

at EC level, in order to ensure regular information exchange. Existing structures should serve as a basis and flexible administrative procedures followed.

5.14. The Committee feels that the following are suitable for improving the impact and effectiveness of regional policy: cooperation in the regions, improved, clear definition of responsibilities, involvement of all socio-economic groups in cooperation with the authori-

ties and well-organized, continual exchange of experiences at national and EC level.

5.15. The Committee expects the Commission to monitor carefully developments in Central and Eastern European countries and regions and to discuss in depth the impact of this on Community regions in its Fifth Periodic Report on the social and economic situation and development of the regions in the Community.

Done at Brussels, 25 September 1991.

*The Chairman
of the Economic and Social Committee*

François STAEDLIN

Opinion on the proposal for a Council Regulation (EEC) introducing Community measures for the control of certain animal diseases ⁽¹⁾

(91/C 339/06)

On 5 June 1991 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 Section for Agriculture and Fisheries, which was responsible for preparing the Committee's work on the subject, adopted its Opinion on 5 September 1991. The Rapporteur was Mr Scully.

At its 289th plenary session (meeting of 25 September 1991), the Economic and Social Committee adopted the following Opinion unanimously.

1. The Committee welcomes the proposal and approves of the introduction of the stamping out policy, with recourse to vaccination being very restricted.

2. The Committee notes that Annex I refers to nine exotic diseases, and is pleased to see that the list can be extended if the need arises.

2.1. These are highly contagious viral diseases. In certain circumstances, the viruses can infect humans. This is especially true of Rift Valley fever. These diseases could cause economic disaster if they become established in the animal population of the Community.

2.2. In some previous laws [e.g. Regulation (EEC) No 72/62], there is provision of the import of small quantities of food for personal use in the luggage of travellers from third countries. This should be reviewed. The Committee acknowledges the near-impossibility of preventing this absolutely, but suggests that this food should be properly certified.

2.3. Disposal of waste food material from international transport must be rigorously supervised.

3. The proposal to establish a properly trained epidemiological unit in each Member State with the help of

⁽¹⁾ OJ No C 148, 7. 6. 1991, p. 12.

the Commission is welcomed. Also that each Member State must submit a 'Plan of Action'.

4. It is noted that it is intended, in time, to bring all 17 Group I diseases under this legislation, even those for which legislation now exists, e.g. foot & mouth, African swine fever, swine fever.

5. The requirements are the least that must be applied by each Member State. Each country is at liberty to make more stringent regulations if it so desires. These further regulations could be abused for protection purposes. Different areas have different susceptibility to different diseases.

6. Compensation to the farmer must be full market value, at least, and must be paid immediately. This will ensure early notification of the disease and should help to prevent the disease spreading.

All measures must be taken to prevent the spread of the disease.

7. Article 4 (A)

Recommend census of all domestic animals, not only of all susceptible species.

8. Article 5

Disposal of a large number of large animal carcasses is difficult. The Commission should examine the problem in depth and issue its findings before the necessity arises.

a) *Burning*

Expensive, time-consuming, and the smoke will pollute the atmosphere;

b) *Burial*

- problem of underground water being contaminated,
- difficult in rocky areas to dig deep enough;

c) *Rendering*

Danger of the products getting into the animal food chain.

9. Great attention must be given to wildlife. This could prove difficult, but it is important that a wildlife reservoir does not remain after the slaughter of the affected domestic animals.

10. Article 10

Rules for the protection and surveillance zones are noted. Some disquiet was expressed that the period of quarantine was far too short, especially for vector-borne diseases, Rift Valley fever and blue tongue.

11. Article 11

It would be of use to have a list of disinfectants and insecticides published, and updated as necessary.

12. Article 13

Movement of vaccinated animals, or their products, which should be identifiable, is forbidden from the vaccinated areas.

This will be reviewed, by the provisions of Article 17, in the light of future developments.

Done at Brussels, 25 September 1991.

*The Chairman
of the Economic and Social Committee*

François STAEDLIN