

Common organisation of the market (CMO) in beef and veal

2001/0042(CNS) - 16/05/2001 - Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading

The European Parliament approved the report by Mr Robert William STURDY (EPP/ED, UK) which aims to tackle the slump on the EU beef and veal market caused by the BSE crisis with numerous non-binding amendments. Parliament approved the Commission's proposals to tackle the slump in the beef and veal market caused by the BSE crisis with numerous non-binding amendments. MEPs believe the Commission's proposal fall short of the emergency measures needed and are calling for more extensive farming methods. The House takes the view that the Commission's proposal to place into storage meat from cattle over 30 months old to replace the current 'Purchase for Destruction' schemes, would exacerbate the current oversupply of beef and depress the market further. It therefore voted by the overwhelming majority of 459 votes to 21 with 26 abstentions to oppose the Commission's plan to introduce individual premium rights for the Beef Special Premium and rejected the reinstatement of the 90 head limit on the number of cattle reared by 305 votes to 178 with 33 abstentions. Meps want to go further than the Commission in supporting extensive farming methods and, as well as supporting the reduction of stocking densities from 2.0 animals per hectare to 1.8 they want farmers to be given incentives to reduce them even further. The Parliament requested that the amount of the premium be set at EUR 160 for 2000, EUR 185 for 2001, EUR 235 for 2002 and the subsequent years. They also voted by 332 votes to 149 to allow farms with more than 90 bulls to take their wage cost into account in order to provide incentives for the more labour intensive grass-land method of animal husbandry. Moreover, the Parliament voted by 321 votes to 161 with 17 abstentions to raise the maximum carcasses weight for intervention to 390 kilogrammes in order to limit the beef supply. Lastly, mindful of the enormous difficulties faced by beef producers, Parliament is supporting the Commission's proposals to raise the 350 000 tonne ceiling that triggers the costly 'safety net' for buying beef into public intervention, despite the fact that it will increase the amount of marketable beef, since producers will otherwise be left with no outlet for their beef by the middle of this year. It is also demanding an EU-wide promotion campaign to restore consumers confidence in beef.