

Thursday 19 June 2008

Imports of poultry carcasses

P6_TA(2008)0307

European Parliament resolution of 19 June 2008 on imports of poultry carcasses

(2009/C 286 E/07)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Regulation (EC) No 853/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 laying down specific hygiene rules for food of animal origin ⁽¹⁾,
 - having regard to Council Regulation (EC) No 1234/2007 of 22 October 2007 establishing a common organisation of agricultural markets and on specific provisions for certain agricultural products (Single CMO Regulation) ⁽²⁾,
 - having regard to Regulation (EC) No 2160/2003 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 November 2003 on the control of salmonella and other specified food-borne zoonotic agents ⁽³⁾,
 - having regard to Regulation (EC) No 882/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 on official controls performed to ensure the verification of compliance with feed and food law, animal health and animal welfare rules ⁽⁴⁾,
 - having regard to Council Directive 91/271/EEC of 21 May 1991 concerning urban waste-water treatment ⁽⁵⁾,
 - having regard to Council Directive 98/24/EC of 7 April 1998 on the protection of the health and safety of workers from the risks related to chemical agents at work ⁽⁶⁾,
 - having regard to the decision of the College of Commissioners of 28 May 2008 approving a draft regulation amending Regulation (EC) No 853/2004, aimed at authorising the use of certain anti-microbial substances to remove surface contamination from poultry carcasses,
 - having regard to the assessment of the possible effect of the four anti-microbial treatment substances on the emergence of anti-microbial resistance, adopted by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) Panel on Biological Hazards (BIOHAZ) on 6 March 2008 at the request of the Commission's Directorate General for Health and Consumers,
 - having regard to the oral question by its Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety to the Commission which was discussed on 28 May 2008,
 - having regard to Rule 103(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the Commission proposal to amend Regulation (EC) No 1234/2007 establishing a common organisation of agricultural markets as regards the rules on the marketing of poultry meat (COM(2008)0336) seeks, by redefining poultry meat, to authorise the marketing of poultry meat that has undergone anti-microbial treatment for the purpose of human consumption,
- B. whereas the above mentioned decision of the College of Commissioners seeks to authorise the use of four anti-microbial substances in the treatment of poultry carcasses for human consumption in the European Union,

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 139 of 30.4.2004, p. 55.

⁽²⁾ OJ L 299 of 16.11.2007, p. 1.

⁽³⁾ OJ L 325 of 12.12.2003, p. 1.

⁽⁴⁾ OJ L 165 of 30.4.2004, p. 1.

⁽⁵⁾ OJ L 135 of 30.5.1991, p. 40.

⁽⁶⁾ OJ L 131 of 5.5.1998, p. 11.

Thursday 19 June 2008

- C. whereas this Commission proposal follows on from the request by the United States for imports into the European Union of US-produced poultry treated with chemicals or anti-microbial substances to be authorised,
- D. whereas the United States may already export poultry meat to the European Union under the current rules, provided that such meat has not undergone anti-microbial treatment,
- E. whereas the precautionary principle was expressly laid down in the Treaty in 1992 and whereas the Court of Justice of the European Communities has, on numerous occasions, clarified the substance and scope of this principle of Community law as one of the foundations of Community protection policy in the environment and health spheres ⁽¹⁾,
- F. whereas the authorisation of anti-microbial treatment, either only for imported products or also within the EU, would in both cases mean double standards, as the European sector has been forced to invest heavily in a whole chain approach, while the US is applying only a cheap 'end of pipe' solution,
- G. whereas the Commission acknowledges the lack of scientific data on the environmental and health impact of using the four anti-microbial substances whose authorisation is now being proposed,
- H. whereas consumers could be misled, as the chlorination procedure might alter the appearance of meat to make it look fresher than it is,
- I. having regard to the long process of adopting and consolidating Community food safety and hygiene rules and standards, which has served to reduce the number of infections caused by various specified food-borne zoonotic agents,
- J. whereas, according to the findings of an assessment conducted by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the use of anti-microbial substances in the United States has not reduced the number of infections caused by listeria, salmonella and other bacteria,
- K. whereas the Agriculture and Fisheries Council has already discussed the topic twice and whereas the general reaction of the Member States to the Commission plans to authorise the anti-microbial treatment of poultry carcasses has been negative,
- L. whereas at its meeting of 2 June 2008 the Standing Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health rejected the above Commission proposal by 316 votes to nil, with 29 abstentions, thus sending out a clear and forceful message prior to the EU-US Summit in Brdo, Slovenia,
- M. whereas the Commission is obliged to forward its proposal to the Council following its rejection by the Standing Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health,
1. Voices its disapproval of the Commission proposal;
 2. Calls on the Council to reject the proposal;
 3. Is strongly of the opinion that this issue should be dealt with by the Agriculture and Fisheries Council and not by other Council configurations;
 4. Requests to be consulted and fully informed by the Commission before any further decisions in preparation for the next Transatlantic Economic Council meeting, which takes place in October 2008;

⁽¹⁾ Judgment of 23 September 2003 in Case C-192/01 *Commission v Denmark* [2003] ECR I-9693; judgment of 7 September 2004 in Case C-127/02 *Landelijke Vereniging tot Behoud van de Waddenzee, Nederlandse Vereniging tot Bescherming van Vogels v Staatssecretaris van Landbouw, Natuurbeheer en Visserij* [2004] ECR I-7405.

Thursday 19 June 2008

5. Stresses that authorisation of the four anti-microbial substances for the treatment of poultry carcasses intended for human consumption would pose a serious threat to Community rules and standards and would constitute a setback for the efforts and adjustments made by poultry professionals with a view to reducing the incidence of bacterial infection in the European Union; points out that it would also represent a serious and extremely damaging reversal of Community policy in this area and a blow to the credibility of Community efforts to promote high food safety and hygiene standards at international level;
6. Draws attention to the considerable investments made in this area by European poultry professionals, in accordance with Community legislation, with a view to reducing pathogen contamination by implementing a total food chain approach;
7. Considers the total food chain approach, as used within the European Union, to be a more sustainable means of reducing pathogen levels in poultry meat than decontamination using anti-microbial substances at the end of the food production process;
8. Voices its concern at the fact that authorisation of imports of such poultry meat could undermine European standards;
9. Stresses that the proposal is out of step with both the European public's food safety and hygiene expectations and the demand for production models — both within and outside Europe — which ensure that high hygiene standards are maintained throughout the production and distribution process; stresses that it would be likely to undermine European consumer confidence in foodstuffs sold within the European Union, which remains fragile following the food safety problems that have arisen within the Union over recent years;
10. Acknowledges the need for suitable scientific advice taking due account of the need for consumer protection and information; considers that the arrangements ultimately adopted, whatever they may be, should not result in any distortion of competition;
11. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and Commission, to the governments and parliaments of the Member States and to the EFSA.

Crisis in the fisheries sector

P6_TA(2008)0308

European Parliament resolution of 19 June 2008 on the crisis in the fisheries sector caused by rising fuel prices

(2009/C 286 E/08)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Council Regulation (EC) No 1198/2006 of 27 July 2006 on the European Fisheries Fund ⁽¹⁾,
- having regard to the Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on improving the economic situation in the fishing industry (COM(2006)0103),
- having regard to the conference organised by the Commission and held in Brussels on 10-11 May 2006 on new technologies in the field of fisheries,

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 223, 15.8.2006, p. 1.