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Brussels, 19 August 2020

Dear [REDACTED],

Thank you for the letter of 10 July 2020 which was signed by six livestock organisations expressing their concerns about the date of application of Regulation (EU) 2016/429 on transmissible animal diseases ('Animal Health Law') and its complementary legislation.

In this letter the co-signatories expressed doubts about the preparedness of Member States to implement the new animal health legal framework, pointing to the delays in the Commission's development of certain delegated and implementing acts and the aggravating Covid-19 situation. The six organisations representing the livestock sector in the European Union also asked the Commission to take the initiative and propose a postponement of the date of application of the above legislation.

The Animal Health Law was adopted as early as 2016 and the majority of delegated acts have been published in the Official Journal. It is true that this happened for some of them with a delay, however, the texts of the delegated acts were extensively discussed with the Member States experts, and were available to them for many months. The last expert group meetings in this regard took place in the first half of 2019. Throughout the process the Commission was continuously inviting and encouraging Member States to start with the adjustments of their national systems to the new legislation, which is in fact not very different from the existing rules, and therefore should not trigger too many changes. Moreover, all these acts are Regulations and are, as such, directly applicable in Member States.

Many Member States have advanced well with the process of adapting their national legal system to the new legislation. We welcome their progressive attitude and my services are supporting them along all steps. In addition, the Commission is organising an extensive 'Better Training for Safer Food' (BTSF) for the officials at the latest in early 2021.

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Finally, I would also like to draw your attention to the much shorter interval between the date of adoption and the date of application of Regulation (EU) 2017/625 on official controls and its complementing legislation, to which national legal systems in Member States have been adapted successfully.

Considering the above, the Commission does not intend at this stage to propose the postponement of the date of application of the Animal Health Law and its corresponding legislation. Such postponement would delay a number of long awaited measures for the European stakeholders and it would trigger delays in the application of certain other measures linked to the date of application of the Animal Health Law.

I would appreciate it, if you could share my reply with the co-signatories representing Animal Health Europe, AVEC, Copa-Cogeca, EFFAB and UECBV.

Yours sincerely,

