

TETRA

NEWSLETTER

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Photo: Ildikó Búza

THE GIST OF MY PROFESSIONAL CAREER IS LINKED TO VALUES LEARNED IN BÁBOLNA

AN INTERVIEW WITH KÁROLY CZINDER, THE SALES MANAGER AND TECHNICAL ADVISOR OF BÁBOLNA TETRA LTD.

Károly Czinder, the Sales Manager and Technical Advisor of Bábolna TETRA Ltd., turned 65 this year and decided to retire but continue working part-time. His first experience with animal husbandry was with his father's rabbit in the backyard at home during his childhood. Later, after graduating from the Agricultural College of Kaposvár, Hungary, he worked in poultry breeding for eleven years and in the waterfowl sector for twenty-six years. He truly believes that the very essence of his professional career is based on the Agricultural Combine of Bábolna (the former legal entity to many Bábolna companies) directed by dr Róbert Burgert.

■ *Are you ready to retire this year?*

– That's the plan, but it doesn't mean I quit working. If my employers still count on me and we can agree, I would like to work part-time to represent the company's interest. There are good examples before me as the company owners and my friends are still active at work above 70. I can't imagine my life without daily tasks, continuous activity, and busy hours. I want to stay in the professional mainstream as long as I can physically handle it.

■ *You graduated from the Agricultural College of Kaposvár, Hungary, in 1979 and, straight after that, began working at the leading and most prestigious company in Hungary, the Agricultural Combine of Bábolna. The prevailing view of those times was that Bábolna only hired people with great degrees who were ambitious enough and highly devoted to agriculture.*

– I received a student grant from Bábolna in 1977 and spent the summer internships at the company. After my college graduation, I began my work in a familiar environment, which greatly assisted my integration. During the summer months of the internships, the students mentored by Béla Kállay gained comprehensive knowledge about broiler and layer poultry breeding. Namely, the most essential data for a poultry breeder are grams, millilitres, millimetres and minutes. I will never forget these and try to pass them on to young professionals.

Those who want to obtain good results must calculate everything precisely. That is the basis of good farming practices.

■ *Was it on purpose that you began your career in production, or you had other alternatives in mind?*

– It was my deliberate intention to work in production. I am from Komárom County, where Bábolna is located, so finding work in the region was an obvious choice. I was always fond of small animals; it was my daily routine to help my father with the rabbits in the backyard as a child. I was also interested in poultry. I attended a secondary grammar school specialising in Biology and Chemistry, which also determined my choice to study at the college in Kaposvár. I was very proud to hold my college degree in my hand. It was an honour to every student offered to contract with Bábolna. In agricultural 'circles', we had a rhyme that said: "Those who join the Bábolna team, their career turns like a dream." Bábolna was the flagship of agriculture during that time.

■ *In which area of agriculture did you start your work after college?*

– I began working as an intern hatching consultant. It took me three months to learn about the entire poultry breeding. Then I became a broiler-hatching programmer. In the latter position, I worked with broilers for eleven years

until Hungary's 'change of regime' (around 1990). Those years were part of the so-called 'Burgert-era' (dr Burgert used to be the director of Agricultural Combine of Bábolna) and a pivotal period in my career. Besides, that was the time I met my current bosses, György Búza and Zoltán Budai, who had been working in Bábolna since 1979. I must admit that to this day, those years represent a solid base for my professional knowledge and that we all adopted a responsible attitude during the 'Burgert era'.

■ *Why did you switch to waterfowl breeding?*

– That's an exciting story full of unusual, accidental moments. Under a debt settlement agreement, the director of Agricultural Combine of Bábolna bought pedigree geese housed in Rácalmás and Kunszentmiklós farms belonging to the Kecskemét Poultry Processing Plant. There were five or six different geese breeds of various ages. The management was looking for a goose expert within the company. I was not a very qualified expert at that time. All the knowledge I had about geese was what I learnt eagerly from my teacher Attila Ballay at college. So, in 1991, they appointed me as the manager or the senior engineer of the waterfowl division – I do not remember what the position was called then.

Before purchasing the Kecskemét Poultry Processing Plant, Bábolna founded an undertaking for geese production to supply meat for the slaughterhouse during the bankruptcy and liquidation proceedings of the Plant. Our division delivered day-old goslings to production farms. Later, Bábolna became the trustee of the Békéscsaba Poultry Production Plant as well, where Bábolna carried out professional work. Besides Rácalmás and Kunszentmiklós, the number of our pedigree geese farms was slowly growing. And I continued working at the waterfowl division for 26 years until 2016. In 2005, when the Agricultural Combine of Bábolna was privatized, I founded Bábolna-Víziszárnyastenyésztő Kft. (Bábolna Waterfowl Breeding Ltd.). From this position, I became the contracted breeding manager of the goose division of Bács-Tak Kft. and an employee of our subsidiary Füzes-Kacska Kft.

Unfortunately, the repeatedly appearing avian influenza caused severe damage to the goose flocks. The number of Bábolna Emden White Breeds, of which I am the registered breeding director, is so low that I decided to close my business. If Bács-Tak requires, I am willing to do administrative and other work amicably to keep the venture going.

■ *Many believe that the future of goose production is highly uncertain, and there is no real prospect for this industry. Do you agree with this notion?*

– Yes, I do. It is the mere truth. It would be a shame to deny it. I was offered to buy either a pedigree geese stock or a complete farm in 2005. Still, it was apparent in those days that becoming a pedigree geese producer in an extensive goose integration meant I would be a drop in the bucket. Plus, if I looked back at the past decades, I could not see a period when production had been successful for four consecutive years. Unfortunately, we had to face the fact: if we had three prosperous years, the fourth took away all our previous profits. And there were times when the company reached 'break-even' for two years and, then, avian influenza hit the industry, plus there was a boycott against goose liver production by animal rights activists.



KÁROLY CZINDER

On the other hand, it is easier to produce duck liver and meat. The final duck product is ready within a shorter period, and we could not participate in this intense competition. Modern duck hybrids will soon produce larger livers with less work and cost than geese. Goose strongly carries its ancient instinct and is the least domesticated poultry species. However, we have parent stock and commercial meat ducks with good results.

■ *Avian influenza makes production more and more unpredictable. What is your view regarding vaccination against this virus?*

– It is no use denying the constant presence and appearance of the virus. The only way to counteract its devastating effects is vaccination. From a breeder's point of view, I see no reason why decision-makers and officials fear authorizing vaccination. As far as I know, poultry is vaccinated in France. I am confident this will be the only solution in Hungary. We also need permanent knowledge transfer, education, and compliance with epidemic prevention regulations. At the same time, the above measures are still insufficient if we know the virus can stick to even a speck of dust. Therefore, none of the farms is protected despite keeping all the safety regulations in fully closed houses. I forecast a bright future for broilers, layers and meat ducks as they all produce food for mass consumption. However, I am less optimistic about geese kept for fattening and meat.

■ *Let's talk about your current workplace and position. You detoured before returning to Bábolna in the autumn of 2016.*

– I live in Bábolna. Therefore, I was in close contact with my former colleagues and friends, namely György Búza and Zoltán Budai. They kept asking me to work for their

company again, but I was loyal to Bács-Tak Ltd., and I did not want to let the owner, Mr István Kiss and his team down. Then, due to various reorganisations at Fűzes-Kacsa Ltd., I decided to return to Bábolna in 2016. Since then, I have worked for Bábolna TETRA Ltd. as a domestic sales manager and technical advisor for day-old chicks, 17-week-old pullets and table eggs. I am also responsible for pullet selling and growing at Bábolna's and contracted farms. Our partners raise the majority of layers. In the past six-seven years, I could build an effective partnership with contracted farmers who are competent professionals. It means that we have point-of-lay pullets available every month sold to both domestic and international clients.

■ *You highlighted how important your early years spent in Bábolna were. They made an unforgettable impression on your work habits and determined your career path. Do you think young agriculture engineers have similar virtues?*

– I would not judge the younger generation according to such merits or compare them with us. I prefer talking about when I began working for TETRA, contacted our partners, or took on new ones regarding day-old growing. Then I met several young professionals whose fathers or relatives used to be my client. It assisted me in switching from waterfowl to layer hybrids quickly and without any trouble.

■ *I feel your answer was quite elusive, so I'm asking you again if you think there is any difference between the new agricultural generation and 'the old-timer' one.*

– There are some differences: the things we learnt and how we obeyed during the 'Burgert-era'. It is a fact that we are more enthusiastic about working than the current generation. However, there are some exceptions, of course. To make a long story short: the attitude has altered. When we house day-olds, I am still on the spot, doing physical tasks, carrying boxes, helping the farm workers, and explaining them the most important things to do. Let's consider that my only chance to see a day-old flock is when we deliver them to our clients. At the same time, it is an outstanding opportunity to control day-old chick quality and see the environment where they are housed. Plus, if you are present at the final destination, you can avoid false customer complaints.

I also monitor pullet development; therefore, I record representative data every week for our partners. I always check the parameters I get from the farms. If we see something extraordinary, we work together to find the reason behind the facts. I am present at the pullet deliveries as well. I often help unload them, even in winter. It warms me up, I would be cold if I just stood there. While I carry the pullets, I can check how well they are developed. I feel their weight. They say work 'ennobles'. Though I will never become a nobleman, the truth is, I love to do it, and it is part of my job.

■ *There is no significant difference between the quality features of leading layer hybrids. One breed has a slightly lower feed intake, the other lays more and larger eggs, and the ones are more disease resistant. So, what is the secret of a good selling technique in such a competitive environment?*

– I believe that today, considering genetic and selection work development for leading varieties, we see breeds with similar parameters. They do not differ much from one another.

I think the success of selling depends on personal relationships. It is a matter of trust with your current and future clients.

■ *You mentioned that point-of-lay pullets are sold at 17 weeks these days. It is different from when they were rehoused at 18 weeks of age.*

– Yes, they were sold at week 18 for a long time. Still, thanks to targeted breeding and selection, the maturity of pullets is getting earlier. It is week 19-20. From a technical point of view, it is best to house pullets three weeks before egg production to get the birds used to their new environment. Plus, egg production is stressful for the layers, so we do not want to cause double stress by housing them close to laying time. Earlier, these hybrids began production at week 21, so delivering them to layer farms at week 18 was perfect. Our current hybrid TETRA SL LL starts laying a few eggs at week 19, so we ship them at week 16 to the layer farms.

■ *You work at a company with significant domestic and international clientele and many contacts. How challenging is it to tackle everyday tasks?*

– Once you love what you do, work is not a burden. It does not matter whether you hold a particular title or position. In the past, the company had a rigid system and strict organisational order. At TETRA, it is the contrary. We have an excellent team and friendly relationship with the management and the owners. We act like a good family. I longed to return to this pleasant company atmosphere, where team spirit is the priority. Everyone believes we are sitting in the same boat and paddling in the same direction. If someone makes a mistake, we unite and seek a solution. We all know that we can count on each other anytime. Not to mention that we do not have set working hours but tasks to accomplish. There is no limit. It was also dr Burgert's motto: 'An agriculture engineer has to be on duty 24 hours per day at his company.' Working in Bábolna is a full-time job. It is partly the reason for Bábolna TETRA Ltd.'s remarkable success.

It was essential to my career as a hatchery program manager in the 80s. TETRA had many 18-week-old pullet and day-old chick shipments to various countries worldwide. I remember mainly flying to North African and Middle East countries and the Soviet Union for long hours on the famous IL18 aeroplane with the birds to supervise loading and unloading. In those days, we hatched 100 million broiler chicks, of which we exported 40 million. The hatchery program was not computerised then, and we had no mobile phones etc. I had a checkered paper notebook, a pencil, an eraser, and a telephone with a crank handle. Still, we solved everything on time.

■ *Have you got enough time for your family?*

– Family was always of utmost importance in my life. My wife and I have been happily married for 39 years. She came from a family where people were teachers for generations. She works as a teacher too and has similar values to mine. We have a daughter who graduated from Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary, of the Faculty of Germanic Studies. She is also a teacher. And she gave birth to our first grandchild in January, which makes our life even more beautiful! ■

SUPER LAYERS ON THE HORIZON? THE INNOVATOR INTRODUCED NEW LAYER HYBRIDS

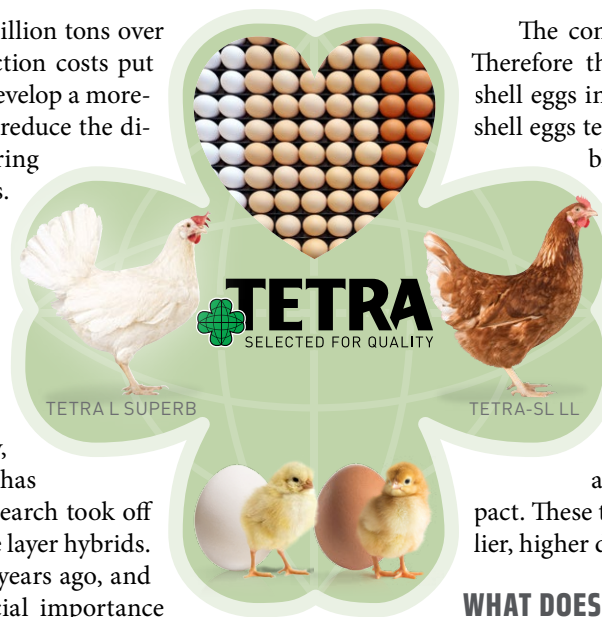
Bábolna TETRA Ltd. received a special recognition titled **'IN THE GLOBAL FOREFRONT WITH LAYER BREEDING'** from the jury of the **31ST HUNGARIAN INNOVATION GRAND PRIX** for its innovation performance.

Egg production exceeded 86 million tons over the world in 2021. Growing production costs put pressure on table egg producers to develop a more-efficient hybrid. The aim is to reduce the direct costs of egg production by lowering the ratio of layer-growing charges. There are two solutions for this: either the bird's point of lay should be earlier, which means a shorter growing period, or raise the number of eggs produced per bird considerably. As for the former, poultry breeding has reached the bird's biological limits. Therefore, persistency, i.e., lengthening the laying period, has become the top priority. Intense research took off at Bábolna TETRA to breed long-life layer hybrids. Genetic work began more than ten years ago, and little did the company see its crucial importance then. Today, when the world faces an energy crisis, increasing costs and the ever-pressing issue of environmental awareness trends, Bábolna TETRA is pleased to introduce modern hybrids meeting these demands.

The newly-bred TETRA L SUPERB (white) and TETRA-SL LL (brown) layer hybrids can produce eggs in large quantities for a more extended period and more economically.

WHICH EGG IS MORE POPULAR AND BETTER? THE BROWN OR THE WHITE-SHELLED ONE?

I addressed the above question to Attila Orbán, the Breeding Director of Bábolna TETRA, after the Hungarian Innovation Grand Prix award ceremony. The answer, however, is not simple. The ratio of eggshell preference is 50-50% globally, but Hungarians favour brown-shell eggs. In the meantime, white-shell eggs are desired in North and Central America and Saudi Arabia.



The consumer is a creature of habits. Therefore there is no demand for white-shell eggs in Hungary, even though white-shell eggs tend to have a lower incidence of blood and meat spots and their dry matter content is higher, and one can make a better sunny-side-up egg or sponge cake from them.

The reasons why food processing plants like white-shell eggs are that layers have a lower feed intake, so egg production costs are less, and so is the environmental impact. These traits lead to, as mentioned earlier, higher dry matter content.

WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD?

The breeding director listed the following features of the TETRA L SUPERB white egg layer:

- it lays approximately 490 eggs throughout its life cycle,
- it accounts for 31 kg of eggs per bird,
- maturity (i.e. 50% production) is around 140-150 days.

Thanks to this new breed, there is an extended laying period, more eggs and fewer small ones are produced, and the ratio of the growing-laying period is lower, so there is less unproductivity. Breeding has continued as customers expect these birds to produce better and better year after year. Therefore, our geneticists should go on with their selection project. The cost of this work amounts to 1.5 billion HUF (approx. 4 million EUR) per year. Poultry producers expectantly wait to apply for funds to finance this high-quality genetic work. ■

ILDIKÓ SÁNDOR | AGRÁRÁGAZAT MAGAZINE
May, 2023.

Bábolna TETRA is a crucial player in the global poultry breeding market. The company used to be part of the famous Agricultural Combine of Bábolna boasting 230 years of breeding tradition. The intense poultry genetic work at TETRA began in 1960. Their hybrids are well-performing layers on both domestic and international markets. Since 2004 the new management has set up a new logistical and breeding centre, and they have defined a new breeding concept assisting their poultry trade activity in around 60 countries on four continents. Breeding and selection are carried out in Uraiújfalu and its area (Western Hungary) on 16 farms with 220 employees.

AVIAN INFLUENZA (AI)

TIME AND AGAIN

In Europe, **THE NUMBER OF POULTRY AND WILD WATER BIRDS INFECTED WITH HIGHLY PATHOGENIC AVIAN INFLUENZA (HPAI) HAS INCREASED SINCE THE SUMMER OF 2022** according to the European Food Safety Agency (EFSA), the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) and the European Union Reference Laboratories (EURL). The reports confirm that the birds infected with HPAI were primarily wild water birds and poultry. The growing number of avian influenza (AI) cases officially registered among poultry since the summer of 2022 is related to wild water birds.



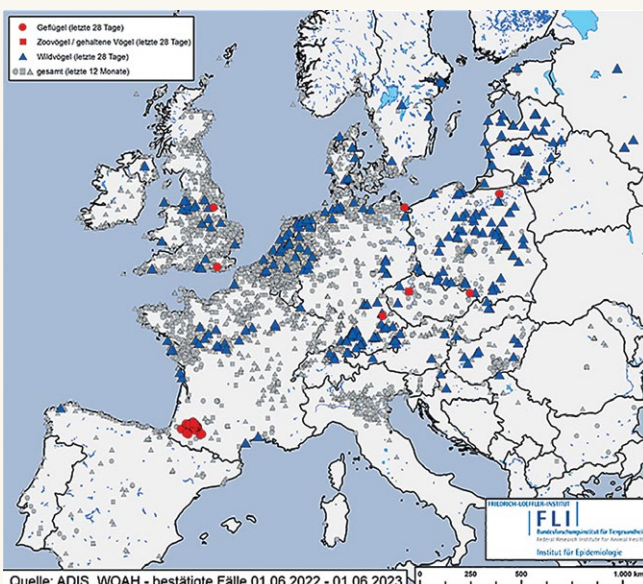
The current outbreak is an unprecedented pandemic in Europe. Between October 2021 and 2022, 2,520 poultry, 227 captive birds and 3,867 wild bird AI outbreaks were reported across 37 European countries in the first year of the pandemic. Approximately 50 million birds were culled in the affected establishments.

The extraordinary high number of HPAI cases in wild birds and poultry during the summer of 2022 meant that for the first time in history, there was no clear distinction between the end of the first outbreak and the start of the HPAI pandemic beginning in October 2022. At the request of the European Commission, EFSA currently examines the availability of poultry vaccines against HPAI and investigates possible vaccination strategies. Results will be revealed in the second half of 2023 (EFSA, ECDC, EURL, 2023).

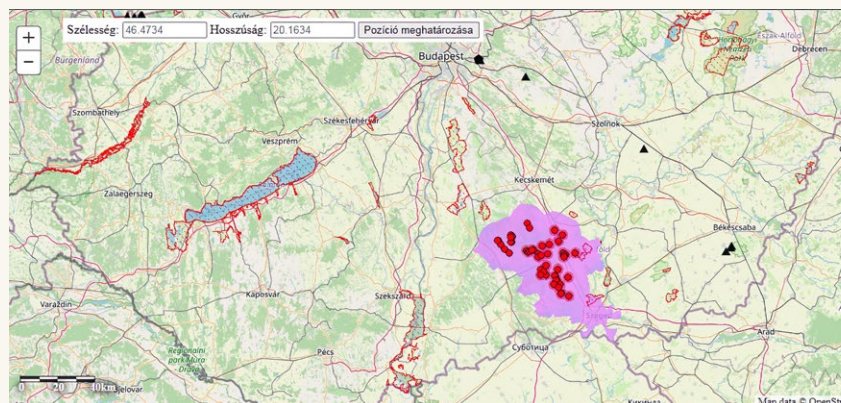
Since 1 September 2022, the HPAI virus has been detected in 887 poultry farms, 295 captive bird establishments and 7,088 wild birds.

The outbreaks were confirmed in the following countries: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, The Czech Republic, Denmark, Republic of North Macedonia, Finland, France, The Netherlands, Croatia, Island, Ireland, Poland, Luxemburg, Hungary, Moldova, United Kingdom, Germany, Norway, Italy, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Switzerland, Sweden, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Turkey (National Food Chain Safety Office -NFCO, 2023).

Places of outbreaks in Hungary during the spring of 2023 are marked with red circles. Protection and surveillance zones are marked pink.



(LFI, 2023)



Due to the presence of HPAI, the Chief Veterinary Officer of Hungary imposed modifications to former disease control measures that came into force on 23 May 2023 until their withdrawal. Measures applied to poultry replacement and transportation.

In the non-restricted areas of Bács-Kiskun, Csongrád-Csanád and Békés County, replacement is permitted. It means that a new flock can be housed instead of the previously culled Avian Influenza-infected poultry without special restrictions after an on-site veterinary inspection ending with favourable results.

In all cases, the official veterinary inspection must cover the checking of instructions on litter, liquid manure, waiting times, delivery bans and other legal restrictions. The consent of the Hungarian Poultry Products Council is optional for replacement.

After replacement, the flock must be under surveillance for 21 days, including an official veterinary on-site inspection and a laboratory test before the surveillance is lifted.

Conditions applying to poultry transportation:

- In areas of Bács-Kiskun, Csongrád-Csanád and Békés Counties in Hungary, not restricted by avian influenza (AI) infection, laboratory testing of waterfowls is compulsory 72 hours prior to delivery to the slaughterhouse.
- In the whole territory of Hungary, where AI restrictions are not applied, laboratory testing is compulsory 72 hours prior to delivery for waterfowls (except day-olds) transported for further growing as per the production guide or for the birds taken to a new farm (for growing, force-feeding, fattening, breeding etc.)
- In all cases, 20 tracheal and 20 cloacal swabs are mandatory, i. e. 40 birds must be tested.
- The favourable results of the tests mentioned above are the prerequisites of deliveries (NFCSO, 2023).

The possibility of human infection with avian influenza was discussed during the 2020-2021 pandemic. Russian authorities notified detection of avian influenza A virus in human clinical specimens on 18 February 2021. Seven positive avian influenza A (H5N8) cases were confirmed. They were all poultry farmworkers who participated in a response operation to contain an avian influenza A (H5N8) outbreak detected in a poultry farm in Astrakhan Oblast in the Russian Federation. Two men and five women were infected. Their age ranged between 29 to 60 years. They remained asymptomatic for the whole follow-up duration, lasting for weeks (TASS, 2021).

WHO closely monitors the spread of avian influenza, as the large-scale presence of AI viruses entails the risk of infecting humans and may produce such virus mutation that can cause human-to-human transmission. In recent years, there have been only sporadic H5N1 human infections. Since 2020, seven cases have been confirmed in Laos, India, Great Britain, China, the USA and two in Spain, and two people have died of the disease in India and China (WHO, 2023).

The first person who died in AI (H3N8) was detected in China.

The most frequent serotype (H3N8) of avian influenza viruses, less dangerous for livestock, were not isolated in humans until last spring. H3N8 infected two people in China in April and May of 2022. The first death caused by the virus was registered a year later, during the spring of 2023.

A woman living in China who, among others, was suffering from various cancers was infected by severe pneumonia in February, was hospitalised and later died from secondary infections. The Chinese victims were infected at a market selling live poultry. WHO claims there is no need for a pandemic alert as H3N8 cases have nothing to do with the world pandemic among birds caused by H5N1 (HVG, 2023).

France, currently having the highest number of outbreaks in Europe, pushes EU states to approve avian flu vaccine for poultry. French Agriculture Minister Julien Denormandie announced that two vaccines would soon be tested. They aim to be approved for all 27 EU member states (EURACTIV France, 2023).

The US government is considering the authorisation of possible vaccination against HPAI. The prevailing view of international trade is that if a country vaccinates, it must mean HPAI is out of control in the area, and the products are unsafe. The virus is almost everywhere and is a real danger now, thanks to migratory birds. HPAI is not going away with vaccination. Therefore, the vaccination concept would be focused on differentiating infected from vaccinated animals (DIVA) surveillance strategy. (WATT Poultry, 2023).

In several parts of the world, it is authorised to vaccinate poultry routinely against lowly (H9) and highly (H5, H7) pathogenic avian influenza.

Commission Regulation (EU) No.2023/361 specifies issues related to vaccination against avian influenza. According to this, inactivated vaccines could be used (vaccines containing live avian influenza virus, regardless of whether they are attenuated or not, cannot be applied). Poultry and captive birds can be vaccinated. Member States decide on vaccine application. Vaccination authorisation plus vaccinated flock and their products monitoring fall within the scope of authorities.

The European Commission has recently harmonised poultry avian influenza vaccination rules according to which vaccination against HPAI is permitted. Rules concerning the virus include exemptions that make delivering poultry and poultry products from vaccinated areas easier without increasing the risk of a virus spread. The legal modification was necessary due to the outbreak of the recent and most devastating avian influenza pandemic across the EU, causing enormous damage to this agriculture sector and it hampers trade. (European Commissioner for Health and Food Safety Stella Kyriakides 2023).

Currently, no avian flu vaccination is permitted in the EU. However, the new rules allow for harmonising the use of vaccination to prevent or control the spread of the disease. Furthermore, they set out the conditions to allow the delivery of vaccinated animals and their products. The new rules are scheduled to come into effect on 12 March 2023 and are in line with international standards developed by the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH; formerly OIE). (EURACTIV, 2023) ■

DR ELŐD BAJCSY | Veterinary Expert
on Poultry Medicine

OUR ONE-MINUTE NEWS

FROM THE LAST SIX MONTHS

28 MARCH 2023



TETRA day-old chicken shipment to Algeria ■

14 MARCH 2023



Many thanks to all of you who visited our booth at VIV Asia 2023. ■

24 MARCH 2023



Bábolna TETRA Kft. received special recognition within the framework of the Hungarian Innovation Grand Prize application for its „Laying hybrid breeding at the forefront of the world” application. ■



LET'S GET TOGETHER



7-9 JUNE 2023
ILDEX PHILIPPINES
 MANILA,
 THE PHILIPPINES
 Smx Convention
 Center Manila



6-8 JULY 2023
VIV TURKEY
 ISZTAMBUL,
 TURKEY
 Istanbul Expo Center



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