WRITTEN QUESTION E-2421/99
by Sebastiano Musumeci (UEN) to the Commission
(16 December 1999)

Subject: New directive on honey that penalises beekeepers

The Commission is preparing to adopt a new directive on honey to replace Regulation No 74/409 (1). As drafted, this directive would seriously penalise those working in the sector.

Does the Commission not consider it should postpone adoption of the provision so that it can examine more thoroughly the justifiable demands made by Italian and European beekeepers, which focus in particular on:

1. reconsidering the production of honey as an agricultural activity and not yielding to the lobbying of the preserved food industry, which as always is concerned with reducing the product’s quality specifications and making the compulsory wording on the label obscure;

2. recognising individual countries’ rights to safeguard the definition of honey as a product obtained exclusively from flower nectar and to prevent honey and mixtures from outside the Community coming onto the European market, as often happens with the complicity of Member States?


Answer given by Mr Liikanen on behalf of the Commission
(25 January 2000)

In 1996 the Commission presented a proposal for a Directive (1) designed to simplify and replace Council Directive 74/409/EEC of 22 July 1974 on honey (2). When drafting the proposal and in the discussions that followed, the Commission took account — in accordance with the conclusions of the Edinburgh European Council — of the Community interests of all parties concerned.

1. The proposal for a Directive on honey defines honey and lays down certain compositional criteria which all Community and non-Community honey must meet in order to be marketed under the name of honey.

2. It would therefore be against the rules governing Community and international trade to oppose the import of honey from outside the Community when the product complies with the rules laid down in the Directive on honey. However, after Parliament delivered its opinion in May 1999, the Commission decided to amend its proposal to make it compulsory to indicate the country of origin of non-Community honey on the label. At the Council meetings, some Member States raised the question of the labelling of mixtures of Community and non-Community honey. However, this question has not yet been resolved.


WRITTEN QUESTION E-2428/99
by Piia-Noora Kauppi (PPE-DE) to the Commission
(16 December 1999)

Subject: Exemption of horses used in competitions and sport from rules on veterinary medicine

Horses are classified in the European Union as meat production animals which are not permitted to be dosed with certain medicines in the interest of meat quality. The recent food scandals have put the authorities on their guard, and the regulations on medication have to be complied with even if the animal’s meat is not in practice intended for human consumption.
In Finland, horses are primarily competition and sports animals. Less than half of all horses are slaughtered and, of those, only a fraction are used in the foodstuffs industry. That is why it is really important for competition and sports horses to be excluded from the rules on veterinary medicine.

The Commission clearly agrees with me and has made a proposal to that effect to the Council. Nevertheless, there seem to be delays in dealing with it.

1. What is the Commission’s proposed timetable for placing competition and sports horses in a different category from those horses classified as production animals?

2. If there should be further delays in dealing with the Commission’s proposals, what action can be taken now to ensure that competition and sports horses can be treated, given that no maximum residue limit (MRL) values have yet been set for the medicine required?

**Answer given by Mr Liikanen on behalf of the Commission**

(28 January 2000)

Following a favourable opinion by qualified majority at the meeting of a joint zootechnical and veterinary standing committee on 8 December 1999 the Commission adopted a Decision establishing the identification document (passport) accompanying registered equidae for breeding and production (¹) based on Council Directive 90/426/EEC of 26 June 1990 on animal health conditions governing the movement and import from third countries of equidae (²) and Council Directive 90/427/EEC of 26 June 1990 on the zootechnical and genealogical conditions governing intra-Community trade in equidae (³).

The identification document foreseen for equidae for breeding and production uses part of the information provided in the internationally recognized passport for registered equidae, established by Decision 93/623/EEC (³). A special section to be added to the identification document accompanying registered equidae and equidae for breeding and production provides for marking of equidae which are not intended for slaughter for human consumption and of those which are intended for slaughter under the condition that treatment with medicines containing substances not included in Annex I, II or III of Council Regulation (EEC) No 2377/90 of 26 June 1990 laying down a Community procedure for the establishment of maximum residue limits of veterinary medicinal products in foodstuffs of animal origin (⁴), is recorded and a general withdrawal period of six months is observed.

With effect from 1 January 2000 the administration to food-producing animals of medicinal products containing pharmacologically active substances which are not included in Annex I, II and III of Regulation (EEC) No 2377/90 is prohibited within the Community. Therefore, treatment of an equine animal with substances not included in these annexes can only be applied or prescribed after the vet has satisfied himself that the equine animal is properly marked in the new section of the identification document either as not intended for slaughter or as intended for slaughter under the above conditions.

When equidae are transported to the slaughterhouse, the identification document must be checked by the official vet at the slaughterhouse during ante-mortem inspection to verify the identity and to check the medication record in order to ascertain the completion of the required withdrawal period.

(¹) (not yet published).

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(2000/C 225 E/143)  
**WRITTEN QUESTION E-2431/99**  
by Roberta Angelilli (NI) to the Commission  
(16 December 1999)

Subject: Objective 2 in Lazio

The recent redesignation of areas eligible for Objective status and hence of the targets for European Union structural funding has triggered controversy in the region of Lazio, focused on the new award of such