


Procedure file

Basic information	
CNS - Consultation procedure Regulation	1996/0229(CNS) Procedure completed
Beef: identification and registration of bovine animals, labelling of beef and beef products Repealed by 1999/0204(COD)	
Subject 3.10.05.01 Meat 4.60.02 Consumer information, advertising, labelling	

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	ENVI Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection		30/10/1996
		GUE/NGL PAPAYANNAKIS Mihail	
	Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
	AGRI Agriculture and Rural Development		03/10/1996
		PPE MAYER Xaver	
Council of the European Union	JURI Legal Affairs, Citizens' Rights		19/12/1996
		PSE GEBHARDT Evelyne	
	Council configuration	Meeting	Date
	Agriculture and Fisheries	2061	15/12/1997
	Agriculture and Fisheries	2000	21/04/1997
	Agriculture and Fisheries	1995	17/03/1997
	Agriculture and Fisheries	1988	17/02/1997
	Agriculture and Fisheries	1985	20/01/1997
	Agriculture and Fisheries	1980	17/12/1996
	Agriculture and Fisheries	1963	18/11/1996
	Agriculture and Fisheries	1959	28/10/1996
	Research	1952	07/10/1996

Key events			
02/10/1996	Initial legislative proposal published	COM(1996)0460	Summary
07/10/1996	Resolution/conclusions adopted by Council		Summary
28/10/1996	Debate in Council	1959	

18/11/1996	Debate in Council	1963	Summary
17/12/1996	Debate in Council	1980	
20/01/1997	Debate in Council	1985	
05/02/1997	Vote in committee		Summary
05/02/1997	Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading	A4-0037/1997	
17/02/1997	Debate in Council	1988	
19/02/1997	Debate in Parliament		Summary
19/02/1997	Decision by Parliament	T4-0046/1997	Summary
07/03/1997	Legislative proposal published	COM(1997)0103	
17/03/1997	Debate in Council	1995	Summary
07/04/1997	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
21/04/1997	Act adopted by Council after consultation of Parliament		
21/04/1997	End of procedure in Parliament		
07/05/1997	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information

Procedure reference	1996/0229(CNS)
Procedure type	CNS - Consultation procedure
Procedure subtype	Legislation
Legislative instrument	Regulation
	Repealed by 1999/0204(COD)
Legal basis	EC before Amsterdam E 100A
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	ENVI/4/08337

Documentation gateway

Document attached to the procedure	N4-0417/1996	03/07/1996	CSL	Summary
Initial legislative proposal	COM(1996)0460	02/10/1996	EC	Summary
Economic and Social Committee: opinion, report	CES1404/1996 OJ C 066 03.03.1997, p. 0084	27/11/1996	ESC	Summary
Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading	A4-0037/1997 OJ C 085 17.03.1997, p. 0005	05/02/1997	EP	
Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading	T4-0046/1997 OJ C 085 17.03.1997, p. 0056-0067	19/02/1997	EP	Summary
Legislative proposal	COM(1997)0103 OJ C 100 27.03.1997, p. 0022	07/03/1997	EC	

Additional information

European Commission

[EUR-Lex](#)

Final act

[Regulation 1997/820](#)[OJ L 117 07.05.1997, p. 0001](#) Summary

Beef: identification and registration of bovine animals, labelling of beef and beef products

OBJECTIVE: the position paper seeks to define the Commission's position on the framework for the eradication of BSE in the cattle herd in the United Kingdom and for the reestablishment of the single market in beef. **SUBSTANCE:** the framework plan sets out the action which the United Kingdom is in the process of taking and the action which it has undertaken to carry out in future in order to speed up the elimination of the disease. Once this action has been established it will lead to a gradual easing of the current restrictions of beef products from the United Kingdom to the rest of the EU and to third countries. With regard to the conditions and arrangements for the gradual lifting of the ban on British beef products, the Commission considers that any plan seeking gradually to restore the single market in beef will require the following actions by the United Kingdom: - implementation of a selective slaughter programme to be approved by the Commission under the Standing Veterinary Committee procedure; - introduction of an effective animal identification and movement recording system with official registration; - legislation for the removal of meat-and-bone meal from feed mills and farms and cleansing of the premises and equipment concerned; - effective implementation of the over 30 months rule including the destruction of the animals; - improved methods for removing specified bovine material from carcasses. These actions must be backed up by Community inspections to verify correct and effective implementation. This approach, which concentrates on human and animal health should enable agreement on a procedure allowing the gradual removal of the ban, using the following four stages: a) animals and meat from certified herds (no history of BSE and no exposure to infected meat-and-bone meal); b) embryos; c) animals born after a specific date; d) meat from animals under 30 months; e) meat from animals over 30 months (longer term). Exports to third countries will be permitted in parallel to phased exports to other Member States, in line with the principle of precaution. The document defines the procedure to be applied at each stage in order to guarantee the successful outcome of this framework. ?

Beef: identification and registration of bovine animals, labelling of beef and beef products

OBJECTIVE: to reinforce the provisions concerning the labelling of beef and beef products with a view to restoring consumer confidence in their quality. **SUBSTANCE:** the proposed regulation requires each operator or organization in the beef trade to submit a specification indicating the information to be included on the label and measures to be taken to ensure its accuracy. The specification must also describe the control system to be applied and the measures to be taken in relation to operators who do not comply with its provisions. The specification must establish the link between the identification of the carcass and cuts of meat or meat products with the identification of the individual animal from which it came. Mention is also made of the information which may be included on the label: information concerning the animal, including the method of fattening and other information in relation to feeding. ?

Beef: identification and registration of bovine animals, labelling of beef and beef products

In its conclusions of 14 May 1996 the Council declared that TSE (transmissible spongiform encephalopathy) was a public health issue and took the view that all appropriate steps should be taken to eradicate the risk of possible transmission of BSE (bovine spongiform encephalopathy). It considered that there was a need for substantial improvements in the level of cooperation and coordination of research activities and in the exchange of information in this area and therefore called on the Commission to take suitable steps towards achieving this. It also called on the Commission to continue to provide updated information on the research work being carried out under the Fourth Framework Programme and, in particular, to give an account of recent calls for proposals concerning transmissible BSE and its possible link with neuro-degenerative diseases in humans. The Commission was to intensify its research activities in this field to include subject areas such as basic and applied biology, human and animal health and diagnostic procedures, particularly in association with the life science programmes. The Council agreed to look into this question again at the next Research Council meeting (5 December 1996) on the basis of the communication from the Commission, taking into account current research activities, including work under way or being planned in the Member States, and scientific opinion emanating from various expert groups, and in particular from that chaired by Professor Weissman and the Multidisciplinary Scientific Committee.

Beef: identification and registration of bovine animals, labelling of beef and beef products

The Council instructed the Special Committee on Agriculture to continue to examine the Commission's proposals so that it could decide on these issues before the end of the year, provided that Parliament's opinion was available.

Beef: identification and registration of bovine animals, labelling of beef and beef products

Since beef consumption can be brought back to normal only through a package of measures, the Committee backs in principle the Commission's efforts in submitting two draft directives designed to create, within a short space of time, an EU-wide basis for improving cattle identification and the labelling of beef and beef products. The Committee is in no doubt that a comprehensive identification system must start by securing the adequate identification of livestock. Attention must also be paid however to ease of implementation in the individual Member States and also to existing labelling systems. Moves must be made to avoid overburdening beef farmers and dealers so as to ensure acceptance of the system from the start. The Committee broadly backs the Commission proposal on the labelling of beef and beef products since it believes that this can meet the information requirements of many consumers and go a long way to helping restore consumer confidence in European beef. The ESC would point out, however, that consumer confidence can only be restored in the long term if labelling of the origin of beef is obligatory. The Committee feels that the Commission proposal should be geared towards a new objective: - general obligation to identify carcasses; - in the case of fresh meat, obligatory identification at every stage, ending with the final consumer. The Committee feels that the identification arrangements for beef products could be optional. ?

Beef: identification and registration of bovine animals, labelling of beef and beef products

Labelling beef and beef products should be compulsory and should include specific information for the attention of consumers: this was the conclusion of the committee (chairman: Ken COLLINS (PSE, UK)) following the BSE (bovine spongiform encephalopathy) crisis. It rejected the Commission proposal for marking to be optional. The committee adopted the report by Mr Mihail PAPAYANNAKIS (GUE/NGL, EL) on the proposal to amend the Council regulation on the labelling of beef and beef products. The report emphasized the need to restore consumer confidence. The committee decided that this could be achieved if operators or organizations selling beef or beef products labelled their products correctly, in the same way as operators and organizations importing beef and beef products into the Community from third countries. The European Commission wished labelling to be optional due to the lack of data on livestock in most Member States and the need to comply with international trade agreements. In the proposal for a regulation, every operator or organization active in this sector would specify the information to be included on the label and the measures needed in order to guarantee its accuracy to the competent national authorities. This information would be limited to the place of origin of the animal, its sex, method of fattening, the date of slaughter and the age of the animal on slaughter and the methods of carcass disposal. However, the committee on consumer protection added to this list the breed of animal, any genetic engineering techniques performed on the embryo and other data on antibiotics and stimulants administered. The committee also amended the proposal so that, one year after the entry into force of the regulation, labelling requirements would be extended to processed goods containing beef or beef products. It also postponed the date of entry into force of the regulation from 1 January to 1 July 1997. The report was adopted under the consultation procedure. Nonetheless, the committee approved an amendment, against the Commission's advice, to base the proposal on Article 100 A of the treaty (internal market, codecision procedure) rather than Article 43 (agriculture, consultation procedure). ?

Beef: identification and registration of bovine animals, labelling of beef and beef products

In adopting the report by Mr PAPAYANNAKIS (GUE, Gk) Parliament amended the proposal for a regulation regarding the labelling of beef and beef products. It called for the proposal to be based on Article 100a of the EC Treaty (internal market, co-decision procedure) instead of Article 43 of the EC Treaty (agriculture, consultation procedure). On the content of the proposal, Parliament confirmed its willingness for compulsory labelling for beef and beef products. The following information should appear on the label: - Member State, region of a Member State or third country of birth, sex, breed and method of breeding of the animal; - any genetic engineering techniques performed on the embryo or transgenic origin of the animal; - other information on antibiotics and stimulants administered; - Member States, regions of Member States or third countries where the fattening took place; If beef from different countries of origin is available at a point of sale, the origin of each piece should be evident from the labelling. Parliament also required: - the extension of labelling to processed goods containing beef and beef products within one year of the entry into force; - the imposition of administrative and financial penalties on any party failing to comply with the requirements of this Regulation; - the entry into force of the regulation on 1 July 1997 (instead of 1 January 1997); - Member States to submit annual reports to the Commission on the implementation of the regulation. ?

Beef: identification and registration of bovine animals, labelling of beef and beef products

The rapporteur insisted that the compulsory labelling of all products was necessary, including industrially processed products (sterilised tinned food). The creation of two markets should be avoided whereby consumers would be faced, on the one hand, with labelled products which were more expensive because they offered an additional guarantee and, on the other, similar products at a cheaper price because their consumption was riskier. Commissioner Fischler said that the regulation in question should provide a guarantee of origin for beef and cattle, from the farm to the consumer, in order to win the latter's confidence. This was why a compulsory labelling system was needed. In this respect, as imposing such a procedure would require a certain degree of preparation, Mr Fischler considered it appropriate to implement an optional system for a transitional period. Finally, the Commission was prepared to accept Article 100a as the legal basis for the regulation in question but Mr Fischler underlined that, in this case, the current debate would amount to a first reading. As a result the Commission would be unable to act with the requisite degree of urgency in this area.

Beef: identification and registration of bovine animals, labelling of beef and beef products

After lengthy discussions the Council reached unanimous political agreement, on the basis of a Presidency compromise proposal, on a draft single Regulation based on Article 43 of the Treaty. It will be remembered that, further to the Opinion of the European Parliament, the Commission decided to combine the two original proposals based on Article 43 of the Treaty, which provides for a codecision procedure. The Council did not concur with the Commission on the issue of the legal basis for its proposal. The Commission said it deeply regretted the Council's choice.

Beef: identification and registration of bovine animals, labelling of beef and beef products

OBJECTIVE: to establish a reliable system for the identification and registration of bovine animals with a view to restoring consumer confidence in their quality. **COMMUNITY MEASURE:** Council Regulation 820/97/EC establishing a system for the identification and registration of bovine animals and regarding the labelling of beef and beef products. **SUBSTANCE:** the Council finally adopted a single regulation based on Article 43 of the EC Treaty. The text provides for the introduction of the identification of all animals born after 1 January 1998 by two eartags and by passports or identification documents. This identification is to replace the system currently in force under Directive 92/102/EEC not later than 1 January 2000. Provision is made for derogations, specifically for animals born before 1 January 1998 and bulls. The identity of each animal and its movements will be recorded on a database in each Member State, and all information concerning the animal's movements will be recorded in a passport that will accompany the animal wherever it goes. Keepers of animals must also keep an up-to-date register in which they record detailed information on the bovine animals on their holdings. As regards the labelling of beef and beef products, a compulsory system will be introduced on 1 January 2000. However, this does not exclude the possibility of a Member State deciding to apply the system merely on an optional basis to beef sold exclusively in its territory. An optional labelling system will remain in force until 31 December 1999. It requires that, where an organization or operator decides to label its beef, a specification must be submitted for approval by the competent authority of the Member State where the production operations will take place or the products concerned will be sold. Until 31 December 1999 each label must at least bear an identification code which ensures a link between, on the one hand, the identification of the carcass, quarter or pieces of meat and, on the other hand, the individual animal or the animals concerned. The labelling system compulsory in all the Member States from 1 January 2000 must also require indication of the Member State or third country where the animal from which the beef is derived was born, the Member States or third countries where the animal was raised and the Member State or third country where it was slaughtered. However, Member States where there is a sufficiently developed identification and registration system for bovine animals may before 1 January 2000 impose a compulsory labelling system for beef from animals born, fattened and slaughtered in their territory. **ENTRY INTO FORCE:** 7 May 1997. The regulation applies from 1 July 1997.