

**Opinion on:**

- the proposal for a Council Directive amending Directive 90/539/EEC on animal health conditions governing intra-Community trade in and imports from third countries of poultry and hatching eggs, and
- the proposal for a Council Directive amending Directive 91/494/EEC on animal health conditions governing intra-Community trade in and imports from third countries of fresh poultrymeat<sup>(1)</sup>

(93/C 201/17)

On 31 March 1993, 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 appointed Mr Proumens as Rapporteur-General for its Opinion.

At its 306th Plenary Session (meeting of 27 May 1993) the Economic and Social Committee adopted the following Opinion unanimously.

**Summary of the Opinion**

The Committee approves the two proposals amending Directives 90/539/EEC and 91/494/EEC respectively, but has a few reservations as well as a number of suggestions to make.

**1. General comments**

1.1. The Committee considers that the report from the Commission to the Council on Newcastle disease is an important part of the procedure for assessing all the types of risks associated with this disease, particularly in intra-Community trade in, and imports of, poultry and hatching eggs.

1.2. The economic consequences of the disease for poultry farmers are now a well-established fact.

1.3. By presenting these two amendments the Commission is justifiably seeking as far as possible to standardize the approach adopted when earlier measures were put forward; in doing so it makes use of the experiences gained in the meantime.

1.4. The Commission is also seeking to simplify administrative and other procedures.

1.5. Although the Committee has not been consulted on the Commission report, it hopes that its views will be heard. The ESC considers that some of the points made in this report should be the subject of recommendations or clarifications, primarily for poultry farmers and in particular small-scale poultry farmers, but also with a view to assisting national civil servants, notably in their preventive role.

**2. Comments on the report**

2.1. The competent national authorities should bring the problem to the attention of poultry farmers in areas where migratory birds congregate, and in areas where wild pigeons are particularly numerous.

2.2. An illustrative list of recommended egg fumigation procedures could be established.

2.3. The national authorities should be particularly careful about imports of fresh poultrymeat from countries where Newcastle disease is enzootic.

2.4. Manufacturers of fertilizers incorporating poultry manure must be informed about methods of treatment to preclude contamination, and must apply such methods.

2.5. The national authorities should take all measures to eradicate the disease in wild pigeons, including wild pigeons in towns, but will need to be aware that implementing the solutions is no easy matter.

2.6. Surface water presents high risks of contamination so here too the compendium of treatment methods to be circulated should be as comprehensive as possible.

2.7. Whilst there is no need to review the position of three Member States on vaccination (Ireland, Denmark and Northern Ireland as part of the United Kingdom), the Committee feels that vaccination is the best method of protection against the disease provided it is carried out under appropriate conditions.

2.8. The obligatory vaccination certificate for racing pigeons should be delivered by an official or authorized veterinary officer.

<sup>(1)</sup> OJ No C 89, 31. 3. 1993, p. 8 and 12.

### 3. Amendments to Directive 90/539/EEC

3.1. The aims of the Commission's amendments are:

- to bring order to the different texts;
- to define more clearly conditions for export;
- to draw up an effective but less stringent timetable of inspection.

These objectives are clearly set out and defined in the text of the new Directive.

3.2. The Commission recognizes that vaccination is not practiced in some Member States (Ireland, Northern Ireland as part of the United Kingdom and Denmark). If need be, however, this special non-vaccinating status could be withdrawn.

3.2.1. Subsidiarity continues to play a role but if the disease is in danger of spreading, then action must be taken in conformity with Community rules.

3.3. Experience has shown that monthly veterinary inspections are appropriate and minimize red tape.

3.4. In this connection one Member State, namely Ireland, has expressed concern regarding non-veterinary personnel working under the authority of veterinary inspectors. Ireland is afraid that if the legislation is applied rigorously, the jobs of non-veterinary personnel will disappear; the only solution is to adopt transitional measures that take into account their long experience in the veterinary field.

3.5. Finally, if veterinarians have to notify the appropriate authorities of cases or even suspicion of disease, this does not free poultry farmers themselves from the same responsibility, e.g. where they suspect the presence of disease.

### 4. Amendments to Directive 91/494/EEC

4.1. The vaccination position will in any event have to be reviewed by 1 January 1995 in the light of the reports drawn up by the Standing Veterinary Committee.

4.2. The new provisions of Article 10 (covering health conditions for imported poultrymeat) deserve to be unreservedly approved as they provide Community poultry farmers with guarantees against unfair competition in the event of the rules applied in non-Member States being less tight.

Done at Brussels, 27 May 1993.

*The Chairman  
of the Economic and Social Committee*

Susanne TIEMANN

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