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Answer given by Mr Wojciechowski
on behalf of the European Commission
(21.11.2024)

The Commission is aware of difficulties caused by bluetongue which have been discussed at the Agriculture and Fisheries Council on 23 September 2024.

Member States may implement eradication programmes¹. They must maintain a publicly available up-to-date list of disease-free areas. Movements of animals from affected zones must comply with risk mitigation measures² and certification. Member States have a long experience in combating bluetongue and coordinating among themselves.

The EU can provide financial support under the Common Market Organisation upon evidence that the market is affected by trade restrictions, resulting from the application of veterinary measures for combating the spread of the disease.

Strategic Plans may provide support to prevent and mitigate the economic impacts of animal diseases. Support can be provided for risk management, improving on-farm biosecurity and investments to restore agricultural potential that Member States are encouraged to use. An additional support possibility has been put forward by the Commission on 21 October 2024, proposing to introduce adaptations to the European agricultural fund for rural development (EAFRD) 2014-2022 programmes to allow Member States to provide emergency support of up to EUR 42 000 to farmers affected by natural disasters (including animal diseases) or to reinforce measures to restore production potential.

Aid for the prevention, control and eradication of animal diseases and to compensate for the damage caused by them may be granted under certain conditions by Member States, without prior notification, under the Agricultural Block Exemption Regulation³ or, with prior notification, under the Agricultural State aid Guidelines⁴. Limited support can also be granted in application of the Agricultural *de minimis* Regulation⁵.

¹ Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2020/689 of 17 December 2019 supplementing Regulation (EU) 2016/429 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards rules for surveillance, eradication programmes, and disease-free status for certain listed and emerging diseases: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg_del/2020/689/oj

² For example, with vaccination.

³ Commission Regulation (EU) 2022/2472 of 14 December 2022 declaring certain categories of aid in the agricultural and forestry sectors and in rural areas compatible with the internal market in application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (OJ L 327, 21.12.2022, p. 1).

⁴ Guidelines for State aid in the agricultural and forestry sectors and in rural areas (OJ C 485, 21.12.2022, p. 1–90).

⁵ Commission Regulation (EU) No 1408/2013 of 18 December 2013 on the application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union to *de minimis* aid in the agriculture sector (OJ L 352, 24.12.2013, p. 9).