultry stocking density (especially in the Vendée and Maine-et-Loire départements).

HOPES RAISED BY VACCINATION

In order to strengthen the disease prevention system and in line with the European Council's conclusions on Vaccination during the French Presidency (see p. 57), an action plan for the operational implementation of poultry vaccination was defined in December 2022. This was designed by all stakeholders (government departments, sanitary

agencies, interbranch industry bodies, etc.) with the objective of defining and developing a vaccination strategy to supplement the biosecurity measures that were more essential than ever. The trial undertaken in metropolitan France in May 2022 in four south-western départements involved two vaccines whose efficacy is being tested on ducks. The results will be known in the course of the first quarter of 2023. If all the conditions are met (i.e. efficacy, vaccine availability, operating conditions, acceptability for our trade partners, among others), vaccination could start from the autumn of 2023.

A process of reflection by all professionals in the relevant sectors on the future of the poultry industry also began in the autumn of 2022; this will continue until the spring of 2023 with a view to building a shared vision to strengthen resilience and safeguard the food sovereignty of our country.



AFRICAN SWINE FEVER: NO LET UP IN SURVEILLANCE

Although pig farms in several European countries have been affected by this disease, France remained free of ASF in 2022. Prevention, surveillance and preparation for disease control are the three core focuses of the action plan launched in January 2022.

African Swine Fever (ASF) is a fatal animal disease caused by a virus that infects only domestic pigs and wild boar. It is still highly prevalent in Europe and countries bordering on France: cases have been seen in wild fauna in Germany (in the east of the country) and in May 2022 on a pig farm near the French border.

Since January 2022, numerous cases have been recorded in northern Italy (Piedmont, Liguria) and later in the Lazio region 70km from the French border, in addition to outbreaks on farms in Sardinia. Cases were also confirmed in 2021 in the Caribbean (Haiti and Dominican Republic) not far from the French West Indies.

An action plan was drawn up in January 2022 by the General Directorate for Food (DGAL) in consultation with all actors in the industry. It contains measures to be applied by the various public- and private-sector stakeholders to prevent the introduction of the virus into France. Prevention, surveillance and preparation for disease control are the three core focuses of the action plan. African Swine Fever is a fatal disease in pigs and boar and would have catastrophic consequences for the entire pig industry, not only for export markets but also for national meat prices. This is so because the appearance of the virus in



France would entail the total or partial closure of export markets for French pigs and pig products.

Following the appearance of ASF in Piedmont and Liguria in Italy, **messages to raise awareness were immediately sent out by the DGAL to those involved in ASF surveillance in France.** Central government departments, trade bodies and actors involved with wild fauna have been called upon to intensify vigilance and step up surveillance on farms and wild fauna, event surveillance being essential for early detection of introduction of the virus. Biosecurity audits have been conducted on farms in the Provence-Côte d'Azur region of southern France.

The discovery of an outbreak in Germany six kilometres from the French border in May 2022 led to the immediate mobilisation of all professionals and government departments.

→ READ THE DOSSIER



PREVENTIVE COMMUNICATION AND INTENSIFIED VIGILANCE

The communication campaign launched by the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Sovereignty contains reminders of the preventive measures to be applied to avoid introducing ASF into France. The campaign was conducted in 2022 in three waves (February–April, July, December 2022–February 2023) and included radio spots and posters on motorway and other transport service areas as well as social media.

- For livestock farmers and haulage firms, prevention and biosecurity rules should be adhered to (cleaning and disinfection of vehicles and the equipment used, avoidance of contact between farm animals and wild boar, remaining vigilant and notifying any suspicion of ASF).
- For travellers and seasonal workers, waste food of pig origin should be disposed of in closed bins provided for that purpose because the virus can be transmitted to wild boar and domestic pigs by contaminated meat and products made with contaminated meat.
- For hunters and nature users, the need is to remain vigilant and to notify any dead boar to the decentralised government agencies (DDPP), to the hunting federations in the départements and to the French Biodiversity Office (OFB).



Biosecurity, a major issue for animal health: prevention is better than cure

Biosecurity covers the whole range of measures whose purpose is to reduce the risk of introduction, development and spread of sanitary hazards.

The “biosecurity and animal welfare pact”, a measure allocated funding of €100m from the “France Relance” economic recovery plan, is directed at provision of support for livestock farmers to help them respond more effectively to the goals and issues linked to animal welfare and biosecurity.

In the bovine sector, two training programmes have been proposed to farmers. Over 500 were able to take the offer up in 2022.

In the pig and poultry industries a “pilot farm” trial was launched in December 2022. The aim of this is to co-construct biosecurity measures for free-range rearing and to support livestock farmers in implementing and adapting them. This project is led by FADEAR, a non-profit federation for the development of employment in agriculture and rural areas, and it brings together all the stakeholders involved in biosecurity in these sectors (IFIP, ITAVI, ITAB, ANSES, GDS France, SNGTV). The trial is planned to take 24 months.

VETERINARY SERVICE COVERAGE: REVITALISING RURAL AREAS

Originally implemented in 2016 and rebooted in 2021, the roadmap defined by central government and agricultural and veterinary representative bodies to address the lack of veterinary services in some areas achieved important breakthroughs in 2022. A number of accomplishments are helping revitalise rural areas and maintain livestock farming activities.

The launch in January 2022 of a **call for declarations of interest** led to the proposal for support (diagnostic analysis and an action plan) for eleven local regions affected by a deterioration in veterinary coverage. The objective: to offer a set of methods and a toolbox to regional actors for pooling their efforts, along with assistance in project governance.

An initial overview of the work done was presented on 29 November 2022 on the occasion of the 3rd national veterinary day in the presence of the Minister of Agriculture and Food Sovereignty. The call for declarations of interest was funded by the Ministry and placed under the management of the CNOV (national veterinarians' council). The governance body for the project, comprising CNOV, SNGTV, SNVEL, Chambers of Agriculture France, FNSEA and GDS France, is continuing its work in 2023 with a view to major expansion in these diagnostic programmes.

A user guide for local government to facilitate support for veterinarians and veterinary students has been produced in conjunction with the ministry for local government. This can be accessed online at <https://agriculture.gouv.fr/les-col->

[lectivites-territoriales-autorisees-delivrer-des-aides-aux-veterinaires-et-etudiants](#), and has been circulated to the decentralised departments (DDecPP, DRAAF, Prefectures).

A veterinary care agreement signed between the attending veterinarian and the livestock farmer will determine care provision arrangements to enable – subject to certain conditions – prescription of the whole range of available veterinary medicines without systematically requiring a clinical examination and based on the attending veterinarian's detailed knowledge of the farm.

The attending veterinarian designated by the livestock farmer will commit to ensuring continuity of care and supervision of the use of veterinary medicines on the farm. This general principle, which does not include any exception for ruminant farming, will be adjusted to take account of the specific features of pig, poultry, rabbit farming. This reform of ongoing sanitary care introduces a protective framework for the relationship between farmer and veterinarian and creates the conditions for authorisation of the development of veterinary telemedicine. Regulatory definition of the relevant veterinary procedures is currently under way.



VETERINARY MEDICINES: CHANGES TO NATIONAL LAW IN LINE WITH NEW EU REGULATIONS

In January 2019, the European Parliament and Council adopted a set of regulations – the “Veterinary Medicines Package” – directed at increasing the availability of veterinary medicines across the EU, lightening the administrative burden, boosting competitiveness and innovation, improving the functioning of the internal market, and managing the growing risk to public health of antimicrobial resistance.

Two EU regulations applicable to veterinary medicines and medicated feed came into force on 28 January 2022. An ordinance was issued in March 2022 to align national regulations with those regulations following work done jointly by the DGAL, DG SANTE (DGS) and the ANMV (French Agency for Veterinary Medicinal Products).

Medicated feed, until now treated as a form of veterinary medicine, is now considered to be a type of animal feed subject to specific rules. Adjustments have been made to the applicable rules at every stage and for all operators in the chain from production to use of veterinary medicines and medicated feed. ANSES has been designated as the responsible authority for manufacture of veterinary medicines, and the criminal law and financial penalties have been adjusted and certain official enforcement measures strengthened (official notices to remedy, officer empowerment, formal questioning powers). Certain provisions in the adopted EU regulations concern



practicing veterinarians directly, such as the prohibition on the use of antimicrobials for preventive purposes.

Other provisions, notably those relating to the conditions governing prescription, retail distribution and use of veterinary medicines (including for example the issuance of single units of such medicines and their sale online) and medicated feed will be clarified in official decrees and implementing orders following consultation of the representative veterinary and farming organisations.

The ordinance has also broadened the obligation to provide information on prescriptions and sale of medicines containing antibiotics to include all antimicrobials. The information collection system, Calypso, which will en-

able this information to be collected from veterinarians, pharmacists and manufacturers of medicated feed, will become available on 14 March 2023.

The interministerial work done jointly by the DGAL, the DGS and ANMV continued throughout the year on the drafting of texts for regulatory implementation, the first of which will be published in 2023.



PROTECTION OF ANIMALS: PROGRESS ON NUMEROUS FRONTS

In 2022, the DGAL worked on several issues relating to animal welfare: combating abuse, pet abandonment and the culling of male chicks in the egg industry.

- France's law of 30 November 2021 against the maltreatment of animals and in favour of the consolidation of the relationship between animals and human beings required the drafting of four implementing decrees falling within the remit of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Sovereignty, three of which have now been published. These enable the awareness of future new pet owners to be raised by imposing the mandatory signing by purchasers of pets (as from 1 October 2022) of a [formal undertaking and acknowledgement](#) a minimum of seven days prior to the purchase or donation. The purpose of the obligation for all owners of Equidae to certify that they are aware of the specific needs of these animals (from 31 December 2022) is to combat ignorance of those needs since this can lead to maltreatment. The severity of the penalties applicable to acts of abuse has also been increased.

- At the end of December 2020, the Ministry presented a [plan for combating effectively the abandonment of domestic carnivores](#) the purpose of which is to raise the awareness of the general public, to organise and assist the network of non-profit associations and at the same time strengthen the penalties for acts of abuse. An overall €35m plan has been devoted to the cause of animal protection.

The France Relance economic recovery plan included an allocation of €29m in 2022 for animal protection non-profits



to enable them to expand or renovate their animal shelters in conjunction with local town halls, or to conduct sterilisation campaigns for cats and stray dogs. In order to optimise such programmes grants have been allocated to national associations to allow them to provide training and to alert local non-profit associations to the issues.

The Ministry also funds veterinary care for pets with deprived and homeless owners in order to foster ongoing care provision and encourage sterilisation.

Lastly, given the lack of reliable data on pet abandonment and limited knowledge of the circumstances that may lead to it, in 2021 **the first domestic carnivore protection observatory (OCAD)** was set up. This has a steering committee whose membership covers the whole range of actors in the field of pet animals, non-profit associations, sector professionals, scientists and representatives of central and local government. The observatory is tasked with issuing recommendations on public policy and in 2022 it began to collect information relevant to the analysis and objective characterisation of pet abandonment.

- **Egg sexing: from 1 January 2023, no male chicks in the (shell) egg production sector has been culled, in accordance with the undertakings given.** This has become a concrete reality due to government support for innovation in hatchery systems and to industry solidarity where funding is concerned. Previously, nearly 50 million male chicks were culled in the egg industry every year.

Derogations are planned to allow continuation of the culling of day-old chicks subject to a "reasonable grounds" condition for which provision is made in the regulations, in particular for animal feed, on terms that will be clarified by official orders issued by the Minister of Agriculture, most notably with regard to the culling methods used and the breeds involved.

→ POUR INFOS



The animal health law: finalisation of the list of diseases for government action

The DGAL devoted substantial effort in 2022 to the implementation of the provisions contained in the animal health law. This work continues into 2023.

The EU animal health law (AHL) came into force on 21 April 2021. It defines a new, modernised and coherent framework for prevention, surveillance and control in the field of animal health.

The AHL recategorises regulated diseases. They now number 63; some are already regulated in France but 13 are new additions to the list.

Twenty-one animal diseases previously regulated at national level are no longer regulated under the AHL framework. However, in order to maintain the efforts undertaken to prevent or eradicate certain of these diseases, the government will continue to intervene in the cases of thirteen diseases listed in Annex 1 of the official order of 3 May on regulation of animal diseases of national interest.

CONVICTIONS OF VETERINARIANS AND MANAGERS OF LIVESTOCK FATTENING AND TRADING FACILITIES

In the wake of the broadcast in July 2020 of a video filmed clandestinely in a slaughter lamb fattening and trading facility in France's Occitanie region, non-profit association "L214" filed a formal complaint for animal abuse against the firm and its managers. Alongside this, in the slaughterhouse at Vitré residual antimicrobials were detected in a lamb carcass supplied by the very livestock farm identified in the complaint.

Following the filing of the complaint, a preliminary investigation was ordered by the public prosecutor's office in Rodez. Acting jointly with the national gendarmerie's investigation brigade, the DGAL's national veterinary and phytosanitary investigation unit (BNEVP) was involved in a variety of enquiries both on the farm itself and at the business premises of the attending veterinarians providing care to the firm's livestock.

Those enquiries revealed a number of irregularities: non-compliant sanitary reports and treatment protocols, a non-compliant farm register, veterinary prescrip-

tions containing various recurrent anomalies (animals not identified, inconsistent prescribed quantities and prescription dates), and issuance of very large quantities of critical antibiotics. On completion of the investigation, the matter was handed over to the courts.

In June 2022, the firm's registered managers and two veterinarians appeared before magistrates in Rodez. The farmers were each convicted and fined €10,000 (€5,000 suspended) for non-compliant administration of a medicinal product and failure to correctly maintain the farm register. As for the veterinarians, they were found guilty of prescribing and administering a medicinal product to an animal for whose veterinary care they were not personally responsible or for which they were not providing sanitary surveillance or health monitoring on a regular basis, said medicinal product containing critically important antibiotics, and without having conducted the prior mandatory examinations and tests.

It is important to recall that the administration of antibiotics, especially critically important antibiotics, without prior clinical assessment of the animal by a veterinarian is a contributing factor to the appearance of resistance responsible for 6,000 deaths every year in France.



NATIONWIDE FRAUD IN THE LIVESTOCK FARMING WORLD

Following an investigation lasting more than a year, the gendarmes of the Vignec regional brigade and the Bagnères de Bigorre investigation brigade in the Hautes-Pyrénées, supported by officers from the DGAL's BNEVP, successfully uncovered extensive trafficking in several hundred animals, horses and ruminants, sheep and beef cattle, some destined for clandestine slaughter. Several livestock farmers had filed formal complaints as victims of fraud in July 2020.

Thanks to extensive enquiries and analysis by BNEVP officers and their knowledge of industry actors at national level, it was possible to confirm the initial enquiries by the gendarmerie, showing that a large percentage of the livestock was being used to supply clandestine slaughter facilities with the remainder being sold on cattle markets in central France.

The prejudice estimated to have been caused by this large-scale fraud was not far off €500,000.

The case was heard in January 2022. The principal defendant was sentenced to seven years' imprisonment and his accomplices to suspended terms between 18 months and 2 years. Excellent detective work by officers across the country from the Hautes-Pyrénées to Nord-Pas-de-Calais, not forgetting Auvergne and Vaucluse!



RUSSIAN SPITZ DOGS SOLD AT SKY-HIGH PRICES ON THE EUROPEAN MARKET

Quite by chance in February 2022 the railway police intercepted a load of 28 dwarf Spitz puppies at Poitiers train station. The puppies, visibly very young, were nearing the end of a long journey from Russia to their final destination in France's Gironde region as part of an illegal trafficking operation.

Alerted by the police, the DDPP for the Vienne département, with support from the national veterinary and phytosanitary investigation unit (BNEVP) rapidly verified the ages of the animals and the legality of their importation into French territory. Veterinary examinations and blood tests on the puppies confirmed that they did not have the age stipulated by regulations and that most were not vaccinated against rabies.

The public prosecutor's office in Poitiers opened a preliminary enquiry for illegal introduction of animals non-compliant with legislative requirements, fraudulent commercial practices and undeclared labour. This enquiry was given to the Gendarmerie's investigation brigade in Poitiers with support from the DDPP and BNEVP. It illustrates the scale of the illegal arrivals of puppies in France from abroad, amounting to between 50,000 and 100,000 puppies every year. Trafficking in puppies is particularly lucrative. The young animals are purchased for between €150 and €300 from suppliers in Eastern Europe and sold on for at least €1,000-1,500 in France.

Given the scale of the phenomenon and the issues involved, in July 2022 the European Commission initiated a programme coordinated across Member States to combat illegal trade in pets. The BNEVP, as France's point of contact for the Food Fraud network in Europe, is an active participant in this operation.







4



Plant and environmental health

The health of plants is threatened by a range of harmful organisms whose introduction and spread in France can have serious consequences. Such threats are worsening, notably due to expanding globalisation and climate disruption. The DGAL endeavours to prevent disease, pursuing the goal of a transition to a more sustainable form of agriculture.

PLANT HEALTH: THREAT LEVELS REMAIN HIGH

The eradication of pests that are now firmly established often turns out to be impossible and in some cases it is therefore reasonable to change the control strategy and switch to a preference for containment.

This was precisely what was done in 2022, specifically for *Ceratocystis platani* and **flavescence dorée in grapevine**. Such strategic refocusing makes it possible to concentrate government action on the measures that will be most effective in maintaining a satisfactory state of plant health in the country, i.e. on prevention and early detection.



Since 2019, the presence of *Bactrocera dorsalis*, the **oriental fruit fly**, has been confirmed every year in the Paris area around facilities importing and distributing goods likely to spread the fly (i.e. Orly airport and Rungis wholesale produce market). Intensification of surveillance since 2022 has led to the capture of over 80 of the insects. The absence of damage or larvae leads to the conclusion that these were incursions by insects carried on goods (exotic fruit) brought into import and sales premises. Captures in 2022 in the East and Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes regions are also considered to have been incursions. In order to prevent the establishment of this pest in the country, France has requested an intensification of checks at all European points of entry.

Geosmithia morbida is a fungus that causes thousand canker disease in walnuts. This fungus and its vector (the walnut twig beetle *Pityophthorus juglandis*) are quarantine pests. The first detection involved the capture in the summer of 2022 of adult insects in traps on American black walnut, (*Juglans nigra*) in two parks in the city of Lyon. Surveys carried out on vulnerable trees in the vicinity led to confirmation of the presence of *Geosmithia morbida* on three common walnuts (*Juglans regia*). Steps to eradicate the pest were set out in an official order that was the subject of a public consultation process.

Following initial detection in the municipality of Saint-Tropez of the pine tortoise scale (*Toumeyella parvicornis*) in 2021, surveillance was stepped up in 2022. Issued ministerial and prefectural orders will allow the boundaries of the infested area to be defined and steps taken to avoid the introduction and spread of the scale. These measures target both commercial operators and private individuals in the relevant geographical areas.

PLANTS IN DANGER: A CONCERN FOR ALL

A national communication campaign was rolled out over the summer of 2022 to make the general public more aware of the danger for our plants, fatal in some cases, from three pests: the bacterium *Xylella fastidiosa*, the Japanese beetle and the Asian longhorn beetle.

Launched in July, the purpose of the “Plants in Danger” campaign was to prevent the spread of plant pests, bacteria, viruses and insects carried by commercial movements of plants or by travellers returning from journeys abroad. The aim was to alert the general public, private individuals and amateur gardeners and encourage them to exercise vigilance and notify any unusual signs or symptoms observed on plants or in their homes. The campaign also targeted traders in plants and local government bodies to alert them to the need to purchase only plants that have been duly checked and which therefore possess a phytosanitary passport.



→ MORE INFO



→ GO TO THE
COMMUNICATION KIT



SEEDS: CONSERVATION OF CULTIVATED PLANT BIODIVERSITY

Since 2015, the DGAL, with the support of GEVES (the French Variety and Seed Study and Control Group), has been leading national policy on the conservation of plant genetic resources and support for collection management bodies, these being central to the system. In 2022, the programme continued with two broad focuses: official recognition for the managers of collections of plant genetic resources and development of the national collection of plant genetic resources.

The conservation and sustainable management of the plant genetic resources of cultivated plants and related wild species constitute a major issue for the agroecological transition, forming as they do a reservoir of solutions for creative breeding and safeguarding national plant heritage.

Official recognition of managers of collections of plant genetic resources is embodied in a formal label awarded by government to actors that follow good practice in ensuring proper conservation of their collections (e.g. traceability, record-keeping). This scheme is also aimed at listing, raising the profile and bringing together those involved around common issues.

To date, **official recognition has been granted to eight collection managers**. These include non-profit associations, a research institute, a technical institute, a private company, a regional nature area and a private individual.

The national collection covers the whole range of resources of interest to France from the standpoints of heritage, culture, agriculture and science. Those resources are made available by collection managers: they are intended to be accessible for any person or entity in France or abroad for research, selective breeding or training purposes. This availability allows France to fulfil

its obligations under the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA).

In 2022, 1,032 additional resources were added to the national collection: straw cereals, carrots, lettuces and potatoes. These were provided by public/private cooperative networks or by INRAE. The national collection currently contains 4,978 resources.

An audit mission by the CGAAER (France's General Council on Food, Agriculture and Rural Areas) is currently ongoing with the purpose of arriving at recommendations for the optimisation of national policy for coordinating and supporting concerned actors. Its conclusions are expected in the near future.

The intention in organising the second edition of the "Actors' Meetings" in June 2023 in Angers was to bring together the many actors involved in the conservation of plant genetic resources and to alert stakeholders to the issues involved in conservation.

Alongside action at national level, the DGAL and DGPE-MASA (general directorate for the economic and environmental performance of enterprises) are representing France in international negotiations on the ITPGRFA governing body; such negotiations are conducted every two years. The most recent session took place in September 2022 in New Delhi, India.



FOREST HEALTH: CLOSE SURVEILLANCE OF SPECIES AT RISK

After 2021, a more positive year for forests, 2022 once again featured a period of drought and intense heat. The consequences made themselves felt in the various forest species and die-back was observed in beech, oak, chestnut, fir, pine, and other species.

The yearly overview report on forest plantation from the DSF (forest health department) at the DGAL highlighted a failure rate of 38% for plantations due to drought. Massive fires have caused extensive damage to forests, leaving them vulnerable, especially in south-western France, these now being under sustained surveillance given that they are high-risk areas for pine nematode and attack by native bark beetles (*Ips sexdentatus*, Mediterranean pine engraver beetle, etc.).

Where bark beetles are concerned, the crisis in spruce that began in 2018 has seen a sharp resurgence, generating unprecedented damage at higher altitudes in the Franche-Comté département and in the east of the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes region. However, all in all, there is less damage compared with previous years. This is no doubt linked to the reduction in the area of spruce stands in the lowlands. The damage caused by this crisis is currently estimated at 20m cu. m. or 60,000 hectares of forest infested by bark beetle.

In the south-west approximately 30,000 hectares of forest have been affected by *Sphaeropsis sapinea* following episodes of hail in June. This pathogen, which is present in

stands as an endophyte (i.e. an organism living inside a plant), easily manifests its presence following climatic episodes affecting the stands.

Certain insects that are new arrivals in France seem to be establishing themselves and are the focus of close surveillance: oak lace bug (*Corythucha arcuata*), Douglas-fir needle midge (*Contarinia pseudotsugae*), a pine borer (*Epinotia sp.*), the pine tortoise scale on parasol pines (*Toumeyella parvicornis*), etc.

In the case of exotic organisms not present in France, the DSF has conducted a campaign of surveillance of EU regulated pests affecting pine. Pines do in fact have the longest list of quarantine organisms representing a danger to them: pine weevils and non-European scales, a Siberian defoliator, *Dendrolimus sibiricus*, a leaf pathogen *Pseudocercospora pini*, non-European branch cankers, the pitch canker *Fusarium circinatum*, the pine nematode, and others. Over 1,200 observations have been conducted in high-risk areas without, fortunately, any of these pests being discovered.



ECOPHYTO II +: 38 PROJECTS TO UNDERPIN CHANGES IN METHODS

By leading implementation of the Ecophyto II+ plan, the DGAL continued in 2022 to act in favour of reductions in the use of plant protection products (PPP) and the corresponding limitation of the associated risks and impacts. For the period 2021–2022, the call for national-level project proposals was divided into two categories, with funding of €5.3m and €600,000 respectively. The first covers the many measures contained in the Ecophyto plan, ranging from changes in methods to nationwide public policies. The second is devoted to measures in France’s overseas territories.

This call for proposals was strikingly successful, with 129 applications submitted for a total requested subsidy of €20m, thus exemplifying the strong commitment of actors to reducing the use and impacts of plant protection products. Following a tight selection process conducted with the assistance of numerous experts and government departments, 38 “winning” projects were chosen with a wide variety of profiles for coverage of a broad range of issues.

The call for national-level Ecophyto project proposals was published at the beginning of 2023 with a transversal overall theme focused on the adoption of systemic approaches for reducing herbicide use and its impacts, particularly for aquatic habitats and water resources.

The Ecophyto II+ plan meets an obligation laid down in the so-called “SUD” EU directive which creates a



framework for European action for use of pesticides compatible with sustainable development. The negotiations for a revision of the SUD directive began in 2022 following the publication of the Commission’s proposal on 22 June. The proposed “SUR” regulation sets out to specify individual objectives for each Member State for reduction of PPP use and the corresponding risks, setting national targets to be achieved by 2030.

It also proposes a harmonised framework for PPP use in sensitive geographical areas, placing particular emphasis on the application of integrated crop protection. The impact study for this text will involve the provision of additional data by the Commission in accordance with

the Council’s decision of 19 December 2022. In France, follow-up on the proposed regulation is the subject of regular consultations of stakeholders through the “mirror group”.

The Ecophyto II+ plan is also the subject of regular discussions between the DGAL and its departments in the regions. Four seminars have been held, including one, held in person, lasting two days with the DRAAFs, DREALs, ARS and water agencies. These departments and agencies had not in fact met since the Covid pandemic.

POLLINATORS: PROTECTION BROADENED IN LIGHT OF RISKS LINKED TO PLANT PROTECTION PRODUCT USE

On 20 November 2021, the government published a new official order on the protection of bees and other pollinating insects when plant protection products are being used. This order was published in connection with the “2021-2026 national plan in favour of pollinating insects and pollination”. The order has been fully in force since July 2022.

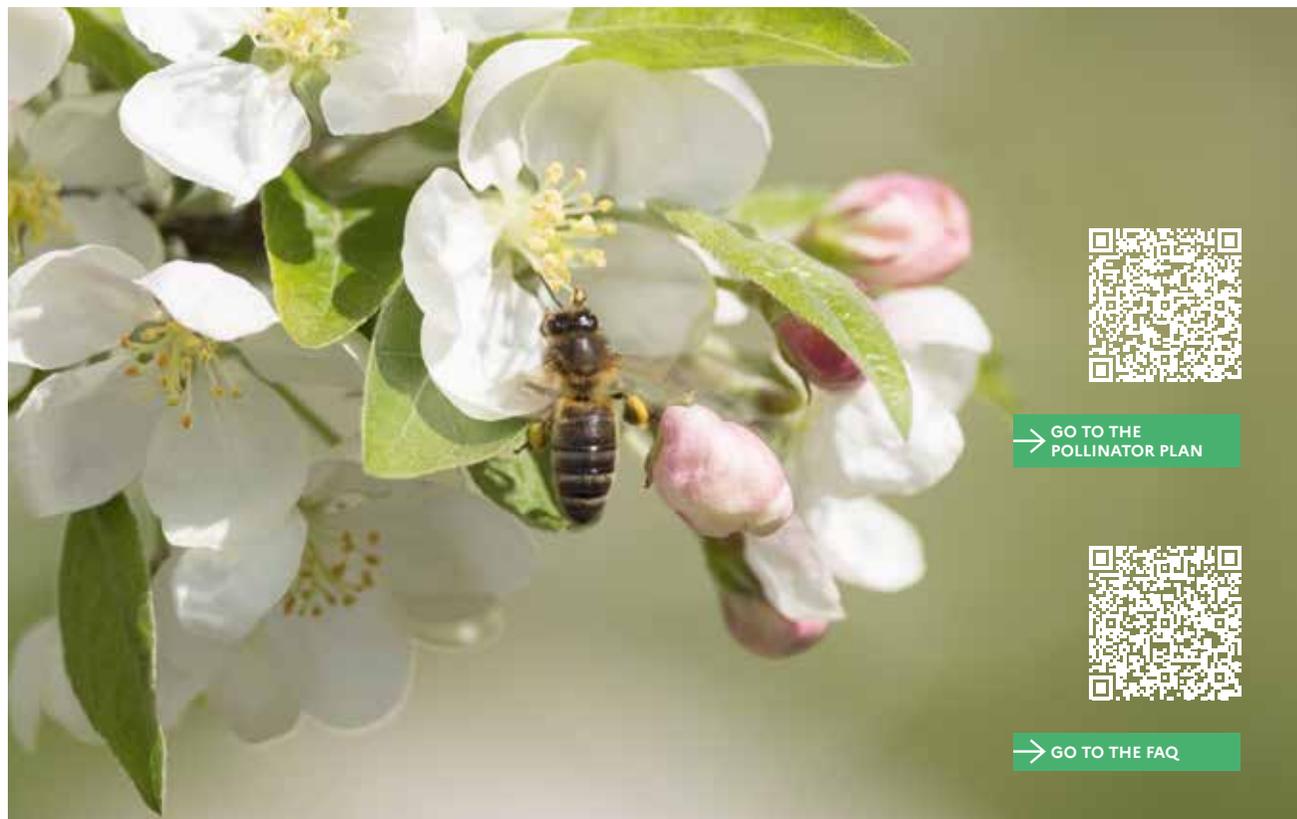
The above order lays down the principle of requirement of a prior assessment and specific authorisation by ANSES for any use of plant protection products on attractive flowering crops and in bee foraging areas, whether the products concerned are insecticides or acaricides, herbicides or antifungals. It also imposes specific time periods for application of such substances, at the end of the day when insect activity is declining towards cessation. It was supplemented in March 2022 by a list of non-attractive crops to which the order’s provisions do not apply.

In order to facilitate its implementation, a FAQ section was published in July on the websites of the ministries of agriculture and ecology. A transition period to 21 July 2022 was put in place during which it was possible for users to apply the products during the flowering season and in bee foraging areas without adherence to specified time periods on condition that the temperature was sufficiently low that bees would not be present.

The official order has been fully in force since that date. This year 2023 will therefore be the first complete year of application of the new provisions to protect pollinators from risks linked to the use of plant protection products.

The order is the positive outcome of joint efforts by representatives of the farming and beekeeping sectors, technical and scientific institutes, non-profit environmental associations and government departments.

It abrogates and replaces the order of 28 November 2003 whose provisions applied only to insecticides and acaricides intended for agricultural use.



→ GO TO THE
POLLINATOR PLAN



→ GO TO THE FAQ

BIOCONTROL: SOLUTIONS WORTH GETTING TO KNOW

In order to limit the use of conventional plant protection products, and especially those of most concern for the environment and health, one solution can be found in biocontrol products that rely on natural mechanisms and interactions between species. In 2022, the DGAL set out to raise the profile of such products since they can provide appropriate responses in the context of the agroecological transition.

The national strategy for the deployment of biocontrol (SNDB) is part of the EGalim law of 2018 and the Ecophyto 2+ plan. It was published in November 2020 and is led by two ministries, agriculture (MASA) and ecological transition (MTECT). The SNDB is based around 31 objectives grouped under 4 core focuses. Its governance was consolidated in 2022 and now has three levels:

- A plenary assembly held annually with all private and public-sector stakeholders,
- Interministerial monitoring committees meeting half-yearly,
- Working groups for each of the core focuses.

2022 was first and foremost an opportunity to consolidate the regulatory definition of biocontrol products: **the official decree of 17 January 2022 in fact specifies the criteria governing inclusion of a product in the biocontrol list.** Most notably, products are excluded if they are covered by the hazard warnings of most concern and where they contain “active substances classified as candidates for substitution”, i.e. where substitution is envisaged (in accordance with regulation 1107/2009).

On 22 June 2022, the European Commission published a proposed “SUR” regulation on sustainable pesticide use. The draft text includes, at the instigation of France, an initial EU definition of biocontrol including the introduction of the expression “biological control” or “biological protection”. Negotiations between the Commission, the European Parliament and the Council began in July 2022.

Alongside this, **extensive deployment of communication efforts** helped raise awareness in a range of audiences. The speech by the Minister at the annual biocontrol meeting of IBMA France on 18 January was for example a demonstration of the government’s desire to “make France the global leader for biocontrol”. A round table at the international agricultural show in Paris on 28 February 2022 gave the DGAL an opportunity to describe how biocontrol makes it possible to “use nature to protect crops”.

The DGAL has also participated in two webinars, one organised by IBMA Global on 29 March “Unlocking the Potential of Biocontrol”, the other by MTECT as part of Meet Up Green Tech on 20 October: “Supporting agricultural innovation in local regions: the example of biocontrol”.



And lastly, [a section specifically on biocontrol](#) has been opened on the Ministry’s website. This links specifically to [a page devoted to the SNDB](#) and to the page dedicated to regulatory information on biocontrol in which the list of biocontrol products is updated on a monthly basis. It also includes a FAQ section and a map of the funding available to farmers, companies and researchers.

One of the major diary events of 2023 will be the launch of the biocontrol and biostimulant Grand Challenge: with €42m in funding over six years, this France 2030 scheme offers a unique opportunity to change the scale of support for research and innovation projects.



EPIDEMIOLOGICAL SURVEILLANCE: CREATION OF THE PLANT HEALTH BULLETIN 2.0

A project for refocusing the Plant Health Bulletin (BSV) set in train by the DGAL is currently under way with support from network partners.

The aim is to generalise the production of bulletins that are more focused on agroecology and integrated crop protection and intended for a wider audience based on the inclusion of components relating to biodiversity in the offered risk assessments.

Crop epidemiological surveillance leading to Plant Health Bulletin v.2.0 are key components of “national biological surveillance” notably in addition to official surveillance of regulated pests (SORE).

In 2022, work done in the regions with coordination by the DGAL/Plant Health Office led to the definition of regional priority matrices and, by compilation, a national matrix. The latter then resulted in a national list of crops with priority under Ecophyto policy. These matrices are decision-aid resources for the DGAL and SRAL/Salims for the allocation of national and regional funds.

This refocusing of the Plant Health Bulletin (BSV) has received input from national technical working groups formed with the SRAL/Salims with the following objectives:

- To prioritise crop couplings to be monitored in the BSV (priority matrix),
- To modernise the system for collecting raw observational data and to ensure interoperability,
- To make sector professionals responsible for data collection and ultimately to bring them on board a common epidemiological modelling platform,
- To harmonise BSV text and presentation, emphasising its agroecological focus and generalising application of the principles of integrated crop protection.

The implementation of all these Plant Health Bulletin 2.0 components will be effective nationwide in 2023.



PLANT PROTECTION PRODUCTS: GREATER PROTECTION FOR LOCAL RESIDENTS AND REVISION OF OFFICIAL APPROVALS FOR APPLICATION EQUIPMENT

The regulations governing the use of plant protection products in the vicinity of residential areas deriving from the EGalim legislation and implemented in December 2019 were strengthened in 2022. Following the decision of the Council of State in June 2021, the government supplemented the system on 25 January 2022 with the publication of an official decree establishing a new procedure for the drafting and approval of charters of undertakings signed by users and an official order extending the protective measures to include individuals working on a regular basis in the vicinity of treated areas.

Additionally, the procedure for official approval of equipment for spraying plant protection products, which has been in effect since 2006, was revised in 2022. Equipment enjoying official recognition of reduced spray drift are listed in the Official Bulletin of the Ministry of Agriculture (BO Agri). Such equipment reduces discharges into the environment along with the risk of contaminating nearby areas.

The 2022 revision makes a distinction between several approval pathways and sets out the information to be provided in each case. It improves forward visibility for applicants.

Under certain conditions (cf. the official order of 4 May 2017), the use of officially approved equipment permits a reduction in untreated zones (ZNT) along watercourses and certain safety distances near residential areas, areas where vulnerable individuals are present and workers regularly present. Certain marketing authorisations for plant protection products also impose the use of such devices.

The list of officially approved equipment is regularly updated and now includes some 500 items, including 275 nozzles, 91 complete spray kits for winegrowers and 94 spray devices for arboriculture. Approved equipment is generally more costly and may attract purchasing grants under a number of mechanisms at national (e.g. economic recovery plan, France 2030), local (water agencies) or regional levels (PCEA: plan for the competitiveness and adaptation of agricultural holdings).



→ MORE INFO

ILLEGAL USE OF A ROMANIAN INSECTICIDE TO TREAT SEEDS IN FRANCE

In November 2022 the trial took place in the magistrates' court in Angoulême of two custom sorting firms*, one located in Deux-Sèvres, and the other in Charente. The origin of the case was an investigation by the DGAL's national veterinary and phytosanitary investigation unit (BNEVP) from May to July 2018 focusing specifically on the activities of custom sorting firms. The objective of the investigation was to detect possible offences relating to the illicit use of plant protection products in the neonicotinoid family (NNI) to treat seeds for spring crops.

The investigation unfolded against the backdrop of uncertainty as to the maintenance of official marketing authorisations (AMM) for NNI systemic insecticides (imidacloprid in particular) the use of which in open fields was ultimately banned from 1 September 2018 in order to protect pollinating fauna.

The BNEVP's enquires led to charges against the two firms. They were accused of "use of a plant protection product (PPP) not covered by an authorisation or parallel trade permit", and "placing on the market a PPP not covered by an authorisation or a parallel trade permit", in addition to "proposing for sale or actual sale of a PPP without proof of holding an official approval therefor".

The evidence gathered and the enquiries conducted by the brigade's investigators did in fact lead to confirmation that the Charente company had introduced a substance authorised in Romania but without a marketing authorisation issued in France. This specialty product was then sold on to the company in Deux-Sèvres, this being a firm specialising in seed treatment. The facts were corroborated by the preliminary enquiry ordered by the public prosecutor's office in Angoulême in 2018 and conducted jointly with the national Gendarmerie.

Seed treatments cannot escape the fundamental rule applied in France according to which all PPPs must have previously been issued a marketing authorisation following an assessment of the risks for users, consumers and the environment.

The court followed the recommendations of the public prosecutor, and after consideration handed down its verdict on the same day: a fine of €3,000 suspended for the registered manager of the Deux-Sèvres firm, €5,000 suspended for the registered manager of the Charentes firm and €30,000 immediately payable for the Charentes company.



* Custom sorting refers to the business of seed treatment companies in the major field crop sector. Such firms conduct sorting operations on behalf of farmers (i.e. separation of seeds and waste) and treat seeds by application of coatings.

ILLEGAL ONLINE TRADE IN PLANT PROTECTION PRODUCTS NOT AUTHORISED IN FRANCE

Illegal practices were observed recently by the BNEVP with regard to a Spanish company's nationwide advertising and marketing of products not covered by a marketing authorisation (AMM) in France.

A preliminary enquiry was started in July 2022 by OCLAESP (French central office against threats to the environment and public health), the BNEVP and the OFB (French Biodiversity Office) targeting various ecommerce platforms marketing PPPs of Spanish origin to private customers in particular.

Enquiries revealed that since January 2020 over 65,000 litres of glyphosate-based plant protection products for a commercial value of approximately €1.3m had been sold to French customers over the Internet.

The investigators succeeded in identifying one of the main resellers of these products in France. Domiciled in France but usually resident in Thailand, this individual was arrested and remanded in custody in December 2022 on his return to France. He acknowledged his involvement in the charged offences and admitted having purchased the products from wholesalers domiciled in Spain, knowing that they were banned in France, before proceeding to sell them on to private customers at a margin of some 30%. The volume of sales generated by this business was assessed at nearly 9,000 litres, the financial gain being estimated at €170,000.

The facts in this case are punishable by a maximum sentence of seven years' imprisonment and a fine of up to €750,000. At the request of the public prosecutor's office, the defendant, on posting bail in the amount of €20,000, was placed under judicial supervision while awaiting the ruling of the court.

The rapid development of ecommerce in recent years has led the BNEVP to conduct investigations aimed at verifying satisfactory application of the regulatory provisions governing the online marketing of plant protection products in France.





5



The Council of the European Union: a French presidency rich in results

DGAL teams were involved in intensive work in support of the agenda of the French Presidency of the Council of the European Union (FPEU) which began on 1 January 2022 for a term of six months. France was responsible during that period for organising and following up on meetings of the Council groups, taking forward the work commenced by previous presidencies. The period was a marvellous opportunity to progress topics of interest for the benefit of all Member States.

A HALF-YEAR MARKED BY NUMEROUS MILESTONES

Those six months featured a very large number of preparatory meetings of great importance held both internally at the DGAL and the Ministry of Agriculture (MASA) and with the staff of the European Commission and the General Secretariat of the Council (GSC). Thirty or so Council Groups were chaired by the DGAL along with EU “on the spot” coordination sessions for six meetings with international organisations.

The DGAL focused on the following priorities:

- Support for **reciprocity of environmental and sanitary production standards** between EU products and products imported from third countries,
- The European Union’s influence in multilateral standards bodies such as Codex Alimentarius,
- **Vaccination strategy in connection with the combat against highly pathogenic avian influenza,**
- Implementation of an experience-sharing process with regard **to animal welfare on livestock farms,**
- Examination of two reports from the European Commission containing an overview of the results of application of **the Plant Health Law with regard to imports and intra-EU trade** (phytosanitary passport).



Events were also organised. The DGAL was the lead or joint lead in organising four events:

- The Ministerial Conference on Antimicrobial Resistance, for which the Ministry of Health and Solidarity was responsible (7 March 2022),
- A seminar on epidemiological surveillance platforms (22 March 2022),
- An informal meeting of Chief Plant Health Officers held in Angers (4-6 May 2022),
- A formal offsite meeting of the Chief Veterinary Officers in Paris (14-17 June 2022).

ANIMAL HEALTH AND WELFARE

In the Chief Veterinary Officers' group (CVOs), in January 2022 the French Presidency launched a **strategic debate on vaccination against Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI)**, which was among its priorities in the veterinary domain. Following discussion, conclusions were adopted, with the unanimous approval of the ministers of agriculture, by the Council of the European Union on 24 May 2022: these recall the vital importance of applying strict biosecurity, surveillance, prevention and control measures to HPAI, emphasising **that vaccination could usefully supplement** those measures in order to reduce the risk of its spread to domestic poultry.



→ MORE INFO

These conclusions also underline the importance of the international aspect, with the identification of measures aimed at **reinforcing the acceptability in principle of vaccination against HPAI** in the context of international trade.

Work was commenced by the French Presidency on making such measures operational and ensuring that they would be followed up. This was taken forward by the Czech Presidency in the second half of 2022.

The CVO group also set out to act as a forum for **the sharing of experience in the field of animal welfare on livestock farms with respect to three transversal themes: research and innovation, training and support**. This work, especially the report by the CVO group on animal welfare, will provide input for the Commission's deliberations in the lead-up to the future revision of animal welfare legislation planned for 2023.

The CVO group also discussed the topic of **mobile abat-toirs**, including the preparation of a questionnaire by the French Presidency and its analysis, which led to the production of an exhaustive description of the current state of play, in addition to the use of artificial intelligence in connection with inspections.

EUROPEAN STRATEGY ON THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS

During the six months of the FPEU, work was conducted on the **EU's strategy with regard to international standards bodies and in particular the Codex Alimentarius**. This joint FAO/WHO body drafts standards and recommendations aimed at protecting the health of consumers and promoting fair food trade practices.

Following the work done in the "Codex-CAC" group, the ministers of agriculture of the European Union adopted the conclusions of the Council of 21 February 2022 entitled **"The EU's commitment to an ambitious Codex Alimentarius fit for the challenges of today and tomorrow"**.

These conclusions are directed at supporting cooperative practices between Member States and the European Commission and highlighting the value of the EU's policies with respect to the Codex. The conclusions send out to Codex member countries and the international community more generally a clear political message concerning the EU's ambitions for the Codex. This approach represented a practical application of **the principle of "reciprocity of standards"** which seeks application of EU standards to imported foodstuffs.

PLANT HEALTH

The Chief Plant Health Officers working party (COPHS) considered the reports published by the European Commission on extending **the use of phytosanitary passports for trade in plants in the Union** on the one hand and, on the other, **the plant import control scheme in the Union**. The French Presidency reported on the proceedings in two executive summaries published on 30 June 2022.

EU participation in EPPO (European and Mediterranean Plant Protection Organisation) and IPPC (International Plant Protection Convention) was also the subject of discussion. The European Commission and the French Presidency jointly drafted **a strategic roadmap for the maintenance of EU influence in matters relating to the IPPC**.

The French Presidency also continued the discussions commenced under the Slovenian Presidency on the development of emergency plans in the area of plant health. Following the COPHS meeting on 3-4 February it therefore set out the current situation on preparation of **national emergency plans** for the 20 priority EU quarantine pests already drawn up or in the process of being drafted by Member States, these needing to be published before 1 August 2023.

EVENTS ORGANISED BY THE FRENCH PRESIDENCY UNDER THE AEGIS OF THE DGAL

THE MINISTERIAL “ONE HEALTH” CONFERENCE ON ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE (7 MARCH 2022)

The Head of the General Directorate for Health, Jérôme Salomon, and the Deputy head of the General Directorate for Food, Emmanuelle Soubeyran, welcomed their counterparts from the 26 Member States.

The political and technical representatives of the ministries responsible for human and animal health met to draft recommendations for the European Commission on antimicrobial resistance (AMR) with a view to the revision of European pharmacological legislation. By undermining the efficacy of treatments for infections, including the most common, resistance to antibiotics is a growing threat to public health worldwide and has a direct impact on human health, animal health and ecosystem health. **Antimicrobial resistance is responsible for over 33,000 deaths every year in Europe and almost 1.3 million deaths around the world.**

The conference led to the emergence of numerous concrete proposals to support the initiatives of the European Commission and the Member States under a “One Health” approach. Based on a “One Health” stance, it was able to arrive at a detailed description of the progress made by the EU and the areas for improvement. The Trio Presidency (France, Czech Republic, Sweden) adopted a



Declaration at the close of the conference. It undertook to make the combat against antimicrobial resistance a French, Swedish and Czech public health priority and proposed ways forward for cooperation across the EU.

SEMINAR ON EPIDEMIOLOGICAL SURVEILLANCE PLATFORMS (22 MARCH 2022)

The seminar on epidemiological surveillance platforms organised by the DGAL provided an opportunity to present the multi-partner collaborative spaces dedicated respectively to epidemiological surveillance on animal health (ESA Platform), epidemiological surveillance on plant health (ESV Platform) and food chain surveillance (SCA Platform).

The day brought together a set of European and French actors in the public and private sectors, some of whom were platform partners, others not. Presentations were given of the work done by the platforms, most notably with

regard to the surveillance of pig influenza viruses, vine die-back and Salmonella in the raw milk cheese industry.

A round table provided an evaluation of how the three platforms, based on their mode of governance and organisational structure, were able to contribute to the “One Health” approach. This seminar provided introductions to other organisations: animal health surveillance in Germany, data-sharing on public health in the Netherlands, and surveillance of *Xylella fastidiosa* in Italy’s Puglia region.

The European Commission closed the seminar by encouraging the founding of sanitary surveillance on acceptance of responsibility by all actors, as expected by the original governance of the epidemiological surveillance platforms. Feedback on this seminar was presented at the Council of Ministers of Agriculture on 24 May 2022.





MEETING OF EU CHIEF PLANT HEALTH OFFICERS (4-6 MAY 2022)

This informal meeting organised by the DGAL in Angers from 4 to 6 May 2022 brought together all the EU's Chief Plant Health Officers and representatives of the Commission and General Secretariat of the Council.



Numerous technical matters were addressed during the meeting, including the lessons learned from the extension of the phytosanitary passport system to include all plant movements for the purposes of planting within the European Union.

MEETING OF EU CHIEF VETERINARY OFFICERS (14-17 JUNE 2022)

The Chief Veterinary Officers of the European Union met on 15-17 June in Paris and Normandy.

This event, organised by the DGAL, was attended by delegations from the EU's 27 countries, representatives of the European Commission and the General Secretariat of the Council. Two countries from the European Free Trade Area (EFTA) – Norway and Switzerland – also took part.

Presentations and exchanges of views on the first day led to progress in the work done following the adoption of

the Council conclusions on 24 May, on vaccination strategy to combat avian influenza. They also resulted in a definition of the current situation with regard to the WOAHO Observatory, on developments in the area of digitisation and electronic certificates, an overview of the results of the work on mobile abattoirs, as well as discussion of the launch of negotiations for an international agreement on pandemic prevention, preparation and defence by the WHO.

The second day was devoted to technical and cultural visits in Normandy, with an introduction to CIRALE (the centre for imagery and research into equine locomotor diseases) a world-renowned reference in this field and attached to the Maisons-Alfort School of Veterinary Medicine. The last morning of work involved exchanges of views between delegations on an issue of importance in France, one shared by numerous Member States: the topic of national veterinary services coverage. Analysis of the situation and possible ways forward were subjects of intense discussion.





6



The DGAL in figures: inspections, checks and traffic

The DGAL comprises some 5,000 full time equivalent staff (FTEs) plus 14,000 government-approved sanitary veterinarians, 30 national reference laboratories and around 150 specialist test laboratories, most attached to France's territorial départements.

The annual surveillance plans and annual inspection plans (PSPC) overseen by the DGAL are actually implemented by the decentralised departments and involve the taking of over 57,000 samples for testing. Added to all the above are inspections of food chain premises. The DGAL also handles a thousand or so sanitary alerts every year.

The DGAL's activities also include checks on imports and exports of products and animals.

CHECKS ON IMPORTS FROM THIRD COUNTRIES

Imported products	Numbers of batches checked	Including rejected batches
Animals and animal products	161,070	1,670
Plants and plant products	63,985	1,005
Feed products of non-animal origin	3,840	20
TOTAL	228,895	2,695

CERTIFICATION OF INTRA-EU TRADE

		Numbers of checks
Live animals	Certification inspections (exit from territory)	92,755
	Inspections of incoming batches for verification of compliance	40

ANIMAL HEALTH AND PROTECTION INSPECTIONS

		...including					
ANIMAL PROTECTION	Numbers of inspections	Follow-up procedures	Official warnings	Official notices to remedy	Penalty notices	Permit withdrawal or suspension	Total or partial closure of premises
TOTAL, comprising:	12,485	3,755	2,070	1,440	230	5	10
Farm livestock	3,800						
Animal transportation	4,430						
Pets	1,445						
Equine animals	990						
Animal laboratory trials	260						
Abattoir inspections	1,560						

		...including					
PUBLIC HEALTH ON LIVESTOCK FARMS	Numbers of inspections	Follow-up procedures	Official warnings	Official notices to remedy	Penalty notices	Permit withdrawal or suspension	Total or partial closure of premises
TOTAL, comprising:	12,635	2,010	1,230	735	30	10	5
On-farm sanitary Inspections	1,220						
Biosecurity	1,765						
Salmonella ¹	5,445						
Identification	1,760						
Veterinary medicines ²	970						
Animal by-products	745						
Animal feed	270						
Reproduction	210						
Trade in livestock	250						

¹ The sharp reduction in inspection pressure due to the HPAI (Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza) crisis had the effect of reducing the numbers of Salmonella-related inspections.

² The secondary focuses relating to medicated feed in the category of "Veterinary Medicines" have been transferred to the "Animal Feed" category. 2022 was a year of transition and that transfer is not yet apparent here. There are around 65 inspections every year (35 physical and 30 documentary) which may be subject to transfer in the future.

ANNUAL SURVEILLANCE PROGRAMME FOR CONTAMINATION IN PRIMARY PRODUCTION, FOOD AND FEED

The results for 2022 will be available in the PSPC 2022 overview report to be published in September 2023

	Samples taken in 2021	Including samples found to be non-compliant	Sampling scheduled in 2022
TOTAL, comprising:	57,268	380	58,172
Physicochemical contaminants ³ in animal products	50,453	242	51,145
Biological contaminants and toxins in animal products	3,369	56	3,960
Residues of plant protection products in primary plant production	1,006	76	995
Contaminants in products imported from third countries	999	6	3-5 % of imported batches
Antimicrobial resistance in commensal and zoonotic bacteria	1,441	Not applicable	2,072

PLANT QUALITY, HEALTH AND PROTECTION INSPECTIONS

	Numbers of inspections	Follow-up procedures	...including				Total or partial closure of premises
			Official warnings	Official notices to remedy	Penalty notices	Permit withdrawal or suspension	
TOTAL, comprising:	27,600	5,185	3,755	1,160	255	15	0
Inspections of users of plant protection products	5,495						
Inspections at plant protection product distribution stage	450						
Inspections to verify observance of hygiene rules	490						
Inspections for issuance of European phytosanitary passports	3,570						
Surveillance of regulated and emerging pests ⁴	12,990						
Management of alerts and control measures ⁵	4,605						

FOOD SAFETY INSPECTIONS

	Numbers of inspections	Follow-up procedures	...including				Total or partial closure of premises	Other measures ⁷
			Official warnings	Official notices to remedy	Penalty notices	Permit withdrawal or suspension		
TOTAL, comprising:	48,960	27,415	20,420	5,630	410	45	810	100
Slaughter ⁶ , processing and warehousing facilities	15,720	6,215						
Institutional catering	9,570	5,800						
Commercial catering	15,020	10,420						
Retail outlets	8,650	4,980						

³ Veterinary medicines, banned substances, growth promoters, pesticides and antiparasitics, trace metals.

⁴ The category "Plant Surveillance" in the "Surveillance of regulated and emerging pests" domain was closed as of 31/12/2021.

⁵ The domain "Management of alerts and control measures" was opened in 2022. It covers all inspections conducted once a pest has been detected. This is alert management (outbreak boundary definition, control methods).

⁶ This number includes only the annual inspections on slaughter premises where veterinary staff also provide a permanent inspection service.

⁷ Obligations covering training, isolation and destruction of goods, clean-up, recall of products, modification works, and so on.

30 YEARS OF THE BNEVP, DGAL'S INVESTIGATION UNIT

At the end of 2022, the DGAL's National veterinary and phytosanitary investigation unit (BNEVP) celebrated its thirty years of existence. The BNEVP is central to the combat against fraud and sanitary crime across the country as a whole and provides a strike force that can be brought to bear at any time by the DGAL. To celebrate the thirtieth year of their Unit, the BNEVP's officers took advantage of a meeting with the minister to describe their official duties, look back over their history and mention a few challenges for tomorrow.

France's national veterinary and phytosanitary investigation unit (BNEVP), formed in 1992, is the investigation unit at the Ministry's General Directorate for Food (DGAL). It is staffed by 20 officers, of whom 16 are investigators, and its interventions cover the whole of French territory to combat organised criminal activity in the various areas of the DGAL's remit (food security, pet identification, health of livestock and living plants, the use of veterinary medicines and plant

protection products, etc.). They work out of the public eye to serve justice and the protection of the population. Designated as joint investigators or expert consultants by the courts, the judicial police or customs officers, the BNEVP's investigators handle a hundred or so cases every year.

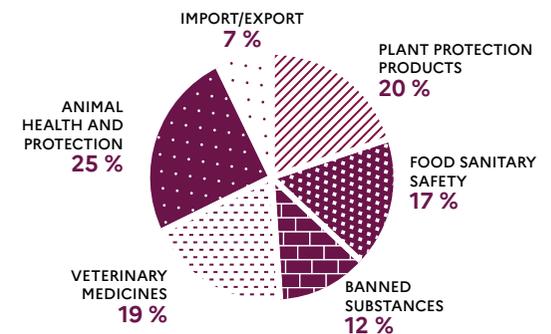
Some cases, such as those involving illegal introduction into France of plant protection products and trafficking in ani-

mals, are of relevance to the whole of the European Union and require close cooperation with the relevant authorities in other Member States.

The unit's investigators provide the Gendarmerie, a principal partner for the BNEVP, with their knowledge of often unfamiliar and highly technical legislation, while at the same time remaining part of the enquiries and decisions. Such joint efforts may lead to the dismantling of networks whose activities can have very negative consequences, up to an including on the plates on French meal tables.



Breakdown of BNEVP cases by category
(in % of total/Period 2002-2022)



EXPORTS (EXCLUDING EU) OF ANIMAL AND PLANT PRODUCTS IN 2022

In 2022 a number of negotiations were concluded:

NEGOCIATIONS

12
SUCCESSFUL
NEGOTIATIONS

10 
CATEGORY
ANIMAL

2 
CATEGORY
PLANT

AVIAN INFLUENZA:

CONFIDENCE MAINTAINED FOR PARTNERS RECOGNISING THE ZONING PRINCIPLE: EVALUATION IN JAPAN – NEW AGREEMENT WITH KOREA

MARKET FACILITATION: JORDAN/SEED POTATOES

NEGOTIATIONS WITH JAPAN AND KOREA FOR A FRAMEWORK TO ALLOW CONTINUATION OF EXPORTS IN THE EVENT OF THE APPEARANCE OF AFRICAN SWINE FEVER IN FRANCE.

CERTIFICATES

**MODELS FOR
COUNTRY/PRODUCT
CERTIFICATES
CREATED OR REVISED**

31 
CATEGORY
ANIMAL

63 
CATEGORY
PLANT

155

NEW CERTIFICATES CREATED
IN THE NEW INTERFACE **EXPADON 2**
WITH MANDATORY SWITCHOVER OF DAIRY PRODUCT
CERTIFICATION ON 1 JUNE 2022

305,250
**SANITARY
CERTIFICATES**
ISSUED AT NATIONAL
LEVEL, INCLUDING
72,000
VIA THE
NEW INTERFACE
EXPADON 2

77,720
**PHYTOSANITARY
CERTIFICATES**
ISSUED AT NATIONAL
LEVEL VIA THE EU
APPLICATION
TRACES NT
INCLUDING **44%**
E-CERTIFICATES

AUDITS

7 
CATEGORY
ANIMAL

7 
CATEGORY
PLANT

- > Audit Japan/poultry: audit of poultry sector and negotiation of zoning principle for HPAI as defined by the EU
- > Malaysia: poultry sector
- > Mexico: meat products
- > Peru: fish farming genetic resources
- > Canada: dairy products
- > Argentina: pig genetic resources
- > Turkey: molluscs
- > Market facilitation Egypt / seed potatoes in June 2022
- > Market maintenance Japan / lily bulbs in July 2022
- > Market facilitation Jordan / seed potatoes in September 2022
- > Market maintenance Taiwan / apples in September 2022
- > Market maintenance visio-audit China / apples in October 2022
- > Market opening Thailand / table potatoes in October 2022
- > Market maintenance visio-audit China / kiwi fruit in November 2022



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