Resolution on the crisis in the EU livestock sector

2010/2916(RSP) - 11/11/2010 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

Following a debate which took place in plenary on 10 November 2010, the European Parliament adopted a resolution on the crisis in the EU livestock sector.

The text adopted in plenary was tabled as a joint resolution by the EPP, S&D, ALDE, Greens/EFA and the ECR groups.

The resolution recalls that the **viability of many EU livestock holdings is being seriously threatened** at present by a combination of factors, which include, *inter alia*: (i) the rising costs of fuel and fertilisers; (ii) the high cost of complying with EU regulations; (iii) greater competition from third-country imports; (iv) the recent surge in cereals prices, due particularly to unforeseen climatic conditions; (v) the low prices being received by farmers for meat products.

Market mechanisms: the Commission is called upon to **urgently introduce efficient and flexible market mechanisms in the livestock sector** and to put in place the measures needed to limit, across the agricultural sector as a whole, the impact of price volatility and speculation. Use should be made of the available market mechanisms to alleviate the current crisis in the pigmeat sector and other livestock sectors. Market tools should also be proposed by the Commission to guarantee an appropriate supply of cereals for animal feed. Members believe that a **safety net** should be applied in all cereals sectors, with a minimum intervention price for the tendering system.

Protein plan: Members support, as a matter of urgency, the introduction of a protein plan for the European Union that would promote the cultivation of protein and leguminous crops, which could also play an important role in reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Post-2013 CAP: the Commission is asked to take into account the special vulnerability of certain livestock sectors – for example, grassland beef production - and the unfair conditions under which they are competing with third countries. Specific measures to prevent serious losses of EU support for livestock farmers that employ sustainable production methods should also be considered. Fair competition between farmers in the Member States must also be guaranteed. Moreover, Members call on the Commission actively to seek to simplify and reduce the bureaucratic burden imposed on farmers in the livestock sector.

The Commission is also asked to:

- ensure that **third-country imports comply with EU animal welfare standards**, in order to prevent unfair competition;
- evaluate the **economic impact** of the introduction of new animal welfare rules, and emphasise that before any new legislation is drafted, existing rules – whether general or specific – should be properly enforced;
- propose a **strengthening of producer organisations** in all livestock sectors, in order to enable them to negotiate better prices for their products while taking into account the production costs;
- fully **safeguard the interests of European producers in bilateral trade negotiations with Mercosur and other third countries**, by avoiding any concessions that could put EU livestock production at risk;
- provide **legal certainty for imports of soy and maize from third countries** by introducing a pragmatic threshold for the adventitious presence of GMOs which are not yet authorized in the European Union but are under scientific consideration.

Lastly, the European Commission is called upon to **review the current ban on meat and bone meal for non-ruminants** and to evaluate the possibility of lifting the restrictions under conditions which would ensure a maximum level of food safety.