

Done at Brussels, 20 December 1989.

*The Chairman
of the Economic and Social Committee*

Alberto MASPRONE

Opinion on the proposal for a Council Decision introducing a Community financial measure for the eradication of brucellosis in sheep and goats ⁽¹⁾

(90/C 62/20)

On 14 November 1989, the Council decided to consult the Economic and Social Committee, under Article 198 of the Treaty establishing the European Economic Community, on the abovementioned proposal.

The Economic and Social Committee decided to appoint Mr Hancock as Rapporteur-General with the task of preparing its work on the subject.

At its 272nd Plenary Session (meeting of 20 December 1989) the Economic and Social Committee adopted the following Opinion unanimously:

1. Introductory remarks

1.1. Brucellosis melitensis infection is a serious disease causing severe financial losses to farmers and flock owners and can infect humans, sometimes with fatal results.

1.2. The disease has been eliminated in seven Member States and now only exists in France, Greece, Italy, Spain and Portugal.

1.3. Whilst animals can be vaccinated this does not totally prevent abortion nor the spread of the disease. Thus slaughter is the only policy that can provide a lasting solution.

1.4. In that farmers are being forced to diversify their activities and the best long wool breeds and heavy milkers originate in the areas now subject to brucellosis, failure to eradicate would cause both economic disadvantage and a barrier to free movement within the Community.

2. General remarks

The general objectives of this proposed Regulation are consequently approved.

3. Specific remarks

3.1. Article 2

As the official brucellosis test, whilst the best presently available, is not as sensitive as might be desirable, the apparent intention of the Commission to have more research carried out into how this might be improved is to be welcomed.

3.2. Article 3

3(2) should specify that holders, testing laboratories, veterinary surgeons or other competent persons making a diagnosis should be jointly and severally responsible for making a compulsory notification; Member States should be urged to ensure that penalties for non-compliance are appropriate.

3.2.1. 3(5). There must be concern as to how the ban on the therapeutic treatment of a flock, i.e. with anti-biotics, can be properly monitored. It is hoped that there will be adequate national penalties for knowingly prescribing or using such medicaments in this context.

3.2.2. 3(9). Permanent marking of flocks (the post-Chernobyl marking of affected animals in the United

⁽¹⁾ OJ No C 327, 30. 12. 1989, p. 51.

Kingdom provides a precedent) is essential. Proper movement records must be kept and regularly monitored by the competent authority.

3.2.3. 3(10). Whilst it is agreed that where say 60 % of a flock is infected it is better to slaughter all the animals and start afresh, there is a problem in that, on occasion owners might find it financially advantageous to have other animals slaughtered so placing an unnecessary burden on Community funds. The avoidance of this will require that the technical details of the procedures to be carried out are precisely defined.

3.2.4. 3(13). Reference is made in indents 5, 6 and 7 to suitable heat treatment. The use of the term 'pasteurisation' would be preferable, whilst still leaving the decision

as to the appropriate method to be used to the national authorities.

Indent 8 states that parts of infected animals used as animal feed should be treated in such a manner as to 'avoid contamination'. The indent would be clearer if this were augmented by 'and render it brucella free'.

3.3. *Article 5*

5(5) is somewhat imprecise in that the number of clear tests required is not stated. It is suggested that the text should be amended to read:

'official brucellosis tests are carried out on the infected holding concerned to the extent necessary to confirm that the disease has been eliminated'.

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