

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-000135/25
to the Commission
Maria Walsh (PPE)
(15 January 2025)**

Subject: Farmer support for bovine tuberculosis and other livestock diseases

The spread of outbreaks of bovine tuberculosis and other livestock diseases in Europe is putting the livestock sector under significant pressure.

Member States such as Ireland have seen an increase in the number of herds impacted by bovine tuberculosis. The Commission decision to reduce financial support for the years 2025 to 2027 leaves livestock farmers and their families in a dire situation. Additionally, current reports show increased bovine tuberculosis cases in Northern Ireland, further emphasising the risk of contamination across the EU-UK border.

1. How is the Commission planning to ensure continuous support to control and eradicate such diseases in the coming years, considering the halt on funding outside the common agricultural policy?
2. Furthermore, how is the Commission planning to tackle the specific cases of outbreaks across shared borders, such as the case of Ireland and the UK?

Submitted: 15.1.2025

**Answer given by Mr Várhelyi on behalf of the European Commission
(18 March 2025)**

For the eradication of important diseases such as bovine tuberculosis, the Commission has put in place specific rules, notably Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2020/689 ⁽¹⁾ that together with Regulation (EU) 2016/429 ⁽²⁾ covers all aspects to eradicate it.

The EU rules are based, *inter alia*, on scientific advice provided by the European Food Safety Authority, on decades of experience eradicating it and on the international standards of the World Organisation for Animal Health.

Member States that are not yet free from the disease, must have in place an appropriate eradication programme approved by the Commission which must comply with the criteria set in those rules and the competent authorities need to implement it until eradication.

This legislation also applies to and in the United Kingdom (UK) in respect of Northern Ireland (NI) in accordance with the EU-UK Withdrawal Agreement. Both Ireland and the UK (NI) have an approved programme ⁽³⁾.

Bovine tuberculosis outbreaks must be dealt with in line with those programmes, under the responsibility of the competent authorities in Ireland and in the UK in respect of NI to progress towards eradication, including at border areas.

EU funding of veterinary measures for bovine tuberculosis eradication is not envisaged for the years 2025 to 2027 as financial resources are allocated to the control and eradication of other major priority animal diseases.

Preventive measures can be supported financially through Member State Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) Strategic Plans ⁽⁴⁾, if programmed, including risk management and improved on-farm biosecurity investments.

Funding of veterinary measures in the UK (NI) with EU funds or CAP support is not possible under the provisions of the EU-UK Withdrawal Agreement.

⁽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.

⁽²⁾ Regulation (EU) 2016/429 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 9 March 2016 on transmissible animal diseases and amending and repealing certain acts in the area of animal health ('Animal Health Law').

⁽³⁾ Reference: Annex II, Part II of Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2021/620.

⁽⁴⁾ Regulation (EU) 2021/2115 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 2 December 2021 establishing rules on support for strategic plans to be drawn up by Member States under the common agricultural policy (CAP Strategic Plans) and financed by the European Agricultural Guarantee Fund (EAGF) and by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and repealing Regulations (EU) No 1305/2013 and (EU) No 1307/2013, OJ L436, 6.12.2021, p.1.