

4.12. The communication refers in several places to agricultural sectors experiencing severe difficulties in achieving appropriate pricing; difficulty in estimating sustainable demand and consumption, heavily subsidised crops, measurement of the diffuse pollution caused by nitrates and pesticides, the CAP and the lack of a methodology for reliable evaluation of the

environmental costs and benefits. Water pricing for agriculture requires a separate document and process of consideration. Account should be taken, for example, of the beneficial aspects of cereal irrigation in preserving threatened species or improving soil characteristics, or agriculture's contribution to the CO<sub>2</sub> sink effect in relation to climate change.

Brussels, 24 January 2001.

*The President  
of the Economic and Social Committee*

Göke FRERICHS

### **Opinion of the Economic and Social Committee on the 'Proposal for a Council Directive on Community measures for the control of classical swine fever'**

(2001/C 123/16)

On 2 October 2000 the Council of the European Union decided to consult the Economic and Social Committee, under Article 37 of the Treaty establishing the European Community on the above-mentioned proposal.

The Section for Agriculture, Rural Development and the Environment, which was responsible for preparing the Committee's work on the subject, adopted its opinion on 20 December 2000. The rapporteur was Mr Scully.

At its 378th plenary session (meeting of 24 January 2001) the Economic and Social Committee adopted the following opinion with 81 votes in favour and two abstentions:

#### **1. Introduction**

1.1.2. Clinical diagnosis can be very difficult, in particular at the early stage of disease in a farm; also laboratory diagnosis may be difficult.

#### 1.1. *Classical swine fever (CSF)*

— Incubation period: 7-10 days in the single animal, 15 to 30 days in the farm.

#### 1.1.1. General characteristics of the disease

— It is a disease infecting pigs (domestic and wild) and it is caused by a well known Pestivirus (no risk for humans is known).

— Main route of infection: direct or indirect contact with infected pigs (airborne infection possible); movements of pigs incubating the disease play an important role in the spread of the disease.

— Clinical signs: fever, anorexia, respiratory signs, haemorrhages in the skin; however clinical signs are extremely variable as well as their severity.

— Mortality is also variable (from very low in sows to very high in piglets).

1.1.3. The virus survives in pig meat for a considerable time, and can be spread through illegal use of swill-feeding; this represents the most usual method of spread of the disease. Affects the trade in pig meat.

— There is no known cure. Some pigs develop into a chronic state showing ill-thrift etc.

1.1.4. The causal virus is very infective and can be carried on lorries, clothing etc. It is therefore essential in controlling the disease that strict quarantine and Stand Still orders are observed.

## 1.2. *The main problems linked to CSF and its effects*

- Existence of areas with a high density of pigs.
- Occurrence and persistence of CSF in the wild beast.
- Millions of pigs slaughtered and destroyed in 1997/1998.
- High costs and losses for the Community budget, for the Member States, for the farmers and for the tax payers.

## 1.3. *The Commission proposals on what must be done for the domestic pigs*

- Increase of disease awareness and preparedness (effective contingency planning is vital);
- Rapid and rigorous actions in case of outbreaks (preventive killing of pigs in contact holdings);
- Improvement of diagnostic skills for an earlier diagnosis;
- Improvement of epidemiological skills to trace disease back and forward.

1.4. The recent outbreak in the Netherlands which caused the slaughter of 10 million pigs and subsequent compensation cost for EU farmers, induced some criticism from the Court of Auditors.

## 2. **General comments**

The Proposed Directive amends the previous Classical Swine Fever Directives on which the Committee gave opinions in 1987 and 1991<sup>(1)</sup>. These amendments are welcomed.

2.1. The explanatory memorandum gives a full account of the reasons for introducing legislation for a 'Marker' Vaccine, including the rare occasion when it might be used. It also quite

rightly points out the obvious deficiency that there is, as yet, no reliable diagnostic test to differentiate between the 'field' and 'vaccinate' strain of the Virus. Until this test is in place, and properly tested the vaccine cannot be used.

2.2. World Trade Organisation implications must be known before the introduction of vaccines.

2.2.1. The 'Third Country' trading implications of vaccines and their use must be examined. There should be international scientific agreement prior to their introduction. This should include 'Applicant countries' from Eastern Europe having an appreciation of the Communities future CSF policy.

## 2.3. *'Classical Swine Fever in feral Pigs'*

2.3.1. This subject is incorporated in the Commission proposal. Appropriate education campaigns should be undertaken by the Member States in order to enable society to cooperate properly when disease eradication is needed.

2.3.2. Experience has shown that where Swine Fever is present in the feral pig population, control, let alone eradication, is very difficult.

2.4. The ESC agrees in principle with the Commission proposal, but it would like to highlight the following:

2.4.1. Diagnostic Manual — The Commission should accelerate its work on adopting it. Based on a preview, the ESC feels that the draft document is on the right direction.

2.4.2. The incorporation of provisions on semen, ova and embryos into the text is welcomed.

2.4.3. Re-stocking by use of sentinel animals or alternative is welcomed.

2.4.4. Rules of 'in contact' and neighbouring farms are welcomed.

2.4.5. The aim of this text is to supplement, not to supplant the previous directives, and the underlining of the changes/additions, to the text is welcomed.

<sup>(1)</sup> OJ C 83, 30.3.1987, p. 3 and OJ C 40, 17.2.1992, p. 87.

### 3. Specific comments to the proposal

#### 3.1. Preface (6)

In connection with outbreaks of CSF and prevention of further spread, the possibility to kill contact herds should be mentioned before vaccination.

#### 3.2. Definition of feral pigs (wild boars) and high densely populated areas

3.2.1. In Article 2, sub articles (a) and (b) there is definition of 'feral pigs'. When comparing with the previous directive, we assume that the reason for this amendment is to ensure that all wild pigs fall within this definition. The ESC believes that all pigs outside human care should be classified as 'feral'.

3.2.2. In Article 2, sub article (u) 'a high densely populated area' is defined as an area with a radius of 10 km around a holding that is known to be infected or suspected to be infected with CSF. The area has a higher number of pigs than 800 pigs per km<sup>2</sup>. At the same time such holdings are to be located in an area with more than 300 pigs per km<sup>2</sup> (cf. directive on trade with live animals, 64/432/EEC) or to be located at a distance less than 20 km from such an area. A more simple definition to 'area with a high density of pigs' would be desirable.

#### 3.3. Articles 2 and 7 and Annex V — contact holdings

3.3.1. A contact holding is defined as a holding in which CSF may be introduced because of the location, the movements of pigs, persons or vehicles etc., in connection also with its vicinity to other holdings within 20 km around a densely populated area. In parts of the EU there are substantial areas of 'high density' that may fall in with the meaning of this definition.

3.3.2. Article 7 (and Annex V) opens the possibility of killing contact herds before official confirmation of CSF has proved the presence of virus or antibodies. This is important in order to limit the spread of the initial outbreaks in an area (region).

3.3.3. Annex V describes the most important criteria which are to be considered before a contact herd is killed including 'movement of pigs from an outbreak holding to contact

holdings after the likely time of introduction of virus in the infected holding'. Other direct contact like joint use of tools in the pen house or the like should also 'qualify' for a phased restocking.

3.3.4. Definition of criteria for culling of the so called contact herds, including 'neighbouring herds' has already been incorporated in the eradication strategy. Nevertheless, the eradication strategy should be even more intensified in the local area around an infected holding. The eradication strategy should, therefore, always include culling of herds within 1 000 m from the infected holding, unless special circumstances indicate otherwise.

#### 3.4. Article 11 — Surveillance zone (radius minimum 10 km)

3.4.1. The surveillance zone may be lifted if among other things pigs on all holdings have undergone clinical, and if necessary laboratory examinations. The current provisions stipulate that serologic examinations of a representative sample of the herds are required before the surveillance zone may be lifted. We think that in future a screening of a representative number of herds should be compulsory in order to minimise the risk of missing infected pigs with no distinct clinical symptoms.

3.4.2. Articles 8, 9, 10 concerning epidemiology, protection and surveillance zones are welcomed.

#### 3.5. Article 19 and Annex VI — Vaccination

3.5.1. In point 2, reference is made to Annex VI which describes the most important criteria that are going to be assessed before it is decided to use emergency vaccination. It is not clear whether one or several of these criteria should be fulfilled. Furthermore, it should be made clear that at any time the 'stamping out' strategy is preferable to vaccination; that emergency vaccination should be avoided and that other possible precautions like killing of contact herds, prohibition of any movements of live animals (apart from minimum zones etc.) should be enforced prior to any vaccination action.

3.5.2. Emergency vaccination should be initiated on the basis of a previous discussion in the Standing Veterinary Committee (ref. Article 26).

3.5.3. In point 9, conditions to the possible use of a marker vaccine are described. The approval of a marker vaccine, the international acceptance and the usage of vaccination should be conditional to the use of vaccination. This is essential in relation to EU exports in order to secure that the usage of a marker vaccine in one region does not jeopardise exports from other EU regions.

#### 4. Conclusions

4.1. Fair and equitable compensation arrangements for farmers who have suffered financial loss as a result of disease control measures are an essential feature of any disease control scheme.

4.2. The proper implementation of Directive 92/102/EEC, in relation to the 'identification of porcine animals', is of

importance in ensuring that all the relevant authorities have full knowledge of the location and density of pig populations.

4.3. The Committee welcomes the proposals for the possibility of the introduction of a marker CSF vaccine in certain limited circumstances.

4.4. The Committee considers it vital that all trade implications be clarified first.

4.5. The Committee points out that as yet no marker vaccine has been approved and that no differential test is even in existence. However the making of these rules should act as a guide to potential vaccine manufacturers.

4.6. The Standing Veterinary Committee will have to be consulted before vaccination is used.

Brussels, 24 January 2001.

*The President*

*of the Economic and Social Committee*

Göke FRERICHS

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### **Opinion of the Economic and Social Committee on the 'Proposal for a Council Regulation amending Regulation (EC) No 1258/1999 on the financing of the common agricultural policy as well as various other Regulations relating to the common agricultural policy'**

(2001/C 123/17)

On 12 September 2000 the Council decided to consult the Economic and Social Committee, under Article 37 of the Treaty establishing the European Community, on the above-mentioned proposal.

The Section for Agriculture, Rural Development and the Environment, which was responsible for preparing the Committee's work on the subject, adopted its opinion on 20 December 2000. The rapporteur was Mr Strasser.

At its 378th plenary session held on 24 and 25 January 2001 (meeting of 24 January), the Economic and Social Committee adopted the following opinion by 74 votes to 1, with 6 abstentions.

#### 1. Introduction

1.1. On 26 July 2000 the European Commission proposed a radical revision of the EU Financial Regulation. The main purpose of the proposal was to simplify and restructure the existing Financial Regulation, which was introduced over 20 years ago.

1.2. The 1977 version has been amended 14 times, as and when necessary: firstly, in order to reflect institutional changes (the Maastricht and Amsterdam Treaties, funding for EFTA countries in the framework of the EEA) and then to ensure more rigorous management of Community resources.

1.3. The Commission considers that all the principles and key provisions for budget and financial management should