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Answer given by Mr Várhelyi
on behalf of the European Commission
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The EU has a set of safety rules in animal and veterinary public health, including food, to manage a potential emerging risk due to the highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) virus strain circulating in dairy cows in the United States. The Commission issued guidance¹ to clarify EU measures in animals should HPAI occur in animals other than birds, including surveillance and control measures, notification and reporting.

EU bodies² assess and report on the risks of HPAI³. Committees⁴ and joint meetings⁵ discuss the epidemiological situation and measures. The EU in cooperation with third countries⁶, helps implementing a Global strategy for HPAI⁷, emphasising the One Health approach. This approach integrates public health, wildlife and environmental sectors to safeguard poultry value chains against HPAI.

In 2025, in accordance with Article 5 of Regulation 2022/2371 on serious cross border threats to health⁸, the Commission will adopt the Union prevention, preparedness and response plan to include provisions on joint arrangements for multi-sectoral collaboration for zoonotic, food and waterborne diseases and relevant other diseases and related special health issues.

Some Member States use available HPAI animal vaccines in poultry and/or captive birds in line with specific EU legislation⁹, depending on the national sectors and epidemiological situation. In 2024 the Commission coordinated the joint procurement of 665,000 doses of the zoonotic influenza vaccine for human use Seqirus, securing an additional 40 million for the 15 participating countries¹⁰. If a pandemic is declared Member States have access to two joint procurement framework contracts¹¹ to reserve more than 110 million doses of pandemic influenza vaccines.

¹ https://food.ec.europa.eu/document/download/c33ee1c7-df3e-44fe-8c5c-f0c88d9540e4_en?filename=ad_cm_hpai_paff_preparedness.pdf.

² European Food Safety Authority, European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, and EU Reference Laboratory for Avian Influenza.

³ <https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/topics/topic/avian-influenza#published-on-this-topic>;
<https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/avian-influenza>.

⁴ Standing Committee on Plants, Animals, Food and Feed: https://food.ec.europa.eu/horizontal-topics/committees/paff-committees_en.

⁵ Health Security Committee: https://health.ec.europa.eu/health-security-and-infectious-diseases/crisis-management_en#health-security-committee and Chief Veterinary Officers.

⁶ Global Framework for the Progressive Control of Transboundary Animal Diseases GF-TADs, as joint Food and Agricultural Organization/World Organisation for Animal Health initiative.

⁷ <https://www.woah.org/app/uploads/2025/02/web-gf-tads-hpai-strategy-woah.pdf>.

⁸ Regulation (EU) 2022/2371 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 November 2022 on serious cross-border threats to health and repealing Decision No 1082/2013/EU.

⁹ <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2016/429/oj>; http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg_del/2023/361/oj;
<http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2019/6/oj>.

¹⁰ https://health.ec.europa.eu/latest-updates/commission-secures-access-665000-doses-zoonotic-influenza-vaccines-2024-06-11_en.

¹¹ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_25_1096.