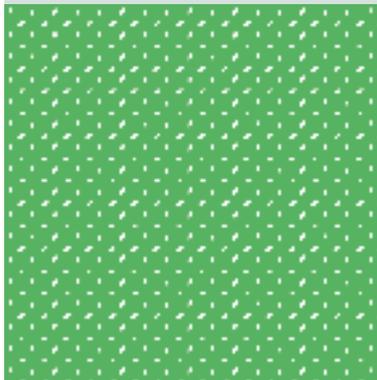


**The French
General
Directorate
for Food (DGAL)**

**Activity
Report**

Key facts 2018



MINISTÈRE
DE L'AGRICULTURE
ET DE
L'ALIMENTATION

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Editorial

business relationships within the farming and food sector and healthy, sustainable food affordable for all» which occupied DGAL's teams day and night in the lead-up to its **promulgation on 30 October 2018**.

A great deal of time was also devoted to **the preparation and adaptation of the DGAL's services to Brexit**, to the implementation of the decision of the President of the Republic to **reduce the use of plant protection products and specifically a ban on glyphosate scheduled for 2020**. Other fundamental operations such as EXPADON and RESYTAL, to cite only those, also saw major progress.

The DGAL, as a body deeply involved in major societal issues, is often approached by the media and spends time on its responses. That is among its core tasks and enhances **the transparency of its activities** for citizens and consumers.

We can be proud of doing our work on a robust foundation: **a mission that is clearly identified and shared, an ability to take action, plus worthwhile outcomes**.

The future is now mapped out on the basis of ambitious goals:

- **to respond to the need for profound change in our agriculture and to societal expectations in the areas of food and sanitary safety**, to roll out the roadmap produced by the National Food Conference with measures relating in particular to institutional catering, animal welfare and the opening up of the National Food Council (CNA) to public debate,
- **to continue to strengthen surveillance systems with epidemiological surveillance platforms for animal and plant health and the food chain**,
- **to adapt our organisation and our working methods**, for example by developing digital tools and efforts to simplify administrative procedures,
- **to act in a more transparent manner, to work more closely with civil society**,
- **to be active at EU level and internationally, to be a major source of new proposals**, with for example the project for the creation of an EU task force to combat fraud.

Patrick DEHAUMONT
Director General for Food

For the DGAL, 2018 was marked, as usual, by various crisis: **the Lactalis crisis**, which led to a parliamentary report replete with proposals for improvements in the system of sanitary controls, **contamination of Reblochon cheese**, with the associated communication on raw milk cheeses, **the arrival of African swine fever** in Belgium close to the border with France, and other topics related to plant health, plant protection products in particular, not forgetting the animal welfare issue.

2018 was also a year marked by **the continuation of France's National Food Conference, with the preparation of the "EGAlim" law** "for balanced

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Major programmes



Drafting the law resulting from the National Food Conference (“EGAlim”)

Following the holding in 2017 of the French National Food Conference, 2018 saw the promulgation of the “EGAlim” law of 30 October 2018 on “ensuring balanced commercial relations in the farming and food sector and healthy, sustainable food affordable for all”.

In 2018, the DGAL tackled the preparation of the implementation of the provisions contained in the food law.

Title II of the law relates to measures to promote food that is healthy, offers sustainable quality, is affordable for all and protects animal welfare (Articles 24 to 92).

The principal measures in Title II

Promotion of healthy, safe and sustainable food

- 50% of products to be sustainable or covered by quality signs, of which 20% to be organic, in public institutional catering by 2022;
- Consulting and keeping users informed on a regular basis on adherence to **the quality of taste and nutrition** of meals served by **institutional catering services in schools and universities**;
- Intensified efforts to counter food waste, extending law 2016-138 (known as the “Garot” statute) to include institutional catering and the agrifood industry;

- An obligation for restaurants to provide “doggy-bags” to their customers from July 2021.

Food education

- Addition to the goals of food policy of an objective whereby policy should “encourage the acquisition of a general food culture during childhood and adolescence”;
- The extension in the education code of the measures on information and education on food and the need to combat waste to include schools ;

These two provisions supplement those already included in the National Food Programme (core focus: educating young people on food).

Food safety

- A strengthening of the obligations on self-inspection for sector professionals following the Lactalis affair;
- Creation of a single website for the withdrawal from sale and the recall of non-compliant products.

The National Food Council (CNA) and its relevance to enlightened food policies



France's National Food Council (its "food parliament") is changing and opening up its membership to civil society: non-profits active on environmental protection, animal welfare, and the prevention and control of obesity. It now answers to a fourth ministry, the Ministry for the Ecological and Inclusive Transition.

In 2018 :

- Adoption of opinions 80 and 81 on food e-commerce and health-promoting foods.
- Continuation of consultation on the national slaughterhouse

identical modes of action in order to protect biodiversity and bees.

- The plant protection product saving certificate scheme (CEPP) has been maintained and its application expanded to include France's overseas territories.

Reciprocity in free trade agreements

- Seeking to ensure adherence to mandatory standards, notably sanitary, phytosanitary and those relating to animal welfare, in

ethics committee, which issued its opinion in February 2019.

- Launch of a process of feedback on the Fipronil crisis, the initial rollout of a new project for feedback on major food-related crisis.

Additionally, the organisation of public debate on food is among the main work areas for 2019.



For more information on this go to : <http://www.cna-alimentation.fr/>

Animal welfare

- The criminal offence of animal maltreatment has been extended to cover transportation and slaughter.
- Penalties under the law have been doubled and animal protection non-profits can now be recognised as civil parties in legal proceedings.
- All slaughterhouses must now appoint a person responsible for animal protection.
- Trials of CCTV surveillance are now under way in facilities on a voluntary basis.
- A ban on entry into production of refurbished or new poultry farm housing for caged laying hens.

Reduced use of plant protection products

- The Ecophyto 2 Plan has been strengthened, in particular by separating the sale of pesticides from advice on their use, and a ban on price discounts, rebates and refunds.
- The ban on neonicotinoids has been extended to cover **products with**



Public policy on food: our model has a bright future

In addition to the “EGALIM” law strengthening numerous aspects of food policy, 2018 was a particularly active year in this area.

New milestones in the fight against waste

- At the end of 2018, a study was initiated to evaluate the implementation of the law of 11 February 2016 (known as the “Garot” law) aimed at making the charitable donation of unsold products an obligation for super-and hypermarkets.
- The obligation imposed by the 11 February 2016 law will be expanded to include certain agrifood industries and institutional catering, as stipulated by the EGALim law.

Food education: counting on the younger generation...

.. to understand and assume ownership of food-related behaviour more beneficial to their health and the environment:

- Maintaining the “taste classes” scheme aimed at encouraging pleasure in tasting food and schoolchildren’s curiosity about food. The scheme notably sets out to prevent obesity and reduce children’s reluctance to eat certain foods. In 2018, another 550 copies of the teaching kits were produced.
- The EU programme for milk and dairy products and fruit & vegetables in school is continuing, with an updated version of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food website including teaching resources and factsheets on the operation of the programme.



(<https://agriculture.gouv.fr/le-programme-europeen-fruits-et-legumes-lecole-et-lait-et-produits-laitiers-lecole>)



(<https://agriculture.gouv.fr/participer-au-programme-destination-des-ecoles>).

- Production, in conjunction with the education ministry, of a handbook for teachers on food education for their classes.

Stronger roots in local regions

- 10 new Regional Food Projects (PAT) were officially approved in 2018, increasing to 21 the number of projects approved since the inception of the scheme in 2017.
- New initiatives are emerging in local regions for setting up such projects. The Ministry is a participant in the work done by the national PAT network (RnPAT) in support of the scheme. It encourages the emergence of local regional projects using the call

for proposals under the 2018- 2019 National Food Programme (PNA).

- Publication of a guide under the title “Building a strategy for funding a local regional food project” in October 2018.

 <http://agriculture.gouv.fr/comment-construire-son-projet-alimentaire-territorial>

 <http://agriculture.gouv.fr/faire-reconnaitre-un-projet-alimentaire-territorial>

Calls for proposals to encourage local actors and local initiatives

- **Award of prizes in the 2017-2018 national call for proposals under the PNA on 2 March.** On the occasion of the Paris International Agricultural Show, as in every year since 2015, the Minister of Agriculture awarded prizes to the 33 winners in the call for project proposals: 29 projects from the regions and 4 national projects. The call for proposals has an overall funding envelope of €1.5m, €1m of which comes from the Ministry of Agriculture, €100,000 from the Ministry for Solidarity and Health, and €400,000 from ADEME, the French energy and environment agency .

 <http://agriculture.gouv.fr/programme-national-pour-l'alimentation-les-laureats-2017-2018>

- **A further national call for proposals 2018-2019 was launched on 24 September,** with total funding of €1.65m: €1m from the Ministry of Agriculture and Food, €400,000 from ADEME, €200,000 from the Ministry for Solidarity and Health and, for the

first time, €50,000 from CEGET, the office for equality of treatment of local regions.

This further edition of the scheme is focused on helping new PATs emerge and seeding exemplary programmes that meet national food policy goals. Over 220 applications have been received.

A 2014-2018 retrospective has been produced (with infographics, a document highlighting the various projects, a catalogue of tools available for conducting PNA programmes, and more).

 <http://agriculture.gouv.fr/les-appels-projets-du-pna-accompagner-la-mise-en-oeuvre-du-programme-national-pour-l'alimentation>

Promoting our food model abroad

- The Ministry of Agriculture and Food participated in the 3rd edition of the World Food Summit in Copenhagen at the end of August 2018. This international summit provided an opportunity to demonstrate France’s commitment to an ambitious national policy on food as set out in its 2018-2022 roadmap resulting from the National Food Conference and the PNA.
- France signed the three multilateral agreements put forward by Denmark with a view to encouraging discussions between all international actors in both private and public sectors. Those agreements are dedicated to promotion of healthier food-related behaviour through better consumer information, to food safety and to combating food waste, and

they are fully aligned with the goals pursued by France’s National Food Programme (PNA).



The Ecoantibio 2 Plan

a collective success for livestock farmers and veterinarians

A successful first Ecoantibio Plan for the reduction of risks of antimicrobial resistance in animal health

There was a 39% reduction in the exposure of animals to antibiotics over the period 2012- 2017 taking all sectors together. The quantified targets of Ecoantibio1 have therefore been significantly exceeded.

What was achieved in 2018

The Ecoantibio 2 Plan

- * **20 actions** ((a tighter focus than in the first plan, which had 40 actions),
- * Fewer legislative and regulatory actions and **more incentivising actions**.

Main objectives:

- **To develop measures to prevent** infectious disease and facilitate the use of **alternative forms of treatment**;
- **To communicate and provide training on the issues surrounding control** of antimicrobial resistance, intelligent prescription of antibiotics and the other ways of controlling infectious diseases.

This success is the outcome of the activities and commitment of stakeholders in both private and public sectors and in particular by the farmer/ veterinarian tandem.

In order to sustain these highly satisfactory initial results, a second Ecoantibio Plan was launched in April 2017 covering a period of five years (2017-2021).

- **Continuation of the national communication campaign directed at farmers** in the various livestock sectors with one key message: “Antibiotics – the right way at the right time”,,
- **Broad-based communication in France, in the regions and internationally on Ecoantibio’s good results** as maintained in 2017,



- **An interministerial conference** organised jointly in November 2018 by the Ministries for the Ecological and Inclusive Transition, Solidarity and Health, Agriculture and Food and Higher Education, Research and Innovation: **“What are the issues and requirements for research**

AGRO-ÉCOLOGIE
PRODUISONS
AUTREMENT

and innovation?” attracted 300 participants,

- **Ecoantibio conferences** held in the regions by sector professionals and/or the Ministry’s regional offices (DRAAF), targeting livestock farmers and/or veterinarians in the regions or the following territorial *départements*: Finistère, Loire Valley, Corsica, Provence/Côte d’Azur, Auvergne Rhône Alpes, Ile et Vilaine.
- **Adoption of EU regulations** on veterinary drugs and medicated feed to help embed the EU’s strategy against antimicrobial resistance.
- **Funding for research projects, studies and training materials:** funding of €1.8m was allocated to Ecoantibio under the national budget in 2018, relating to 10 projects selected at the beginning of the year (2017 call for proposals) and 23 projects selected at the end of the year (2018 call).

The animal welfare strategy, central to sustainable agriculture

Developments in types of livestock production, fundamental regional changes and scientific progress all explain why the public is increasingly asking for greater consideration to be given to animal welfare. Over and above the scientific or emotional aspects, animal welfare is an issue with a genuine ethical dimension.

- **Roll-out of the strategy and priority action plan to promote “Animal Welfare”** presented by the Ministry in the French national council for the orientation of animal and

WHAT WAS ACHIEVED IN 2018

- **Setting up of the partnership chair in animal welfare and its MOOC;**
- **Intensification of inspections and penalties** relating to the conditions under which cattle are transported;
- **Finalisation of a number of self-diagnostic tools for livestock** farms by sector professionals;
- Encouraging results for control of pet sales;
- **Promotion of innovation** (egg sexing project),
- **Setting up of operational units in the territorial *départements*** notably relating to prevention of maltreatment;
- **Development of indicators for monitoring progress on the action plan**, covering all commercial livestock and pets and contributing to the “EU animal welfare platform” set up by the European Commission on 24 January 2017. This was constructed in conjunction with all actors, livestock farmers, veterinarians and animal protection non-profits.

Reinforcement of the action plan

5 core focuses, 20 priority actions notably including:

- **Sharing knowledge and encouraging innovation:** creation of a national centre of reference and support for research
- **Making sector professionals the lead actors in the welfare** of their livestock
- **Ongoing development of farming methods** in the direction of improved animal welfare
- **Reaffirmation of the requirement to protect** animals in slaughterhouses
- **Support for livestock farmers in extreme difficulty** and corrective steps for lack of livestock care
- **Combating the abandonment** of pets
- **Public information on the progress made:** explaining, highlighting the benefits of French production to consumers in France, in Europe and around the world.

Animal welfare as an integral part of the agroecological project

- Animal welfare helps prevent disease and is a factor in reduced drug use
- Animal welfare is destined to become an integral part of collective preferences in national and international procurement contracts; it is increasingly a key factor for competitiveness.

Ecophyto II

Reduced use of plant protection products is possible!



The target

To reduce by 50% the use of plant protection products by 2025, with a first milestone of -25% by 2020.

On the ground, DEPHY farms, now numbering 3,000, have shown that it is possible to reduce the use of plant protection chemicals significantly without impacting the farm's economic performance.

What was achieved in 2018

Nationally :

- **The updating of the Ecophyto II plan to Ecophyto II+** to include the priorities of the government's action plans on plant protection products, making agriculture less dependent on pesticides, and abandoning the use of glyphosate, presented on 25 April and 22 June 2018 respectively. Following a public consultation process at the end of 2018, the final version of Ecophyto II+ will be unveiled in the first quarter of 2019.
- **The formation of three working groups** bringing together the stakeholders for the implementation of the provisions of the action plan on plant protection products, relating in particular to biological control

methods and natural preparations of little concern, advisory services and support for farmers and growers and protection of the public and the environment.

- **Continuation of the core actions of Ecophyto**, with a budget of over **€30m**, specifically: the DEPHY farm network, nationwide biological surveillance, Certiphyto, the web platforms on integrated crop protection and reduction of plant protection products in gardens, green spaces and public facilities, statistical surveys of growing methods and communication.
- **Initiation of a call for national Ecophyto project proposals** with a budget of €4.5m, prioritising alternatives to glyphosate: 138 project proposals received.
- **Initiation of a call for "Research and Innovation" proposals** relating to regional levers for action to reduce the use and the associated risks of plant protection products (€2m envelope).
- **The ramping up of trials of the plant protection product saving certificate (CEPP) :** **49** standardised CEPP actions and **646** commercial references now available.

Regionally:

- Application of the regional roadmaps adopted in 2017 defining priority actions to be undertaken to reduce the use of plant protection products
- Aid for tangible and intangible investments and customised support and training.

Key statistics

As of 01/01/2019 : 3,053 farmers were active in the DEPHY farm network on a voluntary basis, of which **660 were farming organically**.

Renewal of the 41 experimental projects in the Dephy Expe network covering two years (a second wave in 2018), the aim of which is to test systems of production that break radically with current methods, using pesticides only as a last resort and applying systemic approaches.

Roll-out of the network of 30,000 agroecology farms using low levels of plant protection products: a total of approximately **350 groups** involving several thousand farmers.

The seeds and plants plan for sustainable agriculture

Seeds and seedlings constitute an effective and powerful lever for action to implement systems of production reliant on the functionalities provided by ecosystems. Conservation of plant genetic resources and varietal innovation are drivers for reconciliation of the needs of an agriculture offering high performance on multiple levels with the limitation of environmental impacts.



6 core focuses

- 1. Organisation** of the conservation of plant genetic resources,
- 2. Encouragement** of innovation to serve agroecology in the seeds and plants sector,
- 3. Adaptation** of the criteria for registration of plant varieties to ensure agriculture can offer high, multilevel performance,
- 4. Development** of innovative processes for data production and analysis on plant varieties,
- 5. Consolidation** of the control and certification system for seeds and plants placed on the market,
- 6. Ensuring** the promotion of France's interests internationally and transparent communication on plant breeding.

What was achieved in 2018

- **The work to organise networks for the conservation of plant genetic resources and collections** continued in 2018. The issue is to ensure rapid recognition of managers and accelerate the contribution to the national collection of species collections held by the various actors. In March 2018 an official order was issued laying down the criteria for official recognition of collection managers. The criteria for contribution of varieties to the national collection are in the process of finalisation.
- On 29 November 2018, the first **meeting of actors in the conservation and exploitation of plant genetic resources** took place in Paris. This day-long event organised by the GEVES coordination unit led to an exchange of information on the national and international context and issues, **feedback from the actors and discussion of issue of how resources should be characterised.**
- **A new call for proposals was initiated in 2018 to support endangered collections**, improve the conditions under which collections are conserved and characterised (€415,000). Of the 38 applications received, 8 have already been selected. 28 others are currently being considered.
- The seeds sector has helped enrich the plant protection product saving certificate (CEPP) scheme by adding two new standard actions, one relating to resistant varieties of sugar beet and the other to varieties of rapeseed.

Animal health and protection

- * The DGAL is responsible for drafting regulations on animal health and protection, livestock traceability, and the prevention and control of animal diseases such as bovine tuberculosis and African swine fever.





African swine fever: a plan to prevent spread of the disease

African swine fever (ASF) is a disease that originated in Africa and has been present for nearly five years in several Eastern European countries. It affects Suidae (pigs and wild boar) and has been getting gradually closer to our national borders, hitting Belgium in early September 2018. A prevention campaign aimed at avoiding the introduction of the virus was accompanied by an intensified action plan coordinated by the DGAL. As of the present date, France is still free of ASF.

Given the virulence of this virus and the lack of any treatment or vaccine, preventive measures are essential if a serious sanitary crisis is to be avoided in France. A communication campaign has been ongoing since April, targeting road hauliers from infected countries, these being a major vector for spread of the disease.

On 13 September 2018, two wild boar suffering from the disease were found in Belgium near the French border. **Faced with this threat, an intensified action plan has been implemented** with DGAL

in four border *départements*: Ardennes, Meuse, Moselle and Meurthe & Moselle, with the aim of preventing the arrival of the virus on our national territory.

A reinforced observation zone covering 133 municipalities has for that reason been defined along the edges of the infected area in Belgium. Restrictions have been imposed on certain activities such as hunting, with more stringent biosecurity measures and enhanced surveillance of livestock farms and wild fauna in four territorial *départements* along the border with Belgium.

This action plan has been defined and implemented in conjunction with Agency for Food, Environmental and Occupational Health & Safety (ANSES), the French National Office for Hunting and Wild Fauna

(ONCFS), the National Hunting Federation (FNC), the National Forest Office (ONF) and the Ministry's regional office (DRAAF) in Eastern France.

Further preventive measures were announced early in January 2019 and a crisis unit has been set up at the DGAL comprising representatives of the pig farming industry, hunters and the forestry ser-

vices, in addition to scientific experts and government representatives. Elimination of the boar population in the area at risk began in mid-January; fencing is currently under construction and biosecurity measures are being applied on livestock farms.

France exports 40% of its pig production, mainly to Europe, Russia and Asia (China). The loss of its disease-free status for

ASF would have **grave economic consequences for France's agrifood industries.** ■



Bovine tuberculosis: effective screening

The national bovine tuberculosis control plan for 2017-2022 pursues a goal of eradication of the disease by strengthening and adapting surveillance, biosecurity, control and management measures to the various regional contexts.

In France, this zoonosis has become, and continues to be extremely rare in human subjects due to a now very limited level of exposure to sources in cattle. However, the economic impact of the disease has become the overwhelming concern for the various actors in the cattle farming industry. The acquisition of official disease-free status in 2001 facilitates, and is indeed vital for trade in these animals and their products both within the EU and internationally. Retention of that status is among the criteria underpinning the competitiveness of French cattle farming.

With regard to surveillance of cattle farms, the actions implemented have made it possible to:

- define more accurately and expand the areas for priority surveillance where cattle are systematically subject to intradermal comparative tuberculin testing;
 - raise farmers' awareness of the critical need for livestock immobilisation for fully satisfactory use of allergy tests on cattle;
 - subsidise screening procedures at €6.15 per head in order to provide fair remuneration to veterinarians while avoiding extra costs for the farmers in areas subject to more stringent prophylaxis and therefore obliged to arrange for the screening of their livestock;
 - provide bovine and avian tuberculin to sanitary veterinarians by means of a public procurement contract;
 - greatly increase the numbers of training programmes for sanitary veterinarians in partnership with the SNGTV;
 - prioritise the diagnostic slaughter of suspect cattle for swifter detection of infected farms.
- This major financial and technical investment appears to be bearing fruit on the ground where the detection of outbreaks is concerned;
 - 23 *départements* are now covered by zones subject to strengthened prophylactic measures,
 - 123 outbreaks were notified in 2018, a figure up by 30% compared with 2017 (95 outbreaks); 80% of outbreaks are still localised in the Nouvelle Aquitaine region and one particularly highly infected area seems to be emerging in Normandy.

Annual national incidence (0.07%) is still below the threshold under which France's official disease-free status can be retained.



In the Côte d'Or area of Eastern France, the situation has improved markedly: there are now only three tuberculosis outbreaks following the application over the last several years of surveillance measures, which were expanded generally to the whole of the territory this year.

Control measures are based on clearing outbreaks by slaughtering the entire herd or, subject to derogation, selective slaughter.

Surveillance also covers wild fauna specifically under the Sylvatub programme. Cases identified in populations of infected badgers, boar and Cervidae have been discovered in infected areas in proximity to infected cattle farms. These cases are handled by involving hunters, trappers and ONCFS staff and control operations (badger trapping, a ban on baiting, management of hunting waste, game releases, minimum hunting plans) are subject to regulatory control under the ministerial order of 7 December 2016.

The ways forward for improvement of the system are now directed, where prevention is concerned, towards more stringent biosecurity measures on livestock farms. A cattle industry biosecurity chair is currently in the process of creation at the national veterinary school in Toulouse.

The DGAL also funds research programmes on tuberculosis under the triennial call for proposals in the French animal health network (RFSA). ■

Methanisation reduced dependence on inputs

The target for France's energy, methanisation and nitrogen self-sufficiency plan (EMMA) launched in 2013 by the Ministry in charge of Agriculture and the Ministry for the Ecological and Inclusive Transition (MTES) is to develop 1,000 on-farm methanisers in France by the year 2020.

It is focused on the exploitation of organic nitrogen, nitrogen from farm effluent in particular, reducing dependence on mineral nitrogen and encouraging the development of renewable forms of energy with a view to sustainable agriculture and the energy and ecological transition. Methanisation units produce digestate used as fertiliser and biogas (methane), which can then be used to produce heat and/or electricity or alternatively injected into the natural gas distribution network.

The staff of the General Directorate for Food (DGAL) in the directorates in France's départements with responsibility for protection of the public (DDecPP) are involved in issuing official sanitary approvals under the CE regulation

(1069/2009) for these units insofar as they use animal by-products (i.e. parts of animals and other materials that are not, or no longer intended for human consumption: leather, feathers, intestinal contents, former foodstuffs, kitchen and table waste, and so on).

In 2018, a very large increase was seen in applications for these approvals (+26%) and there are currently over 300 installations using animal by-products following:

- the definition of terms for purchase and additional remuneration for the electricity produced by methanisation systems;
- a reduction (40%) in the cost of connection to certain public natural gas supply networks;
- the need to make very substantial increases in the recycling of organic material and to generalise the sorting of organic waste at source over the next six years. ■

Plant health and protection

- * The DGAL is responsible for drafting regulations on plant health, surveillance of plant health and combating the sanitary hazards that can affect them.



2

A spruce bark beetle epidemic

The populations of bark beetles, insects that feed on tree wood, are monitored by the DGAL's forest health division: these beetles have evidently been spreading for the last four years, reaching epidemic proportions across a broad swathe of north-eastern France.

Bark beetles have been benefited by the climatic conditions of recent years: summer heat spells and droughts, especially in 2018, with scattered areas of winter forest blowdown (uprooted trees) providing locations for the insects to breed.

The DGAL immediately circulated recommendations for addressing these outbreaks based on the forest health department's expertise accumulated on this issue over the last 30 years.

The damage caused to spruce stands is already substantial – in region of a million cubic metres – and it threatens to resume in the spring of 2019 in the failing weather conditions that are particularly adverse for the insects. Furthermore, disposal of trees affected by the bark beetles on the market has been made problematic by the fact that the crisis is Europe-wide.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Food has commissioned an initial, rapid estimate of the areas of woodland concerned using

analysis of satellite imagery, which will be available shortly. In partnership with forestry sector actors (ONF, CNPF, cooperatives), IRSTEA and IGN, a field survey of the areas affected by the beetles was begun as early as November in order to acquire reference data to be shared via a collaborative platform for application of continuous monitoring of the spread of the damage using remote detection techniques, starting in the spring of 2019. ■





A ban on neonicotinoids

The use of plant protection products containing neonicotinoids has been banned in France since 1 September 2018. This measure was essential if the massive decline in bee colonies and wild pollinators seen in the winter of 2018 was to be stemmed.

Combating *Xylella fastidiosa*: a 3rd European Commission audit

In November 2018, European Commission auditors travelled to Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur (PACA) and Corsica accompanied by staff from the DGAL and its regional food departments (SRAL) to carry out an evaluation of management of outbreaks of *Xylella fastidiosa*. This was the third mission of the type following the audits of 2016 and 2017.

Surveillance and measures to control this bacterium are occupying teams on a daily basis not only at central administrative level but also on the ground in both affected and unaffected regions: surveillance of the territory as a whole (plant nurseries, commercial orchards, vineyards, gardens, green spaces, public facilities, markets, ports, etc.), intensified surveillance in defined zones, the grub-

bing up of contaminated and host plants, and a nationwide communication campaign. ANSES' plant health laboratory is working to achieve continuous improvement of the test methods for detection of the bacterium.

In 2018, 10,797 inspections were conducted in Xylella-free areas: this revealed no contamination in those areas, which continue to be unaffected. In the southern French PACA region, surveillance of defined geographical areas has revealed a very marginal expansion of their boundaries over the period from January 2016. In Corsica, since the entire island is deemed to be infected, regional surveillance is specifically aimed at avoiding any expansion of the bacterium and its spread beyond the island. This has led to daily inspections at its main ports. ■

The use of five neonicotinoid-based insecticides with particularly harmful effects on the environment, and on pollinating insects in particular, is now banned in France.

This ban has made our country a pioneer in pollinator protection. At France's instigation, the European Union recently adopted usage restrictions for three of these products, prohibiting their use in most circumstances.

The ban has been extended to include two other substances with a mode of action similar to that of neonicotinoids in the law resulting from the French National Food Conference and promulgated in October 2018.

Neonicotinoids can be replaced in many cases by biological control products and other alternatives. ■

Action plans on plant protection products - the abandonment of glyphosate

Governmental action plans relating to plant protection products and to ensuring that agriculture is less dependent on pesticides, plus the abandonment of use of glyphosate, plans presented on 25 April and 22 June respectively, were particular features of 2018. In light of the unsatisfactory results of the Ecophyto Plan for reductions in the use of these products, the government initiated further measures to inject extra energy into the Plan, now called Ecophyto II +, which was the subject of a public consultation process last October.

In order to make the plan more effective and support the roll-out of solutions for farmers, the Ministries of Agriculture and Food, Health, the Ecological and Inclusive Transition and Research resolved, within the framework of the €71m funding devoted each year to Ecophyto nationally and regionally, **to target more tightly programmes of applied research and innovation transfer** in addition to creating farmers' groupings.

The tools provided by the Grand Investment Plan will also be put to use to promote the priorities of Ecophyto II+. They will in this way underpin the development and the placing on the market of novel technological solutions involving agricultural equipment and biological

control. **A high-priority research programme (€30m) aimed at increasing the involvement of the scientific community** has also been announced.

A task force comprising the Ministries of Ecological and Inclusive Transition, Agriculture, INRA, ACTA and APCA chaired by Prefect Pierre-Étienne Bisch, the interministerial coordinator of the glyphosate abandonment plan, has also been set up to implement the cessation glyphosate use over a period of three years, by 2020 for its main applications and by 2022 for all usage.

A resource centre on the alternatives was launched on 1 February 2019 and opened for general access. This website will be fleshed out in order to propose new and practical solutions to cease the use not only of glyphosate but also other herbicides.

Other measures in the action plan – most notably the strengthening of those for provision of support to farmers and the promotion of regional networks in order to raise awareness of, and circulate alternatives to glyphosate – are being rolled out.

The coordinator is to report every three months to government ministers and members of parliament on the action taken and the progress achieved. ■

Creation of the epidemiological surveillance platform

The framework agreement for the plant health epidemiological surveillance platform, whose members include the DGAL, ANSES, INRA, Fredon France, ACTA and APCA, was signed on 9 July 2018.

The platform relies on an operational team comprising staff from the ANSES "Epidemiology and Surveillance Support" unit and the staged recruitment of seven individuals by INRA in Avignon (epidemiologists, an IT expert, statisticians and a website editor).

The creation of epidemiological surveillance platforms can enhance the effectiveness of plant health surveillance by promoting the prevention of sanitary hazards and pooling costs. The framework agreement has been signed for a 10-year term, testifying to the long-term nature of the commitment. ■



A European court of justice ruling on NBTs

On 25 July 2018 the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) ruled on the legal status of new mutagenic techniques in light of the EU regulations on GMOs (genetically modified organisms). The Court concluded that the organisms obtained using these techniques were in fact GMOs. Discussions in which the DGAL is a participant are ongoing at EU level, notably regarding the surveillance of these types of organisms.

The techniques fall into the category of New Breeding Techniques, or NBTs, enabling targeted genomic mutations to be obtained.

The CJEU had been questioned on this issue by France's *Conseil d'Etat* in 2016 in connection with legal action against France by the French confederation of small farmers and NGOs concerning varieties created by these mutagenic techniques. The Court has ruled that all organisms obtained by mutagenesis are

GMOs and that the only organisms not within the scope of application of directive 20018/18 are those derived from traditional mutagenic methods whose safety has long been proven.

Products created with the new mutagenic techniques are therefore subject to the entire range of obligations laid down in the GMO regulations: evaluation, authorisation, traceability, labelling and surveillance.

While awaiting the opinion of the *Conseil d'Etat* in the coming months, this decision could have major consequences for industry sectors likely to want to make use of the methods involved, seed producers in particular. It raises questions notably concerning the application of controls. The DGAL is a participant in discussions at EU level on these issues. ■

An EU audit on the sustainable use of plant protection products

The European Commission audited France in June 2018 in order to evaluate the implementation of measures to ensure sustainable pesticide use. Two French regions, Grand-Est and Brittany, hosted the auditors, who took note of the strong political will to reduce the use of pesticides and the very substantial budget allocated to that goal.

The auditors recommended that indicators be established for the specific monitoring of reductions in the risks and effects of pesticide use on human health and the environment.

They also expressed a wish to see controls put in place to verify application of the principles of integrated pest control by farmers. ■

Safe, high-quality food for all

- * Keeping watch over the sanitary safety of food by improving surveillance of the food chain and scheduling inspections are central to the DGAL's activity.



3



Shellfish surveillance: a new system judged to be satisfactory

New sanitary surveillance arrangements for shellfish ensuring more involvement on the part of local actors were defined and implemented for the first time on 1 January 2018 in the 22 coastal départements.

The French Research Institute for Exploitation of the Sea (Ifremer), which has had responsibility in the past for shellfish sampling and testing, has wanted in recent years to refocus its activities on research.

Ifremer currently has an advice and support and actual performance of surveil-

lance is entrusted to the Prefects in the *départements* with operational backing from the test laboratories in *départements*.

Shellfish farmers and fishermen are also involved in taking samples, especially where specific waterborne resources are required, services for which they are remunerated by government.

As part of these changes, a high level of monitoring put in place by Ifremer enables government staff managing surveillance to fine-tune their controls. That monitoring is also subject to in-depth analysis at national level.

Shellfish are animals that are highly sensitive to contamination of their habitat. The sanitary surveillance of production areas is for that reason a key step in controlling shellfish prior to distribution to consumers. This is also an EU obligation imposed by the « Hygiene Package ».

Initial feedback on this new organisational arrangement is generally very positive: it has helped step up networking between the various local actors, ensuring that they are more involved and that surveillance is maintained at a constant level of effectiveness. ■



Intensified control of facilities manufacturing infant milk powders

In the wake of the Lactalis affair, a strengthened control plan for hygiene in facilities manufacturing or packaging infant formula powder was implemented in the first half of 2018.

41 facilities handling these types of powder were therefore inspected by staff from the directorates in the *départements* charged with protection of the public (DDPP). In addition to checks on premises and equipment, they also examined the self-inspection records kept by company personnel.

Following these inspections, the level of control of sanitary risk in the relevant facilities was assessed by the inspectors and publicly declared on the website and the mobile application *Alim'confiance* :

- 32 had a satisfactory or very satisfactory sanitary level;
- 8 facilities received a formal demand to take remedial steps within a time-frame notified by inspection staff. Those steps related to adaptation of premises, intensification of cleaning and disinfection procedures and in some cases a more stringent self-inspection programme. The facilities concerned were made the

subject of closer monitoring and further inspections were conducted.

- 1 facility had its operations suspended since major instances of non-compliance were observed, although no infant formula was in production at the date of the inspection; this facility will not be at liberty to resume production of infant milk until fully satisfactory risk control guarantees are provided.

The results of these inspections as a whole will provide input for the work done by ANSES, which has been asked to assess the risk intrinsic to this type of production. ■

The food chain surveillance platform: optimising surveillance

The framework agreement governing the platform for food chain surveillance (SCA) was signed in July 2018 by its 14 partners. This resource has been put in place by a four-member coordination team (DGAL, ANSES, INRA, General Health Directorate (DGS)).

The work to optimise the surveillance arrangements for *Salmonella* in the raw milk cheese sector continued in 2018 and a practical guide for the assistance of the industry is to be published in early 2019.

This collective production illustrates the advantages and benefit of working on these topics in a “platform” format that can bring together public- and private-sector representatives from a range of different disciplines.

In October 2018, a new working group was set up to work on the optimisation of *Salmonella* surveillance systems at national level (across all sectors). This group is led by ANSES. Other work on chemical hazards will be led by LABERCA (the laboratory for study of residues and contaminants in foodstuffs), INRA and Oniris-Nantes.

Lastly, an inter-platform organisation has been put in place for the development of a collective culture across the animal health, plant health and food chain surveillance domains. ■

Artificial intelligence to assist inspection scheduling

In June 2018, the first call for declarations of interest in trials of artificial intelligence to assist public services was launched within the framework of the investment programme for the future. Among the six winners unveiled in November by the Secretary of State for Digital Technology, Mounir Majhoubi, the purpose of the project submitted by the DGAL is to target restaurant inspections on the basis of customer reviews.

The objective of the project entitled “IA-lim” is to fine-tune the targeting of establishments to be inspected by improving estimates of risk to optimise as far as possible the inspection capacity of government staff, especially where restaurants and food outlets are concerned. The benefits and impact of artificial intelligence will allow the scheduling of such inspections to be focused and targeted

on establishments identified as presenting greater risk, thereby improving consumer protection.

Over the ten months of this support programme, a specific task will be to evaluate the appropriateness and difficulty of collecting data from the various online customer review websites in order to write an algorithm.

At the end of the period, an evaluation will be conducted using feedback from user tests to determine the maturity of artificial intelligence, to define the sectoral impacts it entails, and so on. This evaluation will determine whether the algorithm has demonstrated its usefulness and whether it can be rolled out for scheduling official checks. ■

Chlordecone : reinforced regulatory controls and food inspections in the French West Indies



Chlordecone was used to control banana weevils in the French West Indies before being banned over 20 years ago. Soil and water pollution by chlordecone is, due to its scale and persistence over time, a major sanitary, environmental, agricultural, economic and social issue in Martinique and Guadeloupe.

As part of successive interministerial action plans since 2009, the DGAL implements **surveillance plans and annual control plans for foodstuffs.**

Their purpose is firstly to assess chlordecone contamination in sensitive foodstuffs produced and consumed in Martinique and Guadeloupe and, secondly, to detect fraud and non-compliance. Food products are deemed “non-compliant” and prohibited for sale if the level of chlordecone contamination exceeds the maximum residue limits (MRLs) laid down by regulation.

During his visit to the French West Indies in September 2018, the President of the Republic indicated that efforts should target “zero chlordecone” in food. The DGAL therefore prepared an official order amending that of 30 June 2018 to reduce the permitted level of chlordecone in bovine meat, **thus offering greater protection for the consumer.**

In addition to beef and veal, **further studies are awaited** on other animal species (sheep, goats, pigs, poultry) early in 2019.

Alongside this, it has been decided to **increase by 30% the number of official inspections in 2019** in order to guarantee adherence to chlordecone limits in food, this to include the infor-

mal economy, marine products, meat and plants.

A scientific and information conference was held in the French West Indies in October 2018 in which the DGAL was a participant. The proceedings led to **the circulation of scientific studies to stakeholders and the general public.** They were informed with complete openness of the reality of the risk created by soil pollution in the French West Indies and of all the steps taken by every actor in the food chain in order to control that risk. ■

The Anses Plant Health Laboratory receives approval as an EU reference laboratory in three additional areas

In 2018, the European Commission initiated several calls for applications for approval of various European Union reference laboratories (EURL) in the following domains: insects & acarians, bacteria, nematodes, funguses and viruses. The teams at ANSES and the DGAL submitted a number of applications. After consideration of these, the European Commission approved the ANSES Plant Health Laboratory for every area for which it had applied, these being: insects & acarians, nematodes and mycology.

European Union regulations provide for the possibility of designating European Union Reference Laboratories (EURL) in the area of plant health. Such “super-laboratories” with acknowledged expertise, some of which are ANSES facilities, play a key role in establishing the analytical methods used by national reference laboratories in all the Member States. Reference laboratories play a strategic role in the overall sanitary safety system.

Discussions are currently ongoing between the EURLs and the European Commission on the establishment of priorities for their programme of work for 2019-2020. ■



The Veterinary and Phytosanitary Criminal Investigation Unit (BNEVP)

- * Around twenty officers on urgent call
- * Investigations on the ground anywhere in France
- * Around forty new trafficking and piracy cases every year.



4



Adulterated waxes harmful to bee health

During the summer of 2016, problems with the health of bees were observed in hives in Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium and the north of France. Investigations by the Belgian authorities revealed that those issues could be linked to the use of poor-quality comb foundations in hives.

Following these reports and the questioning of a number of professional beekeeping organisations, an enquiry was conducted by France's national unit for

veterinary and phytosanitary investigations (BNEVP) into the organisation of the French industry processing waxes for use in beekeeping, an area relatively unfamiliar to French veterinary services.

In the course of this official enquiry, 43 inspections were carried out on the premises of businesses in the sector.

These led to the identification of critical points in wax manufacture, proposal of corrective measures and the initiation of enforcement action (filing of legal

proceedings for alleged adulteration/false pretences).

The BNEVP's investigation indicates that these fraudulent practices extend to the whole of Europe as well as internationally. Adulterated waxes are on sale in India, China, Hungary, Spain and Belgium, testifying to the scale of this fraud, which affects a product essential to beekeeping, possibly harming bee health.

The investigation highlights a potential reason for the vulnerability of hives due to adulterated waxes and a lack of control of manufacturing processes. It is likely to contribute to a healthier "beeswax" sector. ■





A court ruling in a dog trafficking case

The directorate for protection of the public (DDPP) for the Haute-Saône département reported to the BNEVP that a former veterinarian was selling puppies from Slovakia. Over the period from 2016, this had involved the importing of sixty or so puppies every year, and the animals appeared to be younger than their declared age, thus invalidating their mandatory anti-rabies vaccination.

In light of the risk in terms of public health and animal health and protection, the BNEVP and the DDPP decided to conduct an operation against this trafficking, to

identify who was responsible, determine what offences had been committed and take appropriate steps.

In March 2018, after being formally requested to do so by the Vesoul investigation squad, they inspected a delivery of puppies from Slovakia. The person engaged in this trade had not declared the business activity and was not in compliance with the mandatory vaccination rules applicable to animals imported into France. An expert veterinarian estimated the puppies' ages at between three and six weeks less than that shown on their passports. Nineteen puppies were impounded and handed over to the SPA, the French animal protection agency.

The person responsible for this trafficking was prosecuted for importing non-compliant animals, illegal practice of veterinary medicine, failure to declare trade in animals to the government administration and money laundering.

He was found guilty of the charges against him and sentenced to fifteen months in prison, suspended, and a fine of €8,000, accompanied by a 10-year ban on any activity linked to dog-breeding. His veterinarian was convicted of complicity with illegal professional practice and given a 5-month suspended prison sentence and barred from any activity linked to the offences for a period of two years. ■



Official enquiry into a pest

The pine nematode, an extremely harmful parasite, was identified in March 2018 in France in bark sourced in Portugal, travelling through Belgium and destined for sale in France. The BNEVP was tasked with an official enquiry into the organisation of the marketing of this "high-risk" bark coming from Portugal and Spain to be sold on the French market.

The enquiry set out to identify the bark production sectors in the Iberian Peninsula, the transit countries for the bark, the types of pine-bark based product used in France and the working practices of the end users of those products in France.

The BNEVP's enquiries were conducted in close conjunction with the Plant Health Office and the Forest Health Department of the DGAL. They led to a more accurate assessment of the flows of bark from the Iberian Peninsula. Visits were made to numerous firms (sawmills, papermills, wholesalers).

Questions remain as to how this bark is marketed from Belgium. Enquiries were continuing in early 2019. ■



Xylella fastidiosa: an enquiry into the routes for its spread In France

At the end of February 2017, the BNEVP was asked to conduct a further investigation into the routes for the arrival and spread of the *Xylella fastidiosa* bacterium in France.

The enquiry's objectives were:

- Firstly, to update the analysis of trade in *Polygala myrtifolia* carried out by the BNEVP in 2015. Consultation of the various actors involved in the trade in *Polygala myrtifolia* notably led once again to confirmation of the predominance of foreign suppliers (Spanish and Italian in particular) of milkwort in France.

- Secondly, to investigate connected sectors (production and distribution of vines and fruit trees (*Prunus* and *Citrus* in particular)), deemed to present risks.

This BNEVP investigation will enable more accurate targeting of surveillance and the protection of the sectors involved. ■

Sanitary Alerts and Crisis

- * Every year the Sanitary Emergency Unit (MUS) coordinates the handling of over one thousand alerts in close conjunction with DGAL decentralised services in France's territorial *départements*. A notable feature of 2018 was the number of cases of foodborne illness due to raw milk cheese, which required in-depth investigation to identify the farms responsible for the contamination, a rise in anthrax cases in the Upper Alps and imports into France of plant material contaminated with the pine nematode.



5

Pine nematode: interception of contaminated material

2018 featured several interceptions in France of wood materials infested with pine nematode. However, no infested trees have been identified and France remains free of any outbreak of this highly damaging pest.

The pine nematode (*Bursaphelenchus xylophilus*) is a microscopic worm that blocks sap circulation in conifers, which can lead to the tree's death in just 45 days. It is a pest subject to quarantine.

Originating in North America, it initially spread in Asia before arriving in Europe: Portugal, in 1999, where the situation is one of containment, and Spain, in 2008, where it is in the process of being eradicated in two outbreaks in Galicia and Castilla y Leon.

Several contaminated items have been identified, firstly bark originating in Portugal and headed to France for sale in March and April, and four interceptions of wood packaging sourced in Portugal or with other, unknown, origins.

The DGAL's Sanitary Emergency Unit (MUS) coordinated the withdrawal from sale of the potentially contaminated bags of bark. The DGAL immediately alerted the Portuguese authorities, who were quick to act against the market operators concerned. Surveillance was stepped up on bags of bark and wood pallets and packaging.

No standing or harvested trees have been identified as infected; France is still free therefore of any pine nematode outbreak. ■



A hundred cases of salmonellosis due to Pélardon cheese



A number of cases of foodborne illness due to salmonella were notified in the Bouches du Rhône département in early August 2018. ARS and DDPP checks on foodstuffs led to the determination of the origin of these cases. Tests did in fact reveal the presence of salmonella in several batches of Pélardon cheese made by a firm in Lozère and eaten by those who had fallen ill.

The withdrawal from sale/recall of the batches identified in patients' homes began on 10 August, accompanied by a press release in order to reach out to potential consumers of the cheese across France in a holiday period during which the population is highly mobile. Since the cheese is distributed outside France, warnings were also sent through the European alert network (RASFF) on 13 August 2018.

On 22 August, the organisation *Santé Publique France* reported the existence of further cases of human salmonellosis across the whole of France. These were caused by a *Salmonella Newport* strain genetically identical to that discovered in the Pélardon cheese involved in the cases of foodborne illness in the Bouches du Rhône.

The Ministries of Agriculture and Health then took the decision to issue a second press release expanding the withdrawal/recall to cover all Pélardon cheeses from the firm in Lozère and remaining on sale.

A total of 104 victims were registered in France between 11 July and 22 August 2018. The absence of any new detected cases after 25 August demonstrates the effectiveness of the steps taken for product withdrawal/recall. Testing of the milk led to identification of the animal in which the contamination originated. Intensive cleaning and disinfection operations were carried out in the business premises concerned. On resumption, production there was subjected to tighter monitoring over several weeks. ■



Raw milk reblochon cheese and cases of HUS

Seven cases of infection by the bacterium *Escherichia coli* type O26, including six cases of haemolytic-uremic syndrome (HUS), occurred in children aged between eighteen months and three years. Investigations by the sanitary authorities confirmed the link between these cases and consumption of whole reblochon cheeses made from raw milk.

In the week following ingestion of the contaminated food this virulent bacterium can sometimes result in bloody diarrhoea, abdominal pain and vomiting, accompanied in some cases by serious complications, especially in young children and the elderly. A total of 12 cases of HUS were registered and linked to consumption of reblochon cheeses manufactured by a facility in Upper Savoy.

An initial withdrawal/recall operation took place on 11 May last in Leclerc supermarkets. For prudential reasons, this was expanded on 14 May to the whole of the firm's production.

Enquiries in the company concerned continued in order to identify the origin of the contamination. They resulted in a further withdrawal/recall procedure on 22 June after two livestock farms were identified as contaminated by the bacterium.

In the wake of this alert, the sanitary authorities reminded the public that **raw milk and raw milk cheeses must not be consumed by young children**, who should preferably be given pressed/cooked cheeses (Emmental, Comté, for example), processed cheese spreads and cheeses made from pasteurised milk. The same recommendation applies to pregnant women and immunosuppressed individuals. ■



Anthrax

Detection of two dozen cases in the Upper Alps

Between 30 June and 27 August 2018, twenty-five outbreaks of anthrax were detected in cattle, sheep and three horses in fourteen municipalities located in the Upper Alps *département*.

The farms involved were placed under a Prefectural order requiring notification of infection and specifying the treatment of the animals (antibiotics and vaccination), along with biosecurity and cleaning/ disinfection procedures.

The Prefecture, acting in conjunction with the ARS and DDPP, communicated

regularly on the preventive measures applied to the sector professionals exposed to risk (livestock farmers, veterinarians, knackers) as well as on more general measures involving the public: avoidance of touching dead animals if encountered, limited picking of wild plants and berries, and so on.

A campaign of mandatory preventive vaccination was conducted up to December on farms in the municipalities involved, a programme organised and funded by government with assistance from sanitary veterinarians.

In the wake of this episode, work was begun to update sanitary protocols and measures notably based on feedback from government agencies in the Upper Alps.

Anthrax or *Bacillus anthracis* infection is a zoonosis (a disease common to human beings and animals) that affects mammals – mainly herbivores. In France, outbreaks are regularly detected on farms in certain regions (0 to 5 cases annually) but combinations of weather conditions and geology can sometimes lead to multiple new cases in areas such as the Upper Alps. ■

International negotiations and contacts

- * Negotiations connected with EU regulations and their implementing instruments.
- * Participation in the negotiation of free trade agreements.
- * The opening and reopening of markets.



6

Negotiations within the European Union

In 2018, DGAL staff provided advocacy for France's positions in negotiations conducted at EU level.



The adoption of two new regulations on veterinary drugs and medicated animal feed by the European Parliament and the Council.

The purpose of these instruments is to encourage the placing on the market of a broader offering of veterinary drugs, harmonising the manufacture, marketing and use of medicated feed and combating antimicrobial resistance. The new regulation provides for bans on imports into the European Union of animals and animal products which have been subject to antimicrobial uses prohibited within the EU: use of antibiotics as growth factors and treatment with critical antibiotics to be reserved for human use.

A proposed regulation on the transparency and sustainability of EU food chain risk assessment.

This proposal, which includes a number of objectives expressed by the President of the Republic in his speech at the Sorbonne in September 2017, received a very favourable reception from the French authorities. The draft text sets out to make European scientific evaluations more transparent, more independent and more easily understandable, in line most notably with recent debate surrounding glyphosate and endocrine disruptors. The Austrian presidency of the European Council has made this text one of its priorities and is aiming to see it adopted in the spring of 2019.

The DGAL has contributed to the drafting of the implementing instruments of three other recently adopted EU regulations.

- **Regulation 2016/429 – the “Animal Health Law”**
(entry into force in April 2021). This aims to strengthen prevention following the logic of “prevention is better than cure”, allocating responsibility to every actor and applying rules based on an assessment of the risks and imposition of biosecurity rules.

- **Regulation 2016/2031 on plant health**
(entry into force in December 2019). Its purpose is to strengthen the protection of EU territory against the introduction of pests. Where phytosanitary controls on imported plants are concerned, it introduces the principle of a preventive approach for plants arriving from third countries. It also adds intensified surveillance for 180 quarantine organisms to permit their detection and rapid eradication where outbreaks occur in Member States.
- **Regulation 2017/625 on official controls**
(entry into force in December 2019). This regulation lays down a harmonised framework for the organisation of controls and other official activities throughout the food chain. ■



Participation in the free trade agreement negotiations

A particular feature of 2018 was the continuation of the negotiations for free trade agreements between the European Union and numerous third countries, the Mercosur countries (Brazil, Uruguay, Paraguay, Argentina) and Mexico.

The DGAL pursues two goals:

- To improve French businesses' access to third-country markets with a view to removing sanitary and phytosanitary barriers to exports;
- To advocate, preserve and propagate our food model and our mandatory sanitary and phytosanitary standards outside the EU.
- **Negotiations for the EU-Mercosur agreement: under way since 1999.** This is the case because major failures in the Brazilian sanitary system were revealed by the European Commission through an audit mission conducted in Brazil in May 2017.
- **The economic partnership agreement between the European Union and Japan** came into force on 1 February 2019 following lengthy negotiations that began in 2013. Japan is a very valuable export market accounting for 18% of French exports, and has been increasing since 2017.

• **Implementation of the agreement between the European Union**

and Canada (CETA) which came into force on 21 September 2017. It has confirmed a shared desire to work together on major environmental and health concerns such as antimicrobial resistance and animal welfare.

In the sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) domain, the action plan drawn up by the government in 2017 is being pursued and includes concrete actions aimed at ensuring that imported Canadian products adhere to European mandatory SPS standards, for example by verifying the actual application of traceability for imported products using a programme of audits.

- The DGAL took part in the drafting of this plan and is participating in its implementation. ■

Opening China up to French beef and veal

In July 2018, the Chinese authorities announced that four French facilities (two slaughterhouses and two warehouses) had been officially approved, permitting them to export beef and veal to China. This announcement marked the official opening up of the Chinese market to French beef and veal following a 17-year embargo.

The opening of this market came at the end of a period of six months' intense technical, diplomatic and political discussions between France and China which began with the state visit of the President of the Republic, Emmanuel Macron, to Beijing in January 2018. It represented the outcome of unprecedented involvement of the central and decentralised departments of the DGAL, FranceAgriMer, industry representatives and the French Embassy in Beijing.

At the China International Import Expo 2018 (CIIE) in Shanghai in November 2018, the Minister of Agriculture and Food, Didier Guillaume, participated with representatives of the Chinese and French administrations and the beef interbranch representative body in attendance in a festive event to kick off French export trade. ■

Opening up third-country markets

The results of negotiations on sanitary and phytosanitary terms and conditions governing exports to third countries have led to the opening of a total of 14 markets and the reopening of 18 others (i.e. the lifting of embargos), taking all domains together.

10 reopenings and 8 openings of new markets in the “live animals/livestock genetics” sector:

- 10 markets were reopened in connection with avian influenza and poultry genetics (Thailand, Ukraine, Brazil, Taiwan, Russia, Algeria), Newcastle disease (Ukraine/poultry genetics), Bluetongue and breeding cattle (Algeria, Kazakhstan) and horses (Japan);
- 8 new markets were opened: Algeria (hatching eggs), Egypt (breeding cattle), New Caledonia (horses), Japan (cattle embryos and horse semen), India (pig semen), Kazakhstan (live cattle) and New Zealand (goat embryos).

8 markets were reopened for “foodstuffs of animal origin”:

4 embargos related to BSE and beef/veal were lifted (China, Lebanon, Kuwait, Iraq), 3 avian influenza embargos were lifted (Thailand/foie gras, Morocco/poultry products, Iraq/poultry meat) and one

classical swine fever embargo was lifted (Japan/pigmeat).

2 markets were opened for “animal feed and by-products”: (Canada/pet food based on pig blood and processed animal proteins).

2 markets were opened for “plant genetics”: (Kenya/potato plants, Ecuador/lily flower bulbs).

2 markets were opened for “plant products”: (China/shallots, and Vietnam/baby kiwi).

In addition, several “long-haul” negotiation processes came to fruition in 2018, most notably :

- 4 markets were facilitated and 6 markets were kept open. ■

In order to achieve the above results, in 2018 the “Third Country Exports” office assisted 22 field audits by delegations from third countries.

Continuation of the development of EXP@DON 2

In 2018, the IT design work of the Information & Communication department continued. Alongside this, the transfer of documents from Exp@don was completed. The first batch is expected to come on line in the early months of 2019.

The search engine will be enriched with documents from Impadon, FranceAgriMer and the General Directorate for the Economic and Environmental Performance of Enterprises (DGPE) in the Ministry and the module’s functionalities are to be fleshed out during the first half of 2019.

The IT design work for the Certificate module enabling remote applications for sanitary and phytosanitary certificates has commenced. The first batches are expected in summer 2019.

2017 was the year in which the export approval management module came online in Expadon 2, a software package for dematerialised sanitary and phytosanitary export procedures. This resource is intended for export approval applications and their review. ■



<http://www.franceagrimer.fr/International/Exportations/Expadon2>

BREXIT : preparations for the application of controls



Following the triggering of Article 50 of the Lisbon Treaty, the United Kingdom will become a third country and customs duty and sanitary and phytosanitary controls will apply from 30 March 2019. The DGAL has therefore prepared for the application of those controls in the event of a “no-deal” Brexit.

The United Kingdom will logically no longer be a member of the European Union from 30 March 2019. Failing an agreement on arrangements to govern its withdrawal from the European Union (i.e. the “no-deal” scenario), the DGAL has estimated the number of posts required for the application of sanitary and phytosanitary controls, following a survey conducted by the managers of the points of entry and the DRAAFs along the Channel/North Sea coast.

On the basis of a report by the General Council on Agriculture, Food and Rural Spaces (CGAAER) in September 2018, the DGAL formed a “task force” comprising a

“Brexit referent” in each of the three regions along the Channel/North Sea coast plus a project manager answering directly to the Director General.

In November 2018, the recruitment procedure for the hiring of inspecting officers was started. They will be assigned to the nine border control Bilateral posts

receiving goods arriving from the United Kingdom.

Finally, a training course for those officers has been designed by the National School of Veterinary Services (ENSV) and the Ministry of Agriculture National Staff Training Institute (INFOMA). This module will be dispensed from 1 February to 30 March 2019. ■

Bilateral cooperation and twinning

The DGAL cooperates with many countries in order to share its technical expertise and promote the French sanitary and food model.

For example, in 2018 several institutional twinning arrangements confirmed the advantages of this type of cooperation. A twinning arrangement initiated in 2017 and conducted by Hungary with France led to a new relationship with Serbia. The goal is to strengthen the expertise of the **Serbian veterinary directorate** for surveillance of zoonoses and antimicrobial resistance. A twinning relationship with the **Turkish veterinary services** to upgrade official sanitary controls to meet EU standards has been very successfully completed. A new project has been launched in Lebanon for the reinforcement of veterinary services there and to build capacity with regard to food safety.

The pool of experts is evolving constantly, with a total of 320 experts identified by France Vétérinaire International as of the present date.

The DGAL supports thematic training courses organised by the National School of Veterinary Services (ENSV) which hosts between 15 and 20 foreign executive-level staff several times a year.

Finally, in 2018 France and Morocco co-chaired the Mediterranean Animal Health Network (MAHN/REMESA). The meeting took place in Paris in November 2018 and threw a spotlight on the strengthening of national systems for the epidemiological surveillance of animal diseases along the lines of the French epidemiological surveillance platform. ■

Management and resources

- * A totally overhauled food information system
- * More effective tools
- * A quality-led approach



7

Roll-out of ODISSEE

The staff mobility dossiers which are now obsolete have been replaced by a tool for dialogue and monitoring staffing and jobs (ODISSEE). This is intended to simplify staff mobility programmes. ODISSEE came on line in December 2018 to handle the opening of posts for transfers in the spring of 2019.

ODISSEE has two broad components:

- **A management application** listing posts, staff numbers, events, requests for publication and budget allocations;
- **A decision aid tool** using data from the management application to generate a range of dashboards (projected take-up of Full Time Equivalent posts, staff mobility overviews, etc.).

A new milestone will have been reached in July 2019 with the roll-out of RENOI-RH, a new human resources information system for the Ministry for whose operation ODISSEE will be a strategic component. ■



DGAL internal auditor seminar

The DGAL held a national seminar for internal auditors in March 2018 with a view to enhanced cohesion for the network and exchanges of effective practice between auditors.

The presentations and different group workshops led to discussion of the factors for a successful audit, the use made of findings and the benefits of audits for core technical tasks, among other topics. Participants were particularly appreciative of the simulation exercises.

This seminar led to the creation of a network of auditors destined to develop further in the future. In 2018, the network comprised 55 qualified auditors and 67 others on a path to qualification. Any member of staff can choose to initiate a qualification pathway by approaching the regional quality assurance correspondent for his or her region or the DGAL, after obtaining the agreement of line management. ■

RESYTAL: a new milestone

The food information system is being modernised. An initial cycle was completed in 2018 with the migration of the animal health and protection domains to the first RESYTAL applications.

This first development cycle focused on the management of establishments, DGAL users and their official approvals, as well as the entire inspection-related process (risk analysis, scheduling, matrix configuration, recording and editing inspection reports, and monitoring annual campaigns) and exploitation of the data contained in DEDAL, the decision aid system.

A further development cycle began in 2019 with the launch of projects on the management of sampling and testing, surveillance and alert processing. The dematerialisation of procedures, notably including the implementation of remote procedures, will also be central to this new cycle. ■



RESYTAL: start-up of surveillance and alert processing projects

In 2018, trials were begun for the entry of surveillance data on mobile devices. This has proved to be viable and the plant pest surveillance system will be rolled out in the course of 2019.

A prototype for a tool for data entry in the field on mobile devices (smart-

phones, tablets, etc.) has been developed. Information can be entered whether the device is connected or not to a mobile network. The data will then be automatically transferred to a central database immediately the devices comes back on line.

Initial tests were conducted towards the end of 2018. The outcome was positive and should permit the roll-out of the system in 2019 for **surveillance of regulated pests** in the plant protection domain.

Trials are also ongoing to facilitate feedback of **bovine tuberculosis surveillance data**. ■

Communication

- * The DGAL actions and strategy promotion unit (MIVAS) acts to highlight programmes led by the Directorate within its official remit, sanitary safety and food policy. It circulates information among sector professionals and to consumers. It is also in charge of communication when sanitary crisis arise. It helps highlight the value of the work done by the teams both at central administrative level and in the decentralised departments (DD(CS) PP and DRAAF/DAAF). In 2018, communication campaigns were conducted on the wearing of personal protective equipment when using plant protection products and on the prevention of African swine fever.



The DGAL in figures: Inspections and controls in 2018

The DGAL has a workforce of 4,800 full time equivalents (FTEs), plus 14,000 government-approved sanitary veterinarians, 30 national reference laboratories and around 150 specialist test laboratories, the majority attached to territorial *départements*.

Import controls

Imported goods	Number of batches checked	of which, number rejected
Animals and animal products	42,530	308
Plants and plant products	53,550	650
Animal feed not of animal origin	2,700	2
TOTAL	98,800	960

Certification of intra-EU trade

		Number of checks
Live animals	Certification inspections (exit from territory)	92,800
	Inspections for vérification of compliance of incoming batches	590

Annual surveillance programme for contamination in primary production, food and feed

The results for the 2018 campaign will be available in the PSPC overview report for 2018 to be published in September 2019.

	Samples taken in 2017	of which, samples found to be non-compliant	Sampling scheduled in 2018
TOTAL comprising:	61,698	753	60,000
Physico-chemical contaminants* in animal products	49,304	240	50,000
Biological contaminants** ad toxins in animal products	3,490	419	3,600
Residues of plant protection products in primary plant production	1,466	77	1,300
Contaminants in products imported from third countries	1,189	17	3 % of imported batches
Antimicrobial resistance in commensal and zoonotic bacteria	6,249	-	4,000

* Comprising veterinary medicines, banned substances, growth promoters, pesticides, antiparasitics and trace metals.

** Comprising bacteria, organic pollutants (other than pesticides), mycotoxins and phycotoxins.

Animal health and protection inspections

Animal protection	Number of inspections	Follow-up procedures
TOTAL, comprising:	12,820	1,310 official notices to remedy
Farm livestock	5,880	
Animal transportation	2,520	
Pets	1,900	
Equine animals	880	
Animal laboratory trials	310	
Slaughterhouses	1,330	

Public health in livestock farming	Number of inspections	Follow-up procedures
TOTAL, comprising:	19,130	670 official notices to remedy
Sanitary inspections on livestock farms	3,700	
Biosecurity	2,140	
Salmonella	7,730	
Identification	2,790	
Veterinary pharmacy	1,300	
Animal by-products	520	
Animal feed	230	
Reproduction	250	
Trade in live animals	470	

Plant quality, health and protection inspections

	Number of inspections	Follow-up procedures	Comprising:	
			Official actions	Penalty notices
TOTAL, comprising:	12,630	4,370	4,290	80
Inspections of users of plant protection products*	6,140	2,500		
Inspections at plant protection product distribution stage	550	320		
Inspections verifying observance of hygiene rules	1,780	150		
Checks for issuance of European phytosanitary passports**	4,160	1,400		

Food safety inspections

	Number of inspections	Follow-up procedures	Comprising:					
			Official warnings	Official notices to remedy	Penalty notices	Permit withdrawal or suspension	Total or partial closure	Other steps**
TOTAL, comprising:	57,500	30,600	22,280	6,500	810	70	840	100
Slaughter*, processing or warehouse facilities	17,500	6,570						
Institutional catering	10,500	5,630						
Commercial catering	19,200	12,670						
Shops	10,300	5,730						

* This figure includes only annual inspections of slaughter facilities where the veterinary services also provide permanent inspection.

**Obligation to provide training, sequestration or destruction of goods, cleaning, product recall, alterations of premises, etc.

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