

Ovine and caprine animals: registration and identification

2002/0297(CNS) - 17/12/2003 - Final act

PURPOSE : to reinforce measures for the identification and registration of sheep and goats.

LEGISLATIVE ACT : Council Regulation 21/2004/EC establishing a system for the identification and registration of ovine and caprine animals and amending Regulation 1782/2003/EC and Directives 92/102/EEC and 64/432/EEC. **CONTENT :** the Council adopted this Regulation by qualified majority. The Spanish, Greek and Portuguese delegations voted against, emphasising the need in particular for Community funding for electronic identification measures and for setting up a database via the first pillar of the Common Agricultural Policy rather than via rural development measures. The United Kingdom delegation, supported by the Swedish delegation, regretted that no cost benefit analysis was available for the entry into force of the measures. The Swedish delegation, supported by the German delegation, was opposed to any Community financing for these measures. The purpose of the Regulation is to improve and harmonise the tracing of ovine and caprine animals to avoid, as far as possible, and limit the spread of contagious diseases. Rules concerning the identification and the registration of ovine and caprine animals have been laid down in Directive 92/102/EEC. However, experience, and in particular the foot-and-mouth disease crisis, has shown that the implementation of Directive 92/102/EEC has not been satisfactory and is in need of improvement. This Regulation aims to reinforce the provisions of the Directive, in particular, with regard to the introduction in each Member State of an identification system that ensures that animals bear an identification mark and all movements are recorded, with the aim of tracing animals for health reasons. The main points of the legislation are as follows: - the scope of the concepts of 'keeper' and 'holding' are defined more explicitly so as to render the legislation more readable; - Directive 92/102/EEC is amended so that it states clearly that bovine animals are already excluded from its scope and to exclude ovine and caprine animals; - Council Directive 64/432/EEC is amended in order to update the references to the provisions in Community legislation regarding the identification of the animal species concerned; - the age at which the animal is identified: all animals must be identified within 6 months of birth (instead of 1 month as indicated in the initial proposal) or at least before they leave the holding. The initial proposal provided for immediate application from 1 July 2003. This compromise allows Member States an adjustment period of 18 months following publication of the Regulation; - the means of identification and the date of entry into force of electronic identification: the first means of identification continues to be an ear tag, but for the second, Member States may now choose between a second ear tag in the other ear, a tattoo (for national trade), a mark on the pastern or an electronic device. The initial proposal did not include tattooing or a mark on the pastern (for caprines only). However, until 1 January 2008 the second means of identification may be replaced by a global system of identification by holding and individually (following repeated requests from Ireland and the United Kingdom) for movements of animals within a State. As from 1 January 2008, electronic identification becomes obligatory for all ovine and caprine animals. That date will be confirmed or amended by an interim report to be submitted to the Council by 30 June 2006. The initial proposal provided for application of electronic identification as from 1 July 2006. The compromise also provides for a new derogation for Member States in which the number of animals is 600 000 or less; - to take into account future developments in the field of electronic identification of ovine and caprine animals, the Commission will submit to the Council a report concerning the possible application of the electronic identification system on a Community-wide scale, together with the necessary proposals; - the Commission will also provide detailed technical guidelines, definitions and procedures for the technical characteristics of identifiers and readers, test procedures, acceptance criteria and the certification model for approved test laboratories, the procurement of appropriate identifiers and readers, the application of identifiers, their reading and recovery, the codification of identifiers, a common glossary, a data dictionary and communication standards; - each Member State must establish a central register comprising an up-to-date list of all keepers of animals covered by this Regulation who are engaged in this activity in its territory, and containing minimum information laid down on a Community

basis; - for the purposes of rapid and accurate tracing of animals, each Member State must create a computer database which will record all holdings in its territory and the movements of the animals. The computer database becomes obligatory as from 1 January 2008 instead of the dates in 2004 and 2005 originally suggested; Finally, in order to take into account the system established by this Regulation for the granting of certain aids under Council Regulation 1782/2003/EC, that Regulation is amended accordingly. ENTRY INTO FORCE : 29/01/04. Articles 14, 15 and 16 will apply from 09/07/05.